

# New currency for FMCG retail: shopper delight



By [Michelle Francis](#)

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There is no denying that when it comes to the launch of new products or variants, product sampling is one of the most effective vehicles and is one of the main drivers included in the mix. The other is when brands are looking for a cost-effective quick solution to move product off the shelves. Both avenues have their merit but it is going to become increasingly difficult to maintain/increase retailer mindshare and support if we do not raise the bar and deliver medium to long-term value.

Looking at the generic approach of in-store experiential, it is no surprise that retailers are raising the barriers of entry. We need to do more than the narrow cut 'n paste punting product tactics and start delivering real strategic value to the retailers.

The new currency in FMCG retail is shopper delight. Retailers are focussed on delivering a pleasurable and efficient shopping experience. The theory is that this drives loyalty, which in turn will deliver greater basket share. Part of this is reducing clutter and angst when navigating the aisles.

Retailers are also honing in on category performance and cross category pollination and are less interested in individual brand performance. Both these trends are challenges that the industry and FMCG brands need to address.

## Solutions

A few years ago, we started piloting category centric experiential initiatives. One of our first was for a baking aid company that rejuvenated its brand and packaging without new product innovation or variants. Hard to sell vermicelli and silver coloured decoration balls in a destination category where there is generally price and quality parity among competitors. Competition was rife and the customer was fighting for increased shelf share.

We developed an engagement programme where we took a series of cake recipes, mass baked them and then sampled them as bite size treats nationally. This was enough to induce purchase and definitely encourage switching at shelf. However, we went further. Our demonstrators also carried recipes cards and if the shopper liked one, the demonstrator gave them the recipe card and then guided the shopper to purchase all the ingredients. This was not only baking aids but also flour, eggs, baking powder, milk - everything one needed to bake the perfect cake.

The net result was that instead of being an invasive product punting campaign, this initiative became a valued shopping experience. It drove category and cross category sales and the brand benefited, not only from its increased product sales but also from increased retailer mindshare, as we showed in post analysis how we increased shopper delight and basket value. This led to more facings and long-term gains for both the brand and retailer.

The future of in store experiential heavily rests on delivering sublime shopping experiences and solutions that complement the retailer's shopper and drive category growth.

## ABOUT MICHELLE FRANCIS

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