

# Unshackling Sales from spreadsheets

## The Upstream and Downstream Implications on CPG Organizations

In comparison to Excel® spreadsheets, Trade Promotion Management (TPM) software solutions are too often viewed as constraints (at best) and distractions (at worst) by members of the Sales team. In reality, a cloud-based TPM platform provides Sales and the entire Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) organization with the workflow, metrics, business logic and analytics spreadsheets inherently lack.

### Four deadly sins of spreadsheets

Sales remains the toughest audience to wean off spreadsheets. Despite an impressive checklist of benefits, including more effective promotions, added financial visibility and increased profits, Sales teams continue to resist TPM technology. Overcoming push back from Sales begins by understanding the four deadly sins of spreadsheets:

1

#### Familiarity

Sales professionals have always relied on spreadsheets and tend to be more comfortable with desktop tools.

3

#### Portability

Updating a spreadsheet doesn't require an Internet connection making it an easy "go-to" tool for Sales Managers on the road.

2

#### Flexibility

Spreadsheets enable Sales to follow a loose structure of processes and habits that revolve around relationship building and negotiations.

4

#### Confidentiality

Documenting in-depth customer knowledge in a spreadsheet is the best way for Sales to maintain control of accounts.

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven CPG marketplace, companies who successfully unshackle Sales from spreadsheets and antiquated business processes will gain a stronger competitive edge. Industry research has shown that a true TPM tool that provides process, visibility and accountability can drop as much as 10 points off a trade spending budget. The dollars saved can be applied directly to the bottom line or reinvested to build a stronger brand at the shelf.

## Justifying change to gain acceptance

In order to gain the Sales team's acceptance and endorsement of a new TPM tool, Senior Management must enforce a company-wide cultural change. In doing so, the following business goals justifying the immediate need and urgency to relinquish spreadsheets should be clearly communicated:



### Drive profitable promotions

Promotion effectiveness and profitability is the top business challenge CPG companies face. Embracing new technology will empower Sales with the tools needed to build, sell, track and revise every promotion to ensure it is profitable and effective. Time and effort should be spent managing promotions and accounts, not manipulating data in static spreadsheets.



### Better business intelligence and analytics

Capturing all trade spend data in one centralized TPM system will generate real-time business intelligence and analytics. Forward looking reports will help Sales build new, smarter promotions using facts, not gut instinct. Sales will finally have the insight to identify gaps and see why promotions are working or not. Spreadsheets simply can't deliver this type of critical business information.



### Quick and easy planning

Sales Planning will be far less stressful and more productive when done in a TPM solution, leaving more hours available to manage accounts. Sales will have the tools to respond quickly and confidently to senior management on any metric and at any level of the business. Time spent rebuilding plans from scratch in Excel and compiling spreadsheets each quarter will be a thing of the past.

## Sales will fly high on the cloud

Critical business tasks Sales can perform after ditching spreadsheets for CPGvision:

- Quickly monitor promotions and actual results on-the-go from any web enabled device
- Access critical business insights and customer history to generate stronger promotions
- Easily build reports in a format that are meaningful and relevant to customers
- Track sales and spending against forecasts to ensure business objectives are on track
- Possess real-time insights on volumes, spending and account profitability
- View data in dynamic dashboards to ensure promotions are driving the right responses
- See syndicated POS sales data in the same report as shipment data

## A positive ripple effect

Perhaps most importantly, Sales is not the only department who will experience the benefits of kicking a spreadsheet addiction. Moving TPM processes to a cloud-based system will have a positive ripple effect across the entire CPG organization.

For example, from the moment the Sales team creates a promotional plan in a truly centralized TPM tool, critical information regarding base and incremental volume will be accessible to the whole company. The instant visibility will help drive demand and production plans, as well as allow the entire company to work more efficiently using realtime, factual data. This means:

- As the promotion cycle continues and planned spending is assigned to a fund, the Finance team will gain a newfound visibility to future promotional liabilities and real-time actualization.
- The Marketing department will benefit from having a company repository to view customer plans, planned promotional activity, new distribution and brand-specific spending.
- Senior Management will have a common and instant view into the business by channel, customer and brand to proactively course-correct as necessary.

In the end, many Sales teams don't understand or fully realize the upstream and downstream implications their spreadsheet obsession has on the broader organization. While Sales may see the departure from Excel as a potential increase in workload, a progressive CPG company will refuse to compromise on new processes that will drive profitability or share of shelf. Rather, it should strive for continuous improvement using proven best practices and the best tools for the job.

## About CPGvision

In developing the CPGvision platform, PSignite offers the premier revenue growth management (RGM) solution designed to help consumer goods companies grow revenue profitably. The CPGvision solution suite features trade promotion management (TPM), trade promotion optimization (TPO), annual planning (AOP), as well as price elasticity and scenario planning capabilities. PSignite prides itself on delivering the most powerful combination of functionality and ease of use, enabling clients to realize benefits from day one.

To learn more about our ready-to-use trade promotion intelligence, TPx and RGM capabilities, [get in touch](#) with our team.