TODD DOWNARD

CPG Commercial & Customer Strategy Executive
Organizational Leadership | Category Management | Trade Marketing | Shopper Insights | Sales
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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Senior CPG commercial and customer strategy executive with a track record of category growth at 2–3X the market, $200M+ in incremental revenue, and $100M+ in premium growth. 20+ years of experience and 12+ years leading category and customer teams, including 9+ at Director level, spanning Sales, Trade Marketing, Customer & Shopper Marketing, Category Management, and enterprise strategy. Builds and transforms high-performing organizations, develops commercially influential leaders, and earns trust across customers, C-suite executives, and cross-functional teams. Combines commercial judgment with consumer, shopper, category, and retailer insight to translate strategy into action and accelerate growth. Deep Walmart ecosystem expertise complemented by total-U.S., multi-channel, and multi-retailer leadership. Accountable for P&L, margin, and marketing, data, and headcount budgets, with performance measured against ROI.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Category Management | Trade Marketing | Shopper Insights | Go-to-Market Strategy | Category Captain | Walmart Ecosystem Strategy | Customer & Retailer Strategy | Organizational Design | C-Suite Engagement & Advisory | Joint Business Planning | National Account Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

EXECUTIVE TRANSITION | COMMERCIAL & ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

March 2024–Present | Bentonville, AR (Remote)

- Stay engaged in commercial strategy, retailer dynamics, and organizational leadership while pursuing the next senior commercial role.
- Mentor emerging commercial talent on capability building and executive presence; share perspective with CPG and retail peers on commercial, retailer, and organizational challenges.
- Maintain near-daily contact with leaders across retail and CPG, including Walmart, retained search firms, and former teams.

TYSON FOODS, INC.

Director, Walmart Enterprise Strategy & Category Leadership | April 2023–February 2024 (Organizational Restructuring) | Springdale, AR

Led enterprise strategy and category leadership across seven protein categories for Tyson's Walmart business as a member of the Chief Customer Officer's Walmart Leadership Team, integrating customer, commercial, category, and cross-functional priorities.

- Built and developed a 25+ person organization spanning team leaders, Category Advisors, and Analysts, strengthening capability and talent while empowering leaders to own their teams.
- Secured executive investment in Walmart's Scintilla platform, strengthening enterprise insight capability and Walmart decision support.
- Selected to represent Tyson on Walmart's Confidential Category Advisor Leadership Roundtable, strengthening strategic retailer engagement and bringing enterprise perspective into a select forum of roughly 12 senior CPG leaders nationally.
- Partnered with Walmart leadership to improve category flow and optimize adjacencies across 10 Advisorships.
- Drove Walmart share growth at roughly 2:1 versus the rest of market.

LINDT & SPRÜNGLI (USA), INC.

Director, Category Management & Strategic Partnerships | February 2019–April 2023 | Rogers, AR

Led total-U.S. category strategy for Lindt's $800M+ U.S. business, partnering with the VP of Sales and CEO while integrating commercial, brand, marketing, supply chain, insights, and retailer priorities.

Member of Lindt's U.S. leadership team, aligning priorities and cross-functional execution with functional peers in quarterly summits.

- Transformed Category Management from a traditional Sales support function into a strategic commercial and retailer capability, redesigning customer coverage and organizational accountabilities with VP Sales and CEO alignment.
- Created and owned the annual U.S. priority ranking of the overall portfolio, brands and SKUs, and separately by brand, securing senior leadership approval; it directly impacted P&L results and was part of my performance evaluation.
- Set U.S. planogram excellence expectations customized for top retailers, and set innovation priorities and distribution targets by item.
- Led the U.S. Merchandising Vision, selecting the agency, managing the research budget, and leading the research; supported CEO-level alignment across Lindt North America, Ghirardelli, and Russell Stover; trained the entire U.S. marketing organization on the Vision, translating consumer and shopper learning into enterprise priorities.
- Contributed to the multi-year U.S. Chocolate Category Vision and led its U.S. rollout, driving $100M+ in total premium growth through insight-led commercial strategies spanning assortment, placement, promotion, innovation, and go-to-market execution, including pioneering VR-based consumer research that contributed to 10–30% sales increases across top strategic accounts.
- Grew formal Category Advisor roles from 2 to 8, including Walmart's Seasonal Category Advisor designation for Premium Chocolate, and established Lindt as strategic premium chocolate partner of choice at 6+ additional retailers, building 10+ strategic retailer partnerships.
- Built a high-performing national category organization, adding five roles through an organizational assessment and promoting talent into broader leadership; a Category Advisor advanced to Senior Manager and ultimately U.S. Director.
- Secured CEO approval for investment in Walmart's Scintilla platform.
- Partnered regularly with the Global Head of Shopper Strategy, bringing U.S. category and retailer perspectives into global brand strategy, innovation, and shopper priorities while translating global thinking into the U.S. market.

DIAGEO NORTH AMERICA

Director, Category Development — Walmart, Drug Channel & Regional Accounts | August 2014–February 2019 | Bentonville, AR

Led category and customer strategy across Walmart, the Drug Channel, and regional accounts within Diageo's $7.5B–$8B U.S. business, integrating commercial, category, marketing, and executive priorities.

- Rebuilt a 14-person category strategy organization following near-complete turnover, recruiting and developing new talent while redesigning governance, operating cadence, executive communication standards, outcome tracking, and cross-functional alignment.
- Prepared President-level Diageo leadership for direct Walmart CEO engagement, developing a long-term category roadmap that translated consumer trends, competitive intelligence, and portfolio strategy into an executive customer narrative.
- Delivered share growth consistently 3X the market through insight-led commercial and customer strategy, assortment optimization, distribution expansion, and executive-level storytelling.
- Shared leadership accountability with peers for P&L, margin, and top-line sales, managing marketing, data, and headcount budgets.
- Developed and promoted 8 team members into expanded commercial and leadership roles, building a strong internal talent pipeline across customer leadership, team leadership, and category management.
- Strengthened integration between Category and Marketing through recurring strategic planning, aligning customer, commercial, brand, and portfolio priorities.

DIAGEO NORTH AMERICA

Senior Category Development Manager – Walmart/Sam's Club | September 2010–August 2014 | Bentonville, AR

- Led an 8-person category organization responsible for Walmart and Sam's Club strategic category leadership and joint business planning, integrating customer strategy, analytical capability, and talent development to accelerate growth.
- Generated $200M+ in incremental revenue through insight-driven placement and assortment strategies across Walmart and Sam's Club.
- Identified critical gaps in analytical capability and hired specialized talent to develop proprietary BI tools, reducing preparation time by approximately 30% while improving the speed and quality of strategic insights delivered to Walmart and Sam's Club leadership.
- Built complementary analytical capability across the organization while developing the team to move beyond data and translate insights into commercially actionable customer strategies.

RECKITT

National Account Manager | Team Leader – Category Management | Trade Marketing Manager | November 2003–September 2010 | Bentonville, AR & Parsippany, NJ

Progressed through commercial leadership roles spanning total-U.S. Trade Marketing, Category Management, and National Accounts, ultimately building and leading Reckitt's Walmart category-management capability from the ground up.

- Owned the full P&L for my brands as National Account Manager and managed the budget for all Walmart-specific marketing, including the ROI analysis used to evaluate my performance.
- Led total-U.S. Trade Marketing for the U.S. launch of Veet, a major global brand priority, partnering closely with Marketing, Sales leadership, and the VP of Sales to translate brand strategy into customer and go-to-market execution.
- Built an 8-person Category Management organization supporting Walmart Buying, Shopper Insights, and Marketing, establishing the talent and capabilities required to elevate Category Management from a support function to a strategic customer partner.
- Expanded Reckitt's strategic retailer influence by earning multiple Category Advisor and Validator responsibilities through commercial understanding, competitive intelligence, and insight-led customer strategy.
- Delivered category strategies that outpaced Rest of Market, driving 200+ basis points of performance advantage and +2 share points through integrated customer, category, and marketing strategy.
- Managed Reckitt's largest global sales desk calling on Walmart, serving as a strategic integrator between Reckitt brand teams and Walmart's commercial organization and contributing to Reckitt's 2006 Walmart Vendor of the Year recognition.

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

Customer Marketing | Sales Development | Business Development | January 2000–August 2003 | Seattle, WA & Denver, CO

Progressed through customer marketing, sales development, and business development roles across multiple states and markets, building a commercial foundation in customer strategy, field execution, cross-functional leadership, and senior bottler engagement.

- Partnered directly with Coca-Cola Enterprises' VP of Sales to build annual customer marketing plans, oversee 4.5M+ cases, manage $3M+ in marketing investment, and drive 10% annual growth; earned President's Club recognition.
- Led customer and field marketing across Northwest and Northern California markets, partnering directly with the bottler's Vice President while managing a $2.2M marketing budget and driving integrated sales, customer marketing, and cross-functional execution.

AWARDS

Diageo North America National Accounts Top Team Award | Diageo VP Award | Reckitt Fast Forward Awards | Coca-Cola President's Club

EDUCATION

Carthage College — Bachelor of Arts, Biology