



# Distribution Channels: Understanding and Managing Channels to Market

By Julian Dent

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## Distribution Channels: Understanding and Managing Channels to Market

By Julian Dent

Understanding marketing distribution business models is critical to business success. With distribution now representing around half of almost every industry's activities, optimizing routes to market has never been so important.

Using numerous real-life examples, *Distribution Channels* explores the chain that makes products and services available for market and explains how to make the most of each step of the process. By defining the role and significance of the various partners involved, including distributors, wholesalers, final-tier channel players, retailers and franchise systems, the text provides a clear understanding of the entire go-to-market process, while also explaining channel partners' business models and how to engage with them for effective market access.

*Distribution Channels* covers both the tactical and strategic dimensions of channel economics as well as containing information on accessing and servicing markets and customers, controlling brands, integrating web and online channels, building the value proposition and creating differentiation.

There are specific sections on the economics of working with Distributors (wholesalers), Final tier trade channel players. Retailers and Franchises, including sections on how to gain and build share with each type of channel, and which business measures to emphasise depending on whether the vendor is a new entrant or a market leader.

The section on Franchising, added in the latest edition, provides a rare insight into how large franchise systems work, how to gain access and how to position a supplier to build business with or through a major franchise system.

Comprehensive and clear, this book provides the knowledge needed to improve a business model to ensure maximum market exposure and successful product delivery.

The book is written for the practitioner in industry, but is rigorous enough to have

been adopted as a standard text in several universities teaching marketing and business courses.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

The book provides a valuable summary of the key ratios that can be used to evaluate the business models of relevance to the particular stakeholder groups. Dent provides some great insights into how firms can use their understanding to enhance strategic alliances and create sustainable advantage. (Journal of Product & Brand Management)

#### *Praise for the previous edition:*

"A detailed book which sets out the mechanisms by which channels get product and sell it on at profit." - **ITEuropa**

"This is an outstanding resource presented in an easy-to-read... fashion." -- **John D. Rosen**, Amazon.com reviewer

"[W]hen a Master Builder like Julian Dent...takes 30 years of his experience in building channels and...decides to write *Distribution Channels* it pays to read the book... Our recommendation for vendors and distributors: get the book, read the book, and then re-read it on a regular basis." -**Bob Snyder, Consumer I.T.**

"Logistics expert Julian Dent covers the factors that matter most to retailers and wholesalers and explains how suppliers should structure their commercial propositions to appeal to distributors. This is ...an in-depth examination of the ways goods move to market. Dent offers a guide to how distributors operate and lists the major financial indicators they use to track their performance. *getAbstract* recommends this thorough, instructive manual to distribution professionals and to marketing and sales executives who seek an advanced education about how their products reach their customers." --**getAbstract**

Marketing and sales professionals; business managers; account managers; marketing practitioners; MBA students

#### From the Author

This book represents the best part of thirty years personal and shared experience working with distribution businesses of all types in a variety of roles, starting initially as an accountant with Arthur Andersen, though to the last twenty two years as management consultant with VIA International, a firm that specialises in routes to market strategy and implementation. In that time I have had the opportunity to work with some of the world's leading practitioners in the field of distribution channels. And some pretty terrible ones too. In many ways, it is from the clients and situations where things were going wrong that the sharpest lessons could be drawn.

At VIA, we are lucky enough to spend most of our time consulting for some of the world's most successful brands and companies (yes, they still ask for help), which means we have seen an enormous amount of best

practice. Often though, these companies are challenged by sheer scale, complexity and channel overlap or conflict which prevents them from seeing the business issues quite as clearly as they might. They are usually relieved to find we can bring some clarity and objectivity to the situation and can recommend strategies that are rooted in commercial logic to deliver the outcomes they need. Many of these situations have found their way into this book, albeit usually with a cloak of anonymity. You will find many real companies and situations named and described in the book too, but these insights are based on facts already in the public domain or well known among the trade.

Even more usefully, much of our work requires us to go inside the distribution models of our client's routes to market and investigate the actual measures and business model dynamics operating in the distributors and final tier trade channel players. This provides the basis for much of the insight into each type of channel business model laid out in the different sections of the book.

Finally, we have had the opportunity to work with many smaller companies and businesses, typically following the introduction of an injection of venture finance, which means that all concerned are expecting a sharp up-tick in sales. This growth often has to come from a combination of new customer segments, new markets or new products, which usually means new channels too. There have been some hard lessons learnt along the way about establishing a value proposition that will attract the players in the channels needed to deliver the required growth and these are laid out for you here too.

All of the content in this book has at some time or other been taught to people in real channel roles or distribution businesses, looking for insights, concepts, frameworks, heuristics and practical lessons that they can take away and apply. For many of the people attending these workshops, English has been their second or even third language, so the experience has been a good test of how to communicate business and financial concepts in terms that make sense to people who work in sales and marketing (and sometimes, vice versa too).

#### About the Author

**Julian Dent** is Chairman of VIA International, a specialist routes-to-market consulting firm. He has over thirty years' experience in distribution throughout the world, specializing in channel strategy and implementation. For the past ten years he has been immersed in the field of franchising systems, having led the development and implementation of the global strategic plan for a system with almost 35,000 stores. His clients have included Barclays Bank, BP, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Microsoft, Nokia, Stannah, Subway and Xerox.

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##### **James Shafer:**

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important for all of us. The book *Distribution Channels: Understanding and Managing Channels to Market* seemed to be making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The reserve *Distribution Channels: Understanding and Managing Channels to Market* is not only giving you far more new information but also to be your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship together with the book *Distribution Channels: Understanding and Managing Channels to Market*. You never truly feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

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