International Science Journal of Management, Economics & Finance
2025; 4(3): 105-110
https://isg-journal.com/isjmef/
doi: 10.46299/j.isjmef.20250403.11
ISSN: 2720-6394

Physical availability at international markets of a global consumer brand with high added value

Yavor Karagyozov
University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria
ORCID 0000-0009-0009-4269

Abstract: The present study explores the role of physical availability in enhancing the performance of global consumer brands with high added value across international markets. Physical availability refers to a brand's presence, visibility, and accessibility across various retail channels, and plays a critical role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The manuscript analyzes how optimizing in-store availability, bar visibility, menu presence, and staff advocacy can significantly improve a brand's chances of being selected at the point of sale. The research also emphasizes the importance of adapting distribution strategies to the characteristics of local retail and on-premise environments. In addition, the study explores how revenue growth management (RGM) serves as a tool for balancing long-term brand equity and short-term profitability by leveraging key levers such as price positioning, channel-specific packaging strategies, and promotional effectiveness. This multidisciplinary approach draws from marketing, retail strategy, and brand management practices to present a comprehensive framework for maximizing physical availability. The study offers practical recommendations for brand managers and marketing professionals seeking to expand their brand's reach and impact across global markets. By focusing on the operational and strategic drivers of availability, companies can improve sales performance, consumer engagement, and brand competitiveness internationally.

Keywords: physical availability, global brand, high added value

1. Introduction

The object of the upcoming study is global consumer brand with high added value, and the subject is the analysis of strategies for establishing a physical availability in trade channels and international markets.

The aim of the study is to explore and highlight the strategies that companies can use to establish an international presence and maximize the opportunities for their brands to be preferred while minimizing barriers to purchase.

2. Physical Availability at International Markets

Successfully establishing mental availability among consumers is crucial for integrating an international brand into the shortlist of desired products for potential buyers [1]. This means that consumers should:

- Recognize the brand (brand message reach and distinctive characteristics);
- Assign emotional significance to it (meaningful differentiation);
- Consider it in purchasing situations (contextual relevance).

In short, for a brand to be mentally available, it must come to mind easily when a consumer thinks about making a purchase [2].

Being in the top four most desired brands in a given category significantly increases the likelihood of purchase [1]. However, since all brands on the list are considered acceptable choices, a brand only has a 25% chance of being selected. The final decision is heavily influenced by distinctive physical availability, which includes factors such as availability, visibility, portfolio, and price [1]

According to multiple studies, the average consumer spends only 13 seconds selecting a brand in-store within a given category. This is a short yet critical window in which marketing professionals can turn consideration into purchase [1]. The online decision-making process is not much longer, with the average consumer spending 19 seconds on a purchase, and the majority taking less than 10 seconds. The simple truth is that for most categories, consumers have a pre-established mental shortlist of acceptable brands and therefore spend little time thinking about the actual purchase [3].

Ease and habit are the most common automatic behaviors in consumer decision-making. This means that people tend to either buy the brand they usually purchase or opt for an acceptable alternative that is quick and easy to obtain.

For any company brand development teams must be able to optimize the brand's performance in the retail environment in a way that drives both short-term and long-term sales, while also increasing brand value. To achieve this, strategies must be translated into operational plans targeted at the right retail channels. Within these channels, brands need to leverage physical availability factors, such as availability (distribution) and visibility, to capture the attention of shoppers and persuade them to choose their brand over competitors.

This is why winning at the point of sale is one of the core marketing competencies of international companies and is critical for the success of global brands. Achieving this requires a deep understanding of the mechanisms of physical availability. Creating strong physical availability is a collaborative effort between marketing and sales teams. The goal is to ensure that the brand is as easy as possible to notice and purchase, across as many consumers and buying situations as possible.

In simple terms, the objective is to maximize the likelihood of purchase by reducing obstacles to buying the brand across different retail channels and international markets. Without a strong focus on physical availability, investments in building mental availability will be largely wasted [4].

The consumer is the ultimate end-user of a product. In different categories, this could be:

- A child eating breakfast cereals bought by their parents;
- A husband washing dishes with detergent purchased by his partner;
- A guest at an event drinking a beverage selected by the host.

Regardless of who buys or uses the product, all these individuals are collectively considered consumers.

The buyer is the person who visits a store to purchase a product. In some categories, such as dog food, the buyer is the pet owner, while the consumer is the dog itself [5]. In categories like alcoholic beverages, the buyer and the consumer are the same in over 80% of cases, although this may vary slightly depending on the country, retail channel, and subcategory. The remaining 20% of purchases are made for others - either as gifts or at the request of someone other than the buyer. International off-premise consumption subchannels vary in terms of:

- How many buyers shop there (penetration);
- How frequently they shop (shopping occasions);
- How much they purchase per trip (average basket size) [6].

The total purchase amount per customer depends on the quantity purchased and the average price in the channel. While subchannel sizes differ across markets, the same types of subchannels exist globally. These subchannels influence the shopper's journey, from search and comparison to finding, purchasing, collecting, and delivery, whether online or offline.

Across different markets, there are significant variations in category penetration, accessibility, and channel reach. For example, in the whiskey category, hypermarkets (large-format stores selling groceries and non-food items), supermarkets, and discounters (e.g., Lidl, Kaufland) have strong penetration among whiskey buyers in Europe. In contrast, specialty liquor stores have the highest penetration among whiskey buyers in the U.S. Globally, retail channels focused on home consumption generate the largest revenue share for the whiskey category [7].

When evaluating growth opportunities for brands, especially in cases of limited budgets, executing the right subchannel strategy is crucial to maximizing the brand's reach among buyers and consumers, ensuring business growth.

Companies managing large online marketplaces (e.g., Amazon, Alibaba) are often part of a broader ecosystem that offers consumers advantages beyond traditional shopping experiences. This may include entertainment, social media platforms, and more. Due to their nature, these marketplaces provide both presence and reach, enabling brands to be purchased outside the constraints of traditional retail.

However, these platforms present both opportunities and challenges, as the e-commerce landscape is constantly evolving.

Major global retailers like Walmart, Carrefour, Tesco, Alibaba, Amazon, Edeka, and Aldi carefully select the channels they operate in. Some participate in all channels, while others adopt a more selective approach. Additionally, local key players develop strategies tailored to local buyer needs, further shaping the competitive landscape.

3. Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions in On-Premise Consumption Channels

When examining the HoReCa (Hotels, Restaurants, Cafeterias) channel, research shows that approximately 60% of consumers already know what their first drink will be before entering a venue. This is due to their existing "mental availability list", which includes brands they associate with the occasion (e.g., casual drinks with friends, celebrations, food pairings, etc.).

The remaining 40% can still be influenced before they step into the venue. Additionally, 60% of consumers stick with their first ordered drink throughout their visit, making being the first brand in the consumer's choice set a key factor for growth [8].

During the on-premise experience, four key factors influence brand visibility:

- Menu availability
- Bar Shelf Placement (Back Bar Visibility)
- Staff Influence (Bartenders & Servers)
- In-Venue Promotional Materials

The importance of each factor varies depending on venue type, segment, and consumption occasion. In premium and standard venues, brands prioritize leading positions on menus and seasonal promotional boards.

The number of visible placements where a brand's product packaging appears reinforces brand presence in the consumer's mind at the moment of ordering. In-venue promotions create purchase impulses, while bartender and server recommendations leverage their authority and expertise to influence consumer choices [9].

Menu availability - In many venues, brand selection happens while seated at a table rather than at the bar. In these cases, a strong presence in the menu—with distinct visibility—is crucial. This applies to both food pairings and standalone drinks. In premium venues, cocktail menus and premium brand positioning provide opportunities to "premiumize" consumers, encouraging upselling. Well-crafted descriptions highlighting taste notes encourage experimentation and inspire consumers to try something new instead of defaulting to well-known brands. Visual elements, such as glass shape and size, help consumers perceive value and enhance the drink's appeal. "Instagrammable" cocktails increase social media shareability, reinforcing brand availability online.

Bar Shelf Placement (Back Bar Visibility) - In venues where orders are placed at the bar, the back bar shelves displaying alcohol play a crucial role. In busy bars, consumer interaction with the bar is often under 30 seconds (CGA Peach study, Great Britain, 2016). Consumers may feel pressured to order quickly, making brand visibility essential. If a brand is not seen, consumers are unlikely to ask for it. Category-based shelf organization helps consumers find their preferred brand faster, improving speed and efficiency. Some major brands are placed in the "speed rail" (quick-access section for bartenders), but this reduces visibility for consumers. A secondary presence on the back bar shelf is crucial for triggering impulse purchases, even for well-known brands. In on-premise consumption channels, optimizing brand visibility and leveraging key decision-making factors can significantly impact sales and consumer brand preference.

Staff Influence (Bartenders & Servers) -Bartenders and servers play a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions at the point of sale. Their recommendations can directly influence what consumers order, making them key brand ambassadors in on-premise consumption.

Engagement Strategies for Bartenders & Staff - To maximize bartender influence, brands invest in training programs, competitions, and motivational rewards (e.g., travel experiences). These initiatives help bartenders: enhance their skills and industry knowledge, advance their careers within the bar industry, and engage more deeply with premium brands, shaping trends in the alcohol sector.

High-end venues employ top-tier bartenders who set industry trends. By targeting these locations, brands can strengthen their availability in the premium bar segment—a space dominated by professional, modern bartenders.

Creating Sustainable Engagement

- Bartenders enjoy fun and interactive experiences, so brand programs should integrate entertainment and excitement to foster engagement;
- Long-term initiatives should aim to build a community around bartenders, keeping them continuously involved through industry tips, professional development, and career growth opportunities;
- Brand-focused but balanced—If programs focus solely on selling specific brands, they may be perceived as sales-driven rather than genuine career-building resources. Effective initiatives should blend brand education with broader industry knowledge, making them more credible and appealing to bartenders.

By investing in bartenders' skill development, professional growth, and overall experience, brands can cultivate loyal advocates who naturally promote their products through authentic, expert recommendations.

4. Revenue Growth Management (RGM) in International Brands

RGM focuses on finding the optimal balance between short-term and long-term business value. If this balance is not properly managed, companies risk:

- Increasing sales volume but with low margins and minimal profit;
- Maintaining high margins but experiencing declining consumer demand.

The true success of RGM lies in the proper allocation of resources so that both volume and gross margin are optimized for maximum long-term brand value [10].

RGM provides a clear strategy for how to invest margin to increase volume. This is key to sustainable growth as it helps companies understand where and how to allocate funds to ensure future expansion [10].

Leading companies use RGM as a tool for:

- Pricing strategy planning and promotional strategies.
- Portfolio optimization – selecting the highest-value products.
- Investing in key markets and channels with the highest potential.

How does RGM generate financial opportunities?

- The investment potential through RGM exceeds the marketing budget or profit alone.
- A realistic goal for companies is 0.5% - 1.0% incremental turnover growth per year [11].
- Even a price increase of €1 per transport unit (e.g., a case of 12 bottles of alcohol) can generate significant additional revenue on an international scale.

RGM is not just a trendy industry concept – it is a key driver of growth for international brands. Successful revenue growth management enables companies to simultaneously increase profitability, stimulate sales volume, and ensure long-term business sustainability.

The main questions that RGM tries to address:

Most commonly understood as price management, RGM also includes other components of trading costs, which, in combination with the pricing components, provide a broader view of the relationships between volume, price and margin [12]. While running a business, there are certain questions that should be asked:

- Is the company selling the right products in the right channels to meet buyers' missions with profit-making?
- What is the competitive base and promotional pricing strategy?
- Is the overall promotional strategy succeeding in attracting new buyers?
- Is the company selling the right products in the right channels to meet buyers' missions with profit acquisition?
- How to improve the ROI (return on investment) of promotions, defined as additional profit above the base profit?
- How to improve the customer mix to maximize the company's commercial investment? [13]

5. Pillars of Revenue Growth Management (RGM)

In order to provide an analytical framework, the above questions can be regrouped into five RGM pillars. They begin with the decisions that need to be made regarding: is the price worth it for the consumer, motivating distributors and/or retailers, price, merchandising, to sell the given brand [14].

These fundamental questions are divided into five key decision-making areas, with the first ones being more closely related to the consumer, and the middle and end ones being more focused on the performance of distributors and retailers:

Price Positioning

Price positioning determines the value of the brand (emotional/rational/social) in the eyes of the consumer, helps to understand the right price competitive group and create appropriate price differences in the retail sector against these competitive substitutes (brands). It also helps to understand when prices can be raised to build margins or when margins need to be cut to protect the brand's market share.

Channel Architecture, Packaging, and Price

This architecture aims to provide the right packaging in the right sales channel at the right time and at the right price [13]. It considers the price relationships between brands in a brand portfolio and those in the context of competing brands across size and channel [15].

Promotional effectiveness

Promotional effectiveness seeks to optimize the investments made against the returns received from the activity. At its core, it seeks to find the best combination of depth (the amount of discount on the price) and frequency (how often this discount is made) in relation to the products offered [15].

Return on Investment

Return on investment is a key metric for promotional effectiveness, promotional share, and sales growth. These metrics maintain a healthy balance between short-term profit and long-term brand health:

- customer mix management;
- commercial terms and distribution margin.

Globally, companies manage contracts with distributors and retailers. While each country has laws that determine a company's ability to manage the sale of its products, there are many cases where, as part of the contracts in question, a company can agree with its business partners on promotions, volume targets, merchandising incentives, to improve business. This area aims to ensure that incentives and margins are relevant to the company's returns [16]. The distribution margin is part of the evaluation of partners in the path to market.

The relationships between the five key areas are not expected to be consistent, as no two markets are the same, nor do they face similar challenges and/or opportunities. Although businesses may appear the same on the surface, the reasons for achieving results can be very different. RGM analysis provides an opportunity to analyze challenges and target appropriate opportunities.

6. Conclusions

As a result of the analysis, it can be concluded that the highlighted techniques are extremely useful for companies that wish to maximize their success at the points of sale and expand their presence in international markets and international sales channels.

One of the key aspects of the output model from the analysis is optimizing the physical availability of the product in sales channels in international markets and minimizing distribution obstacles, which can lead to significant sales growth.

Another important aspect of the analysis is building strong distribution and brand visibility, which can create significant competitive advantages. Proper product price positioning and strategic promotion management are also critical to the successful management of international brands.

This study presents a picture of success that can serve as a tool for measuring the results achieved and for determining the additional measures needed to achieve greater success for international brands.

Thus, it can be concluded that the above techniques can be very useful for companies that wish to increase their performance and presence in retail outlets. In conclusion, this can serve as a valuable practical tool for managing the marketing activities of global companies, helping to achieve significant sales growth and improve their competitive advantages in international markets.

References:

1) Sharp, B. (2010). What Marketers Don't Know.
2) Holt, D.B. (2004). How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding. Harvard Business Press.
3) Assael, H. (2015). Consumer Behavior: A Strategic Approach, 10th Edition.
4) Walker, Jr., Orville, C. and Mullins, J. W. (2021). Marketing Strategy: A Decision-Focused Approach.
5) Kotler, Ph. and Keller, Кл L. (2015). Marketing Management.
6) Berkhout (2012). Constant Retail Marketing Strategy: Delivering Shopper Delight.
7) Green, M. C., & Keegan, W. J. (2019). Global Marketing Tenth Edition by Mark C. *Green, Warren J. Keegan. University of California Irvine*.
8) Rothbaum, N. (2017). Business of Spirits: How Savvy Marketers, Innovative Distillers, and Entrepreneurs Changed How We Drink.
9) Tungate, M. (2009). Luxury World: The Past, Present and Future of Luxury Brands.
10) Harrison, J. and Albright, T. (2019). Revenue growth management: Transformations and opportunities.
11) Hattaway, J. (2017). The New Era of Revenue Growth Management: Best Practices for Optimizing Revenue Strategy. SAGE Publications.
12) Tevelson, R. (2018). Revenue Growth Management: How to Navigate the 5 Key Levers for Maximum Profit.
13) Blessington, M. (2016). Revenue Growth Management: Optimizing Pricing to Drive Profitability.
14) Frick, D. (2020). Revenue Growth Management: Transforming Your Business for Sustainable Profitable Growth.
15) Farris, P. W. (2010). Marketing Metrics: The Definitive Guide to Measuring Marketing.
16) Vincent, G. and Dubé, JP. (2010). Revenue Growth Management: Transformations and Tools.