

Introduction

In an increasingly competitive grocery retail space, the successful execution of new product launches is critical to sustaining innovation, sales growth, and customer relevance. New product launches require strategic planning, cross-functional alignment & integration, agile go-to-market execution, and performance tracking through post-launch optimization. One of RDD's core sales agency competencies is executing best-in-class merchandising results, planogram centers of excellence, and accelerating new item speed-to-shelf ACV results for our client brands. The success of new and innovative products has many potential obstacles; however, this white paper will draw on our sales agency's 25+ years of experience in the field, and give guidance on how to execute flawlessly from start to finish, and efficiently track ROI post launch with retail execution, data analysis, and communication.

The Approach: Five-phase Framework for Seamless Execution

New product development and planned, expeditious launches are essential for business continuity and market leadership. However, organizations often struggle to coordinate the many moving parts involved in new item introductions. A seamless execution strategy reduces time-to-market, enhances customer satisfaction, and maximizes return on investment. There are 5 critical steps to follow for elevated success and performance.

Phase 1: Strategic Planning

- **Market Research:** Gather insights to align the product proposition with underserved customer interests and needs. Incorporate data and trends to build a strong story.
- **Business Case Development:** Validate the opportunity scale, estimate ROI, and align with corporate branding strategy.
- **Launch Roadmap:** Define critical scorecard milestones, owners, dependencies, deliverables and timelines.

Phase 2: Cross-Functional Alignment

New product launches require the coordination of multiple teams, including product management, engineering, marketing, sales, operations, analytics, and support. It is imperative to ensure that all stakeholders from these teams are aligned and cross-engaged. Creating clear roles and responsibilities will hold all parties accountable and fuel the best opportunity for success. Hold periodic check-ins to keep everyone on track and on schedule.

Phase 3: Agile Development and Testing

- **Minimum Viable Product:** Build iteratively to validate features early, fail early and fail fast. It is crucial to make product development enhancements, formulation changes and quality adjustments prior to conducting qualitative and quantitative testing.
- **Customer acceptance:** Ensure product quality and usability. Focus groups featuring in-market customers, allowing them to see, feel, and taste test the product. Take all feedback constructively, non-biased, and as a steppingstone for validation. Leverage feedback to adapt quickly to prepare for launch.
- **Tap into all information sources,** to include in-store sales agency auditing, to provide a comprehensive portfolio of timely and useful information.

Phase 4: Go-to-Market Execution & Speed-to-Shelf compliance

- **Launch Campaigns:** Coordinate digital, in-store, PR, and influencer campaigns.
- **Sales Enablement:** Equip sales teams with training, scripts, POS signage and B2B selling collateral.
- **Channel Readiness:** Ensure that all sales and distribution channels are primed, trained and enthusiastic.

Phase 5: Post-Launch Optimization and Sales Accelerators

- **Performance Monitoring:** Track adoption, engagement, and retention metrics.
- **Customer Feedback:** Collect and act on user feedback to refine the product.
- **Customer HQ Reinforcement:** Timely, transparent and proactive updates with customers to track progress and adjust programming when necessary.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Apply lessons learned to future launches.

The RDD Associates Difference: Perishables Merchandising, Elevated.

With over 25 years of dedicated merchandising expertise, and field sales associates providing critical “boots on the ground,” RDD has mastered the speed-to-shelf success and ACV building exercise for our client partner brands. Applying a multi-pronged approach, best-in-class sales agencies act as new product launch specialists for every step leading up to the first PO and delivery to the retail stores.

After shipment, the activation baton gets handed off to Field Sales, striving for 85%+ ACV goal within the first 6-8 weeks of the launch. With that goal in mind, it is important to remember that not all stores are created equally; footprints and planograms vary based on location, store size, department sets, and customer base. RDD applies analytics to project an aspirational “high

water mark” for each product launch, setting realistic expectations for all parties to work towards, and giving the best chance for mutual success.

Our approach is straightforward and disciplined, from backend setup to shelf placement: data creation and compliance, item codes systematically established, planogram captivity development, store-by-store white sheet orders and chain distribution commitments, and store-level planogram reset and surge assistance. As new products are delivered to stores for the first time, RDD retail specialists merchandise them on-shelf in accordance with the planogram, place shelf tags, and deploy additional POS materials to catch the customer’s eye.

After the first 4 weeks of retail execution, the RDD leadership team utilizes syndicated data from Circana and retailers’ data platforms, along with store stocking reports to identify voids. Once opportunity store locations have been targeted, the RDD retail team executes a continuous store “blitz” to correct the voids. Results are monitored by taking display pictures, conducting “store calls” on a weekly/monthly basis, and consistent communication. Results are shared with our client brand partners, and we collaborate on monthly retail execution standards and initiatives to solidify the products’ success. Coupled with targeted promotional activity, secondary merchandising displays, IRC placements, and retail auditing missions throughout the year, RDD’s proven product launch model is recognized as best-in-class.

James Perillo IV is a VP Senior Director of Client Services at RDD Associates, responsible for managing a portfolio of top-ranked Dairy, Frozen and Produce clients in the NY Metro area. He is a member of the Eastern Produce Council and NFRA Frozen Food Council and has received multiple Golden Penguin Awards for merchandising excellence. When he’s not calling on clients or building new business, James loves spending time with his wife & daughter, perfecting his golf game, and serving up his signature rigatoni with spicy vodka sauce. To learn more about the latest trends in perishables, James’ food industry expertise or **RDD’s ELEVATED service solutions**, please visit our website or contact: info@rddassociates.com.