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Acosta is an outsourced sales and marketing agency serving CPG companies and retailers in the U.S. and Canada. Scott, who until recently served as vice president, shopper marketing & business development at Kimberly-Clark, is a 2011 Shopper Marketing Hall of Fame honoree.

Another in a continuing series of industry dialogos.

To contribute or comment to this industry dialog, contact: jkramer@rocktenn.com

You are credited with driving Kimberly Clark's work in the shopper marketing discipline. What was the biggest challenge you faced?

Shopper marketing was and is a team sport at Kimberly-Clark, and I count myself fortunate to have been put in a position to lead that team in terms of building the capability. We had very supportive senior management, starting with our president of North American Sales, so there was a lot of buy-in, upfront, for what we were doing. But you need to be able to build the case for change: media has fragmented and a lot of purchase decisions are being made both in-store and along the path to purchase. You also must make sure that you are measuring and can demonstrate wins along the way.

Kimberly-Clark's approach to shopper marketing hinged on the "and." That means, whenever we can, we will try to both build brand equity and differentiate the retailer. One of the best examples was the *Toy Story 3* program executed last year. K-C achieved tremendous brand results from a share and volume standpoint. It was recognized by Disney's North American Consumer Products group as its Marketing Program of the Year, and by Disney's Food, Health & Beauty group as its Retail Program of the Year. It was highly integrated along the entire path to purchase with direct mail, FSIs, special packaging, and a digital engagement where parents could access content through a special code for Disney character phone calls for their children. But, again, the challenge was putting the "and" in there, so a lot of work was done by K-C to customize the program by retailer.

As you pulled all the execution and communication pieces together, what capabilities and skill sets did you find missing from the shopper marketing supplier side?

You could get individual pieces done really well — insights, ideation, program execution, post-promotion analysis — but

you had to engage multiple agencies. I couldn't find it all under one roof. So one big reason I went to Acosta was that it was the model that I'd always been looking for: a one-stop shop with deep knowledge of the retailer.

Much is written about manufacturer insights, organizational structures, and turning insights into action. Not so much about the readiness of retailers to execute against shopper marketing initiatives. What has to happen for the retail community to activate with excellence?

To me, it all starts with objectives. *What are we trying to accomplish? How will we measure? Are we clear on what success looks like?* Then, the clearer retailers can get on their shoppers the better, because then we can truly see how they intersect with the clients' brands. And finally, merchandising and marketing need to be better integrated at the retailer. All too often a chain's marketing people will fall in love with a program, but if it hinges on in-store support, sometimes merchandising will throw up roadblocks. I do think retailers are starting to get it, but it does vary a lot.

You recently left the corporate world to join Acosta. What unique and different approaches do you think you can bring to the shopper marketing discipline?

Acosta has 18,000 employees and represents about 60% of the #1 or #2 brands in the grocery world. On the retailer side, we have a lot of "feet on the street" — almost 13,000 employees — including headquarters representation at every major food chain, in-store merchandising, and a separate team called "sets & projects" that handle special changes like re-sets, product recalls and so on. Acosta gets a lot of insights into what will and what won't work at those chains. As someone who has built his career on the "and" — marrying brand and retailer objectives — you can imagine how excited I am to have access to that kind of data.