Category

Commercial Excellence

Distributor & Reseller Channel Commercial Excellence Playbook

Managing distributor relationships around genuine sell-through, not just sell-in volume

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
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- Administrator
- 11 January 2023
- 3 minute(s)

Overview

A framework for distributor and reseller channel commercial excellence — managing channel relationships and incentives around genuine sell-through to end customers, avoiding the common failure mode of channel programs optimized for sell-in volume that produces inventory buildup without genuine end-customer demand.

What's the difference between sell-in and sell-through, and why

does the distinction matter for channel commercial excellence? Sell-in measures product sold to the distributor or reseller; sell-through measures product actually sold to end customers — a channel program optimized purely for sell-in can produce inventory buildup

in the channel without genuine end-customer demand, eventually creating a painful correction when channel inventory has to clear.

What's the most common sign a channel program is over-focused on

sell-in? Growing channel inventory levels relative to actual sell-through rate, often accompanied by aggressive sell-in incentives that reward distributors for purchasing volume regardless of their actual ability to move product to end customers.

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