WWW.IJRPR.COM

International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

A Study of Sales Management, Retailer Coverage and Distribution Practices at Haleon: Evidence from the Baramati Market

Sainath Asaram Sakhare

School of Business, Indira University, Pune, Maharashtra, India
E-mail: sainathsakhare6@gmail.com

ABSTRACT :

This paper presents a descriptive account of field-level sales management, retailer coverage and distribution practices observed during an on-the-job training placement with Haleon India in the Baramati market, Maharashtra, from 15 May to 15 July 2026. The study is based on the author's participation in distributor and retailer servicing, direct field observations and informal retailer interactions. Activities included reviewing distributor stock, accompanying the salesperson on retailer routes, identifying outlet replenishment requirements, collecting orders, following up on payments where applicable, and communicating damaged-product or other service issues to the relevant team. The draft field record indicates approximately 25 outlet visits on a normal working day; this is an indicative operational estimate and not a verified count of unique retailers or a formal sample size. The observations are organised around five themes: distributor coordination, planned outlet coverage, retailer-specific requirements, relationship-oriented servicing and issue resolution. The study highlights the practical interdependence of these activities but does not estimate their causal effects on sales, profitability or retailer loyalty. It concludes with operational recommendations concerning stock visibility, route discipline, outlet-level follow-up and structured issue tracking. The findings are limited to one territory and the internship period.

Keywords: sales management; retailer coverage; distribution management; consumer healthcare; retailer relationships; channel coordination; Baramati

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer healthcare products reach end users through distribution networks involving manufacturers, distributors and retail outlets. Within this channel, field sales personnel connect product availability at the distributor level with the replenishment requirements of individual retailers. Their work may include checking stock, planning outlet visits, collecting orders, discussing product information and schemes, following up on payments, and coordinating the resolution of service issues. These activities form part of day-to-day sales execution and influence the quality and continuity of retailer servicing.

This paper examines these operational activities through the author's on-the-job training (OJT) experience with Haleon India in Baramati, Maharashtra. The placement took place from 15 May to 15 July 2026. The author accompanied the field salesperson and participated in assigned market activities, including distributor stock review and retailer visits. The paper is intended as a bounded descriptive field account; it does not claim to represent all Haleon territories or to establish statistical relationships between sales practices and business outcomes.

1.1 Research problem

The operational problem addressed is how field sales personnel maintain regular retailer coverage and respond to varying outlet requirements while working within the availability constraints of the distributor. In practice, the salesperson must coordinate route execution, stock-related discussions, order collection and follow-up on retailer concerns. The present study documents how these activities were carried out in the observed Baramati market.

1.2 Significance of the study

The study provides a territory-level account relevant to sales management and distribution-channel coordination. It connects concepts such as territory planning, personal selling, channel relationships and customer servicing with activities observed during field training. Its contribution is practical and descriptive rather than statistical.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Sales and territory management

Sales management involves planning, directing and evaluating the activities of a sales force. Territory design and route planning help organise customer contact, while field supervision and performance review support the execution of sales objectives. In a retail distribution setting, a route must allow sufficient time for outlet coverage, stock assessment, retailer discussion and follow-up. The observed field routine illustrates the operational importance of organising retailer calls rather than treating each visit as an isolated transaction (Jobber & Lancaster, 2015; Still, Cundiff, & Govoni, 2017).

2.2 Distribution and channel coordination

Distribution channels depend on coordination among organisations that perform different but connected activities. Distributors hold and supply inventory, while retailers maintain stocks closer to consumers and communicate local requirements. Anderson and Narus (1990) examine working partnerships between distributor and manufacturer firms and highlight the relevance of cooperation and trust in channel relationships. From a supply-chain perspective, the movement and availability of products depend on the coordination of flows and information across channel members (Bowersox, Closs, Cooper, & Bowersox, 2013). The present field account focuses on the distributor–retailer interface.

2.3 Personal selling and retailer relationships

Personal selling involves direct interaction with buyers to understand requirements, communicate relevant information and support purchase decisions. Repeated interactions can contribute to the development of business relationships. Morgan and Hunt (1994) identify commitment and trust as central constructs in successful relationship marketing. Anderson and Narus (1990) also discuss cooperation and trust in distributor–manufacturer working partnerships. In the retail context observed here, relationship-oriented servicing included listening to retailer requirements, discussing stock needs and communicating unresolved issues. These observations are consistent with relationship-marketing concepts, but they do not independently measure trust, satisfaction or retailer retention.

2.4 Research gap and study focus

Existing sales and channel-management literature provides frameworks for understanding territory planning, channel coordination and relationship development. However, these frameworks do not describe the specific sequence of distributor stock review, route execution, outlet-level order collection and retailer issue handling in every local market. This paper documents that combination of activities in one consumer healthcare territory. It does not claim that the topic has not been studied previously; rather, it offers a local descriptive account of the observed process.

3. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

- To describe the field sales and distributor-to-retailer servicing process observed in the Baramati market.
- To examine the role of regular retailer coverage and route planning in day-to-day sales execution.
- To identify observed product-availability and retailer-servicing challenges.
- To understand how retailer interactions and issue follow-up formed part of routine field servicing.
- To develop practical recommendations for stock coordination, retailer feedback and issue management.

3.2 Research design and setting

A descriptive observational field-study approach was adopted. The study is based on the author's OJT placement with Haleon India in Baramati, Maharashtra, from 15 May to 15 July 2026. The author accompanied the assigned salesperson during market visits and participated in distributor and retailer servicing activities. The field record refers to approximately 25 outlet visits on a normal working day. This figure is an approximate description recorded in the draft material; it should not be interpreted as a verified number of unique outlets, a respondent sample or a measure of territory penetration.

3.3 Sources of information and method of analysis

Primary information for this descriptive account came from direct field observations, participation in assigned sales activities and informal interactions with retailers during market visits. The observed activities included checking distributor stock, discussing retailer requirements, collecting orders, payment follow-up where applicable and communicating damaged-product or other service concerns to the relevant team. Secondary conceptual information was drawn from published books and journal articles on sales management, distribution channels and relationship marketing. The field observations were grouped into recurring operational themes and interpreted in relation to this literature.

No structured questionnaire, probability sampling procedure, controlled experiment or transaction-level sales dataset was used for this paper. No

statistical hypothesis testing or causal estimation was undertaken. The study therefore reports descriptive observations only and does not present invented percentages, sales-growth estimates or significance tests.

3.4 Field activity sequence

The documented field routine began with a visit to the distributor to review product availability and stock position. The author then accompanied the salesperson on the planned market route. At retailer outlets, the team reviewed existing stock and requirements, discussed relevant products and offers, collected orders where required and followed up on service issues. Concerns involving damaged products or exchanges were communicated to the relevant team or distributor for resolution. The internship record indicates that market activity generally concluded at approximately 4:00 p.m. No company sales application was used by the author; accordingly, the paper does not rely on application-based activity records.

4. RESULTS AND FIELD OBSERVATIONS

4.1 Summary of observed activities

Table 1 summarises the main operational activities described in the field record.

Table 1. Summary of field activities observed in the Baramati market

Operational area	Field observation
Retailer coverage	The draft field record indicates approximately 25 outlet visits on a normal working day; the figure is indicative and not a verified unique-outlet count.
Distributor coordination	Distributor stock was reviewed before market visits to understand product availability.
Order management	Orders were collected after considering outlet requirements and existing stock.
Retailer servicing	Retailer concerns, payment follow-up where applicable, and damaged-product or exchange issues were communicated to the relevant team.
Route execution	The author accompanied the assigned salesperson on planned market visits; route distance and time-per-call were not measured.

4.2 Retailer coverage and route planning

Regular retailer visits were a central part of the observed territory-servicing process. Retailers differed in their existing stock, immediate requirements and the time needed for discussion. The planned route provided a structure for visiting outlets and reviewing their requirements. However, the field record does not contain verified route distances, travel times, time spent per call or a complete list of unique outlets. It is therefore not possible to calculate route efficiency or territory coverage rates from the available information.

4.3 Distributor stock and product availability

Reviewing distributor stock before entering the market helped the field team understand which products were available for potential retailer orders. This coordination was relevant when retailers requested replenishment or when particular products were unavailable. A product not available through the channel may create a service gap and may lead a retailer or consumer to consider an alternative. Nevertheless, the study does not contain systematic stock-out logs or financial records, and it cannot establish the frequency, duration or sales value of product shortages.

4.4 Retailer-specific requirements

Retailers had different stock positions and product requirements. The field team therefore reviewed outlet-level requirements before collecting orders. The observations suggest that a retailer-specific discussion is more appropriate than assuming that every outlet requires the same order quantity or product mix. These are field impressions and were not independently validated using a structured retailer-demand dataset.

4.5 Retailer relationships and problem resolution

Retailer servicing involved more than order collection. Conversations included understanding requirements, discussing product-related matters and following up on concerns. Damaged-product and exchange-related issues required communication with the relevant team or distributor. Repeated interaction appeared to provide opportunities for continuity and follow-up. However, no formal measure of retailer satisfaction, trust, retention or repeat purchase was collected; therefore, relationship outcomes cannot be quantified.

4.6 Scope of the field evidence

The available material supports a description of the activities in which the author participated. It does not support claims about market share, sales

growth, retailer loyalty, financial returns or comparative performance against other brands. Such outcomes would require verified outlet-level, transaction-level or survey data beyond the records available for this paper.

5. DISCUSSION

The field observations indicate that retailer coverage, distributor stock coordination and retailer servicing are interconnected parts of routine sales execution. A planned route creates opportunities to identify outlet requirements. Distributor stock information helps the salesperson understand whether those requirements can be serviced. Retailer conversations provide immediate information about existing stock and replenishment needs, while follow-up on damaged products and other concerns supports continuity of service. This interpretation is consistent with channel-partnership literature that emphasises cooperation and trust among channel members (Anderson & Narus, 1990) and relationship marketing literature that highlights commitment and trust in ongoing exchanges (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

The distinction between field activity and business outcome is important. An approximate daily outlet-visit figure describes activity, but does not by itself establish productive-call rate, order conversion, unique outlet reach or territory penetration. Similarly, the presence of retailer interaction does not prove an increase in retailer loyalty or sales. Such conclusions would require reliable records of visits, orders, order fulfilment, sales value, stock availability and retailer feedback over a defined period. The present paper therefore interprets the field experience within the limits of the available evidence.

6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Review distributor stock before the daily market route and identify products requiring replenishment or follow-up.
- Maintain outlet-level visit records so that regular coverage can be distinguished from the number of unique retailers reached.
- Record retailer replenishment requirements and distinguish orders collected from orders actually supplied.
- Track damaged-product, expiry and replacement concerns with a responsible contact and a closure date.
- Use a simple territory review to monitor outlet visits, productive calls, order fulfilment and unresolved retailer issues, subject to company policy and data permissions.
- Collect structured retailer feedback periodically to supplement informal field observations.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is limited to one market and a two-month internship period. The author participated as a sales intern and accompanied the assigned salesperson; the observations therefore reflect the assigned routes and activities rather than an independent audit of the entire territory. The approximate daily outlet-visit figure is not a verified count of unique retailers. No structured questionnaire, probability sample, independent consumer study or transaction-level sales dataset was available. The paper cannot estimate population-level percentages, test statistical relationships or establish causal effects on sales, profitability or retailer loyalty.

Future research could use anonymised outlet-level visit logs, distributor stock records, stock-out reports, order and fulfilment data, and structured retailer surveys. A longer observation period and comparison across multiple territories could help examine whether visit frequency, product availability and issue-resolution time are associated with measurable sales and service outcomes. Any such study should define its sample, measures and data-collection procedure before analysis.

8. CONCLUSION

The Baramati field experience illustrates that practical sales management in consumer healthcare distribution combines distributor stock review, planned retailer coverage, outlet-specific order collection, relationship-oriented servicing and issue follow-up. The activities observed during the Haleon internship show how coordination between distributor stock and retailer requirements forms part of day-to-day market execution. The study provides a descriptive account of these practices and offers practical suggestions for stock review, outlet-level tracking and service-issue management. It does not measure the effect of these practices on revenue, market share or retailer loyalty. Further research using verified operational and retailer-level data is required to test those relationships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the guidance and support received from the faculty and the field sales team during the on-the-job training period. The author also acknowledges the cooperation of the distributor and retail outlets visited during the field placement. The acknowledgement does not imply endorsement of the analysis or conclusions by Haleon or any participating organisation.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. C., & Narus, J. A. (1990). A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships. Journal of Marketing, 54(1), 42–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299005400103
- Bowersox, D. J., Closs, D. J., Cooper, M. B., & Bowersox, J. C. (2013). Supply Chain Logistics Management (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill

Education.

- Jobber, D., & Lancaster, G. (2015). Selling and Sales Management (10th ed.). Pearson.
- Morgan, R. M., & Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. Journal of Marketing, 58(3), 20–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299405800302
- Still, R. R., Cundiff, E. W., & Govoni, N. A. P. (2017). Sales Management: Decisions, Strategies and Cases (5th ed.). Pearson Education.