A method for building new marketing channels

The case of "door-to-door" in dairy products

Matheus Alberto Cônsoli
EESC – School of Production Engineering, University of São Paulo, São Carlos, Brazil, and

Marcos Fava Neves
FEARP – School of Economics, Business and Accountability, University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, Brazil

Abstract

Purpose – The aim is to describe the analysis conducted by a leading company in the dairy (yogurt and fermented milk) sector in Brazil regarding the decision to implement a door-to-door distribution channel, in which one of the authors was involved.

Design/methodology/approach – A brief overview of the marketing channels is presented and the descriptive case study method was used to present the main company information.

Findings – The paper describes the decision-making process that was used to define how basic services like breaking bulks, product variety, special convenience and wait time should be performed in this case. It also emphasizes the main channel decisions, the channel objectives and the chosen door-to-door structure for the company described in the case study.

Research limitations/implications – Even though case analysis has a theoretical background, the decision process used here cannot be generalized, being only a guide for academics and practitioners about how company A addressed the direct marketing issue.

Originality/value – The paper presents specific analysis of the Brazilian yogurt market and use as theoretical background the strategic environmental analysis. As a real case, it can be useful for practitioners as reference for decision making, as well for teaching purposes for case studies with college and MBA students. Finally, the paper presents as main contribution a "method for developing new marketing channels".

Keywords Brazil, Dairy products, Decision making, Distribution channels and markets

Paper type Case study

Introduction

The dairy sector is an important food segment in Brazil and has experienced an accelerated consumption increase since the economic stabilization in the middle of the 1990s. Moreover, together with retailing development and competition among companies; market concentration both on manufacture and retail has increased, and businesses have tended to develop new marketing strategies (i.e. channel management) in order to obtain competitive advantage.

This paper focuses on the case of a leading multinational company in the yogurt market, called here company A, which was searching for solutions to improve its distribution in retail channels and planning to implement a door-to-door channel strategy. The comparative analysis here focuses on two major competitors with previous expertise at implementing this kind of channel strategy. These competitors

Direct Marketing: An International Journal
Vol. 2 No. 3, 2008
pp. 174-185

1750-5933
DOI 10.1108/17505930810899320

are also multinational companies. Company B is one of the largest food companies in Brazil, which also has yogurt in its portfolio. Company C is a traditional dairy company that was the pioneer in door-to-door distribution in this segment.

The decision process and analysis conducted by company A from the middle of 2004 and into 2005 is described, before the pilot projects and other rollouts implementations, when one of the authors was involved in the project. Although the project was implemented, by the end of 2006 and middle 2007, secondary data and media information shows that company A decided to not continue developing door-to-door channel strategies, instead focusing channel strategies on retail channels. Before describing the companies' cases and presenting the channel analysis, we first present an overview of the channel theory regarding channel structure, marketing flows and the main channel decisions, in order to provide readers a brief overview of the channel literature.

Structure, components, and importance of the distribution channels

One of the definitions of distribution channels encompasses "... a set of interdependent organizations involved in the process of making available a product or service for use or consumption" (Coughlan *et al.*, 2002). The purpose of the marketing channel is to satisfy the end-users in the market, whose objective is to use or consume the product or service that is being sold.

The distribution and marketing channels consist of three entities: producers or manufacturers, intermediaries, and consumers. The producers and (food) manufacturers are channel components typically involved in the creation of products. They are the creators of the product's brand, highly visible, and are considered as channel origin. The intermediaries are "... all the institutions and individuals that facilitate the task of the manufacturer to promote, sell, and distribute the products to their end consumers" (Dias, 1997). Consumers are classified as marketing channel members because they can perform and frequently do perform channel flows, as do the other members of the channel (Coughlan *et al.*, 2002).

The importance of intermediaries increases in the channel structure as they adjust assortment discrepancies between the product supply from the manufacturer and the demand from the consumer. The discrepancy results from the fact that the manufacturers produce a large quantity of a limited variety of goods, whereas the consumers desire, generally, a limited quantity of a wide range of goods. Bucklin (1996 *apud* Coughlan, 2001) argues that the channel systems exist and remain viable over time, performing tasks that reduce the search, waiting time, storage, and other end-user costs that are called channel services. He specifies four types of services: bulk breaking; spatial convenience; reduction of wait or delivery time, and variety and assortment of products. The definition of these services is important because they influence the channel objectives and structure.

Distribution channels perform the functions of facilitating search, adjusting discrepancy of supply, breaking bulks, creation of routines and reduction of contacts (transaction costs). They can also be responsible for creation of competitive advantage to the company, making possible the access to a wide net of intermediaries and consumers, supplying services, reducing the distribution's costs, accessing the target market by using advanced technologies (Alderson, 1954; Bucklin, 1966; Berman, 1966; Wilkinson, 2001; Coughlan *et al.*, 2002).

Flows and functions of the marketing channels

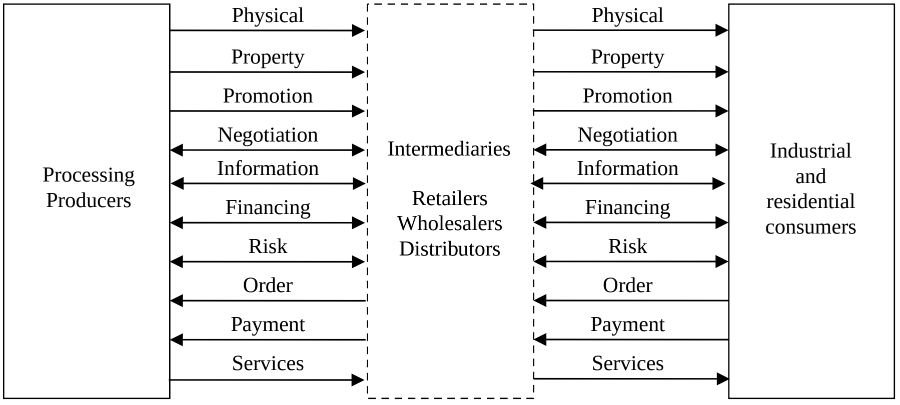
All the participants involved in a distribution channel perform some functions and add value to the channel. In general, a manufacturer can, at his discretion, opt to eliminate an intermediary from any level of the channel: "... though an intermediary can be eliminated, its respective functions cannot" (Semenik and Bomossy, 1995, p. 546). Stern *et al.* (1996) comment that all the flows or functions of the distribution channel are indispensable; at least one institution of the system must assume responsibility for them.

The importance of the intermediaries (e.g. middlemen) in distribution and the problems related to the performance of logistical activities in marketing channels was probably first addressed by Shaw (1912, 1915). This then became the functionalist theory of marketing, developed by Alderson and Cox (1948), who described the basic functions performed in the marketing channels. Stern *et al.* (1996) group these functions into flows of transactions performed in sequence by the channel members. These authors recognize that these flows can even become channels with few very complex levels and a single function can be performed by more than one level of the marketing channel.

Coughlan *et al.* (2002) and Kotler and Armstrong (1993) present a classification of independent flows that are performed by the channel members. In general, the models seek to describe the functions and flows of the channels as a whole, involving storage, promotion, service, negotiation, financing, risk, information, order, and payment. Marketing flows are considered part of the distribution channel. For different channel service levels, members perform these flows and must assume their costs. Figure 1 sums up the marketing flows and costs.

Decisions on the distribution channel

Developing new channel's structure and function processes demands a complex set of strategic decisions that will determine the form in which a channel is organized, how the flows will be performed and how the demands of the end consumer will be satisfied. It is a strategic decision in the micro-universe of each firm, in constant pursuit of increased



Note: The dashed line in the intermediaries shows that the flows can be performed from the producer to the intermediary, from the intermediary to the consumer, from the producer to the consumer or shared among them

Source: Lewis (1968, p. 140), Rosenbloom (1999, p. 16) and Coughlan *et al*. (2002, p. 87)

Figure 1.
Marketing flows in distribution channels

profits and lower costs. At the same time, it is important at the macro level when involving inductive and restrictive environmental forces responsible for the organizational changes.

Kotler and Armstrong (1993) comment that decisions on selecting appropriate marketing channels are among the most important that a firm must make. The decisions related to the firms' sales force and to advertising depend on the persuasion, training, and motivation that the resellers need.

Decisions on needs of consumer service

The structure of marketing channels is obviously developed to serve the consumers and should begin with knowledge of their purchasing habits rather than with the manufacturer's desire to develop a specific channel structure (McCalley, 1996). To plan the channel efficiently, it is necessary to know what levels of services consumers' desire. According to Coughlan *et al.* (2002), the extension of these services to the consumer, and faulty planning and/or execution can seriously compromise the relationship of the parties, with serious consequences to the product image. In general, these decisions involve elements such as size of the lots (breaking bulks) that will be offered, degree of market decentralization, wait time for products, variety of products and service support.

Decisions on objectives of the distribution channel

The channel objectives must be defined in terms of the level of service desired by the target consumers. In general, the firm identifies several segments that desire different levels of services from the channel, and from there decides what services will satisfy those needs and what the best channels are to be utilized in each case (Bucklin, 1966; Kotler and Armstrong, 1999; Coughlan *et al.*, 2002).

The nature of the products, corporate policies and procedures, and characteristics of the intermediaries, competitors, and environmental factors also influence the objectives of the channel. In general, these objectives can be divided in objectives for the consumers, in terms of the needs of the segment targeted, objectives of the firm, in terms of volumes, profit, etc. and objectives for the intermediaries.

Managerial decisions on the distribution channel

Bowersox and Cooper (1992) distinguish the organization of the channels by the degree of directivity inherent in the alternative of channel structure chosen, whether it will be implemented by the firm itself (direct channels) or via intermediaries (indirect channels).

There are three main areas that require managerial decisions in relation to the marketing channel structure: channel extension (length), distribution intensity, and choice of intermediaries for performance of the functions within the channel (Semenik and Bamossy, 1995; Coughlan *et al.*, 2002).

Door-to-door or direct marketing distribution channel

According to Kotler and Armstrong (1999) door-to-door retail (D2D), technically called direct sale, was initiated with the traveling salesmen centuries ago and has grown to become an immense industry. Coughlan *et al.* (2002) emphasizes that at a certain point, the door-to-door formats are variations of other types of channels already established by the firm. These formats started in situations where a product has a high personal sale cost and high margins, and is sold in relatively small orders. A broad gamut of variations tries to find several small purchasers in a location to minimize the cost of sales and supply and provide a unique purchasing experience.

The advantages of this type of distribution and sale are the convenience to the consumer and the personal relationship. However, the high costs of employing, training, paying, and motivating the sales force can result in very high prices.

Case: company "A" channel structure and strategy

Company A (leader in Brazilian market) participates in the yogurt market with direct and indirect channels to retailers. In the direct channel, the firm possesses its own structure to supply the main retailers' chains (key-accounts), wholesalers and regional retailer chains. The present indirect channel possesses some differentiated structures depending on the region of the country, attending mainly small and medium retailers and traditional clients, mainly with distributors, some representatives, and brokers in specific cases. Both channels cited utilize strategies of intensive distribution varying the form of performance and the mix of products depending on the type of client and the area of participation.

The door-to-door channel structure for company A presents an attempt to add services to a certain segment of consumption in specific regions, increasing volume and profitability for the indirect channel of the firm. For the purpose of this study development and analysis of the following factors were evaluated with regard to this new channel:

Consumer market

The growth of door-to-door sales in Brazil is much related with changes in consumption habits and lifestyles, due to factors such as workforce specialization, growth of the services sector, greater participation of women in the workforce and demographic changes, among others. It is worth emphasizing the growing importance of "class C" in the distribution of Brazilian income. It represents, according to Ibge (2005), a slice of 30.1 percent of the population, where 42 percent of the class C consumers include superfluous items on their list of purchases and about 63 percent of them only shop at the supermarket when there is some remaining income.

In Brazil, direct door-to-door marketing was estimated by Domus at US$2.0 billion in, 2002[1] and US$3.33 billion in 2004, where about 4 percent was represented by the marketing of dairy products. About 1.5 million people benefit from the revenues obtained from the resale of products by the direct marketing system, with an average income of US$315.00. Brazil is the fifth largest in direct marketing is surpassed only by Japan, the USA, France, and Italy according to Abevd (2005).

Business environment

Several factors affect the markets as a whole and influence the decisions and the path of businesses. Thus, an assessment was made of the main environmental factors and their implications for the direct marketing activities:

- *Technological factors*. New products and consumer curiosities positively influence the channel. The internet is a promising tool, and can be utilized mainly for integration with clients, purchases, and exchange of information.
- *Economic factors*. Direct sales in this market were also influenced by the comparative reduction in the prices of industrialized products from the dairy sector, mainly of local brand names. Moreover, an increase in the purchasing power of classes C and D was experienced post-1994 when the Brazilian

Economic Plan implemented a new currency and reduced inflation rates. Increase of informal employment, which influences the increase in the number of possible resellers, was also cited by companies.

- *Socio-cultural factors*. Intimately related to the economic environment and the behavioral changes of consumption, they have increased the sale of products ready for consumption, and influenced the market of D2D and street peddlers, that are very common distribution forms of consumer goods and food in large cities in Brazil.
- *Political factors*. Political transition following decades of polarization of the right. Increase of the social responsibility of firms in society. Governmental and private support and attempt to generate new jobs.
- *Geographical factors*. Increase of urban population and concentration in large metropolitan centers.
- *Demographic factors*. Even with a still much "flattened" social pyramid, with the improvement in currency stabilization and HDI (human development index), lower classes began to consume superfluous products that were previously inaccessible to these classes due to income constraints.
- *Legal restrictions*. Need for sanitary adequacy, where some difficulty in obtaining a license can compromise the quality of the products. Fiscal questions refer to informality, which makes it difficult for resellers to adjust to the legislation (most of Brazilian taxes are cumulative in different ties of a chain, which disincentivize taxpayers and increase business informality).

Door-to-door market for yogurts

In order to conduct the analysis of the competition, information was sought on the main competing firms that act in the sector, in order to highlight the size and importance of the channel to the firm, as well as the experiences already obtained in direct door-to-door marketing. Evidences drawn from secondary market data provided a relative market position of participants in this market. Companies B and C were the main participants found in this channel, while the rest of the competitors participate only informally, and no concrete data of structured channels were identified.

With this, it was possible to gather information with respect to the forms of participation and the channel structures of the main participants of the market. The necessary competencies for actions in the direct marketing channel for dairy products were identified and classified as competencies to enter the market, competencies necessary to remain in the market, and finally, competencies to grow in the market.

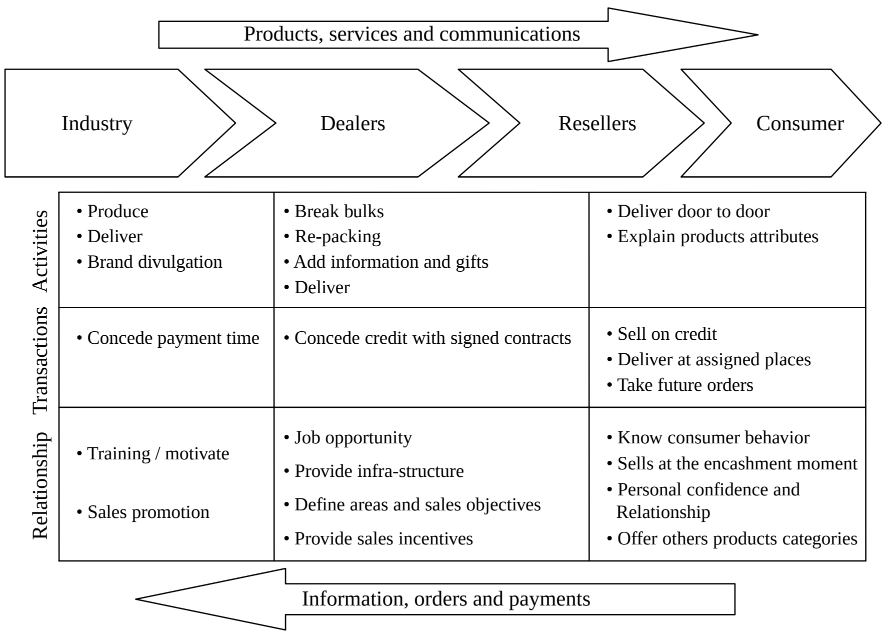
From these surveys, an assessment of the activities and generic flows performed by the channel integrants (industry, distributors and resellers) was conducted, followed by a detailed evaluation of how each competitor structured its specific channel and how the flows and activities were distributed among the members of each channel in each competing firm. This data are summarized in Table I and Figure 2.

Complementing the analysis of channel structure, the main companies in this market were analyzed and compared in terms of marketing mix. As a last step, a SWOT analysis was performed on the channel and situation for company A in this market. The data utilized for these surveys is based on market information, secondary sources, and some interviews with distributors and representatives of some competitors acting in the market. Tables II-IV summarize the information gathered.

	Company B	Company C
No. of resellers	1000 in São Paulo City	10.000 (Brazil)
Experience time	2 years	35 years
Monthly direct marketing sales	280 ton Kits and 90 ton fermented milk (São Paulo)	4.250 ton fermented milk (Brazil) About 75 per cent of revenues from D2D
Brands[a]	Brand Y – second national brand	Brand X – market leader[b]
Market segmentation	Exclusive geographic area	Geographic only
Distribution features	For Brand Y products – owned. Remaining product lines – dealers	Owned at São Paulo City
Reseller's policy	Training about products, Sales rewards and support material	Behavioral training, integration, sales rewards

Notes: [a]Brand names are hypothetical to avoid company identification; [b]companies based their leadership on Nielsen data for retail, but authors did not have access to this data
Source: Authors, based in secondary data and interviews

Table I.
Participants in the door-to-door channel in Brazil (2004 and 2005)



Source: Adapted by authors from Kotler and Armstrong (1999) channel model

Figure 2.
Flows and general activities in the door-to-door channel

Strategic decisions for entry in the door-to-door market

Based on the analysis and market potential, distribution in the door-to-door channel was considered attractive for company A in 2005. However, even being attractive, the door-to-door distribution model also presented threats to the company, mainly related to the fiscal risk involving distributors, labor risks involving D2D resellers, and possible retaliations from the incumbent competition, which could consider the actions of company A in the door to door market as a threat to their business. As to the weak

Table II. Marketing mix analysis – company B

Price	Promotion	Distribution	Product
Marketing mix analysis of company B in 2004 and 2005			
To yogurt consumer, direct marketing have higher prices than other channels	High investments to new product launches and defense from competitors	D2D Channel is not the company focus	Fermented milk can be sold in units, but yogurt only in kits
Remaining channels use similar prices	Sell-out tools for all channels	Two different distribution models No information about direct marketing out of São Paulo city	Innovation and tendencies following

Table III. Marketing mix analysis – company C

Price	Promotion	Distribution	Product
Marketing mix analysis of company C in 2004 and 2005			
Higher than competitors	High investments to contend launches and competitors	Focus in the direct marketing channel (75 per cent of revenues)	Focus: fermented milk Recent entry in dessert market with new products
Lower than others company channels	Sell-out tools	High geographic penetration National coverage	Vitamin complements Individual and grouped package

Table IV. SWOT analysis of the door-to-door channel for company A in 2004 and 2005

SWOT	
Strengths	*Weaknesses*
"Share of Pocket"	High Risk of Credit
Profitability higher than retail channel average	Low resellers fidelity
Convenience	Resellers dependence (consumer relationship)
Buying appeal	Operational complexity (chain control)
No low price brands to compete	
Opportunities	*Threats*
"Approaching" and exploring low income consumers (C and D classes)	Internal competition (Informal and black markets)
Direct contact and communication to consumers	New entrants – low barriers to entry
Develop a new channel for Company A	Possible retaliation from companies B and C, protecting their markets
"Booster" sales volume without sales cannibalization of other channels	Learn curve for company A (expected 2-3 years)

Source: Porter (1997)

points, they are related to the former frustrated initiatives of company A in this channel. These past negative experiences are related to their small market size, the weak economic conditions of the last decade, and a lack of focus and specialization of company A in this channel.

With the actual decision to enter direct marketing, company A's main strategic objective to reach the door-to-door channel is closely linked to a greater satisfaction of the end consumer, providing the maximum in spatial convenience, given that the reseller will try to serve the client in her own home, aligned with minimal wait time, given that product delivery is immediate. Hence, value is added to the product by means of the level of added service.

With this, the action of the firm in this channel was heavily focused on a strategy of overcoming the price perception and convenience of local traditional retail, offering a value proposition (product plus service/convenience) that is more attractive to the consumer, according company A research data. The firm has then a strategy to "skip over" the traditional intermediaries of the traditional distribution channels, so as to offer its products with more added services directly to the end consumer, reducing the number of intermediaries and focusing the channel flows with just one agent. The main decisions related to the door-to-door channel structuring, as highlighted in the literature review summarized on Table V.

Taking as a reference the distribution models utilized by companies B and C, manufacturers that already act in home sales, and taking account of their strong and weak points, the model adopted for implementation was of exclusive independent distributors, that is, a commercial operation involving the sale and purchase of company A products by distributors (Figure 3). These distributors have access to the entire assortment of the firm (Yogurts + Fermented Milk) for commercialization. This is different from the company B model, which segments its commercialization of yogurts and fermented milk. Company C does not have yogurts within its portfolio of products (only fermented milk).

Final comments and managerial implications

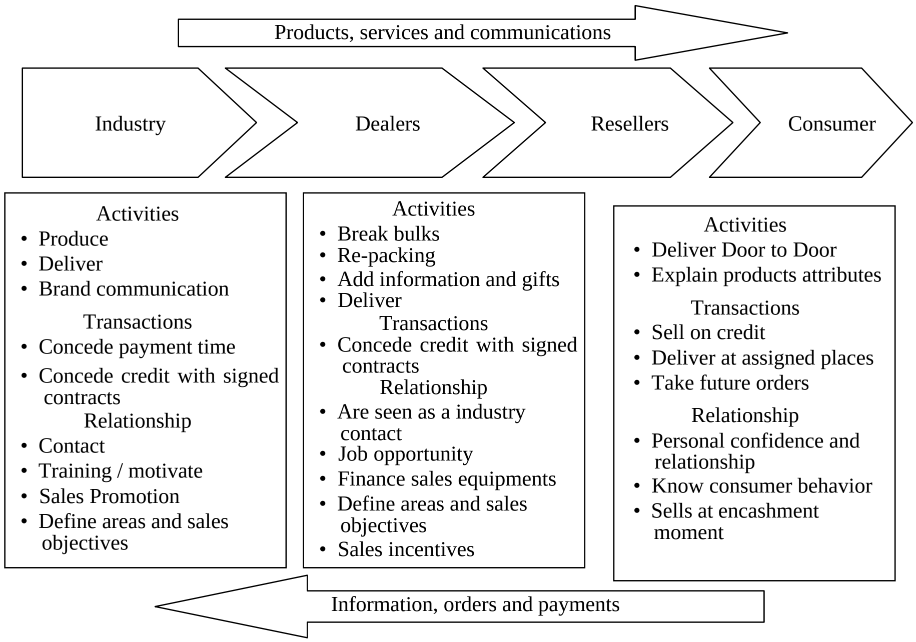
This paper presented the case of structuring a new channel for a company in the dairy sector, more specifically, for yogurts and fermented milk distribution. An analysis regarding performance of some firms and their distribution strategies, and the market opportunities to support the decision regarding the structure of direct marketing for company A's products was developed.

Therefore, an attempt was made to relate the theoretical bases on channel structure and flows to the practical development of a new channel structured by one specific company,

Decisions on necessity of services to the consumer	Immediate delivery, personalized attendance, convenience, aggregate service
Decisions on channel objectives	Develop a consumer proximity sales channel Increase volume and profitability for the company. Find and develop partners to perform marketing flows
Managerial decisions on the channel	Complementary frame to indirect (retail) channel structure, making good use of direct marketing to consumer
Decisions on extension of the channel	One level channel (intermediate): company A → Dealer-resellers → consumer
Decisions on distribution intensity	Selective distribution. Low income class ("C") in cities larger than 400.000 inhabitants of southeast region
Decisions on choice of the intermediates	15-20 dealers with cold warehouse structure, experience and financial warranties

Source: Kotler and Armstrong (1999)

Table V.
A tool for decisions on structuring the door-to-door channel for company A in 2004 and 2005



Source: Kotler and Armstrong (1999)

Figure 3. Marketing channels flows responsibility for company A's door-to-door channel

which initiated its activities in 2004 and 2005. The main strategic choices involved the definition about how to reach the chosen segments, how marketing flows should operate and which members of the channel would be responsible for these flows. Hence, decisions of how to fulfill the needs of the targeted segments were structured, along with the objectives of the channel analyzed, the extension and intensity of distribution, and how marketing channel members should be chosen and evaluated in the structuring process.

So the paper is an exercise trying to contribute to the knowledge on marketing channels, demonstrating the need to utilize the concepts and models of channel structure as a guideline for practitioners and academics concerning the analysis and decisions that need to be made in the careful choice of a new channel structure.

As managerial implications and contributions, this paper can offer a sequence of analysis that was used by a large multinational company to decide whether to enter a new channel. This can be called a "Method" for new channel development decisions, and could contribute for academics and the private sector in studying entry into new marketing channels (Table VI).

Step	What should be done
1	Environmental analysis for marketing channel new opportunities
2	Benchmark and competitor analysis in new marketing channels
3	Decisions on the structure of the new marketing channel (Table IV)
4	Marketing channels flows description and allocation of responsibility (Figure 3)
5	Implementing and monitoring the performance on the new channel

Table VI. Contribution: a method for developing new marketing channels

The method used involved an environmental analysis to figure out new channel opportunities (step 1), followed by a benchmark and comparison with major competitors in the new channel (step 2), the decisions regarding the structure (step 3) of the new marketing channel, a description about the channel flows (step 4) and who should perform them (allocation of responsibilities) and finally, as a last step, to implement and monitor the performance of the new channel (step 5). This method was also useful to support company A to design the distribution procedures and contracts for its distributors and resellers.

The limitations of the study are the traditional limitations of case studies, mainly related with generalization problems and not statistical sampling. But as contributions, or suggestions for future research, it can be added to monitor the performance of this new channel, to monitor conflicts with existing channels, and to evaluate building this channel for other industries. Improving the method (sequence) used in order to come to a deeper and more detailed sequence of steps to build door-to-door marketing channels, using the literature, is also a suggestion for future research and publications.

Note

1. Consider exchange rate of US$1 = R$1.82 in 2000, US$1 = R$2.93 in 2002 and US$1 = R$3.00 in 2004.

References

Abevd (2005), *Associação Brasileira de Empresas de Vendas Diretas*, available at: www.abevd.org.br (accessed April 22, 2005).

Alderson, W. (1954), "Factors governing the development of marketing channels", in Clewett, R.M. (Ed.), *Marketing Channels in Manufactured Products*, Richard D. Irwin, Homewood, IL, pp. 5-22.

Alderson, W. and Cox, R. (1948), "Towards a theory of marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 137-52.

Berman, B. (1966), *Marketing Channels*, Wiley, Chichester, p. 663.

Bowersox, D.J. and Cooper, M.B. (1992), *Strategic Marketing Channel Management*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Bucklin, L.P. (1966), *A Theory of Distribution Channel Structure*, Institute of Business and Economics, University of Berkley, Berkley, CA.

Coughlan, A.T. *et al.* (2002), *Canais de Marketing e Distribuição*, 6th ed., Bookman, Porto Alegre, p. 461.

Dias, S.L.F.G. (1997), "Evolução dos Canais de Distribuição: Implicações Práticas", *II SEMEAD*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 294-309.

Domus (2002), availabe at: www.domus.org.br (accessed October 21, 2002).

Ibge (2005), *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia Econômica*, available at: www.ibge.org.br (accessed October 27, 2006).

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (1993), *Princípios de Marketing*, 5th ed., Prentice-Hall, Rio de Janeiro.

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (1999), *Princípios de Marketing*, 7th ed., LTC, Rio de Janeiro.

Lewis, E.H. (1968), *Marketing Channels: Structure and Strategy*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

McCalley, R.W. (1996), *Marketing Channel Management: People, Products, Programs and Markets*, Praeger, Westport, CT.

Porter, M.E. (1997), *Estratégia Competitiva*, 7th ed., Campus, Rio de Janeiro.

Rosenbloom, B. (1999), *Marketing Channels: A Management View*, 6th ed., Dryden Press, Orlando, FL, p. 688.

Semenik, R.J. and Bamossy, G. (1995), *Princípios de marketing: uma perspectiva global*, Makron Book, São Paulo.

Shaw, A.W. (1912), "Some problems in market distribution", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 703-65.

Shaw, A.W. (1915), *Some Problems in Market Distribution*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Stern, L. *et al.* (1996), *Marketing Channels*, 5th ed., Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Wilkinson, I. (2001), "A history of network and channels thinking in marketing in the 20th century", *Australian Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 23-53.

Further reading

Abevd (2003), *Associação Brasileira de Empresas de Vendas Diretas*, available at: www.abevd.org.br (accessed March 14, 2003).

Cobra, M. (1993), *Marketing competitivo*, Atlas, São Paulo.

Dias, S.R. (1993), *Estratégia e canais de distribuição*, Atlas, São Paulo.

Kotler, P. (1991), *Administração de Marketing: análise, planejamento, implementação e controle*, 2nd ed., Atlas, São Paulo.

Corresponding author

Matheus Alberto Cônsoli can be contacted at: consoli@usp.br