



AMERICAN
CIDER
ASSOCIATION

Getting Creative With Distribution Sales

PRESENTED BY:

Julie Rhodes



AGENDA

- 1 Discover Hidden Sales Opportunities
- 2 Build Better Wholesale Relationships
- 3 Maximize The ROI of Your Time
- 4 Go Digital!
- 5 Promotional Partnerships
- 6 Next Steps - let's go!



not
your
hobby

MARKETING
SOLUTIONS

GETTING CREATIVE WITH DISTRIBUTION SALES

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES
FOR GROWTH



-2025-

CIDERCON[®]

CHICAGO

HI, I'M JULIE

With over two decades of experience in the food and beverage industry, Julie Rhodes is an expert in off-site beverage sales, digital marketing, leadership, team management, and distributor partnership management.

She owns Not Your Hobby Marketing Solutions, an educational services and strategic business consulting company built specifically for small—to medium-sized craft beverage companies. There, she teaches owners, operators, and teams how to work smarter, not harder.

She is also a freelance business journalist and active public speaker, belonging to multiple state brewery guilds and cider trade associations. She was the 2023 Mentor of the Year for the Brewers Association, sits on the BA DEI Committee, and teaches marketing and sales for multiple business of craft beer programs at the university level.

I live in Broomfield, CO, with my industry husband, two crazy boys, and a gaggle of pets. I'm a donut connoisseur and sci-fi nerd, and I used to play competitive billiards.



SCAN THIS!

To ask all the questions





CHALLENGES



Crowded
house

Decline in
Drinking

Distribution
Limitations

Lack of
Product
Knowledge

Limited
Resources

Low Margin
Sales
Channel

Declining
velocity

Relationships
Take Time

**Be A Specialist,
Not A
Generalist**



LET'S INNOVATE

- 🍏 Discover Hidden Sales Opportunities
- 🍏 Build Better Relationships
- 🍏 Analyzing The ROI of Your Time
- 🍏 Go Digital
- 🍏 Partnering For Promotions





UNCOVERING HIDDEN OPPORTUNITIES

Telling Your Brand Story

Leveraging Sales Data

Explore Underserved Markets

Find Placement Gaps

Leverage Your Biggest Fans





CONSISTENT BRANDING

- **Brand Image, Voice, Personality**
 - What are your 3 Uniques?
 - Is your branding consistent?
Across the room test
 - Are you an “easy to sell” brand?





SALES DATA

TOP TIPS



- You can't change what you're not measuring
- Identify KPIs to track:
 - CRM, ERP, accounting software
 - VIP, Encompass, Lilypad, distributor portals, sales & distribution reports
 - Pivot based on the data
 - Watch for trends



BE DIFFERENT



Expanding
marketing
to everyone
who might
enjoy cider

Non-
traditional
retail spaces
as potential
sales targets

Where is
your
competition
not selling
cider?



MIND THE GAP

- Recovering lost placements
- Recovering lost accounts
- Discovering the leaks in your pipeline
- Leveraging SKU gaps
- Recreating success in new territories





KEY ACCOUNTS



The list of accounts that are producing 80% of your volume or revenue

Providing “white glove” treatment for your best customers

Asking your wholesaler to provide a list of “priority accounts”

Special promotions, close personal relationships, maybe special releases - so they feel seen



BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Creating Effective Brand Assets

Brand Integration

Using A CRM

Over-Communicating





BRANDED ASSETS

Sales Sheets & Price Lists

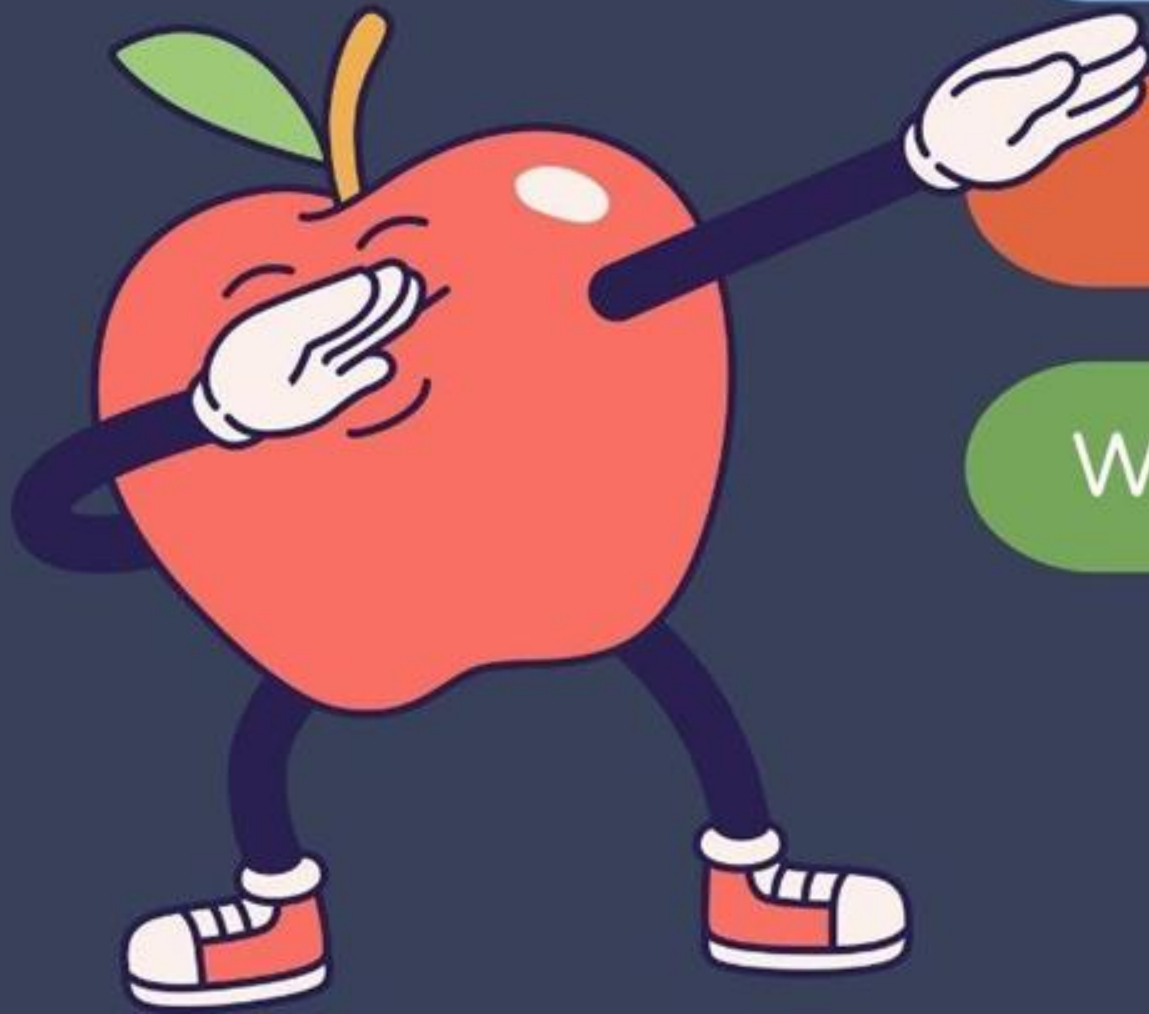
Posters & Banners

Social Media Assets

Brand Calendar

Wholesaler Portal or Drive

Traning Materials





BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS



DISTRIBUTION

- Build Rapport
- Celebrate Success Together
- Communication
- Complement Their Efforts
- Don't Forget Management

RETAIL

- Consistency
- Brand Support
- Communication
- Follow Through

SALES PIPELINE



TRACK
ACCOUNT VISITS
& MAINTAIN
TIMELY FOLLOW
UPS WITH
RETAILERS AND
DISTRIBUTOR
PERSONNEL

TRACK VERBAL
& DIGITAL
BRAND
COMMITMENT -
FOLLOW UP TO
SEE IT
THROUGH

SHARE RECAPS
ABOUT MARKET
ACTIVITY WITH
YOUR
DISTRIBUTOR
PARTNER



BRAND INTEGRATION

RETAIL ACCOUNTS

Offer up cross-promotional and strategic partnership opportunities. Identify ways to inject your brand into their existing business.



DISTRIBUTOR

Ask them about their goals, know how they run their business, and know how their personnel gets paid. Then figure out how you fit into that picture.



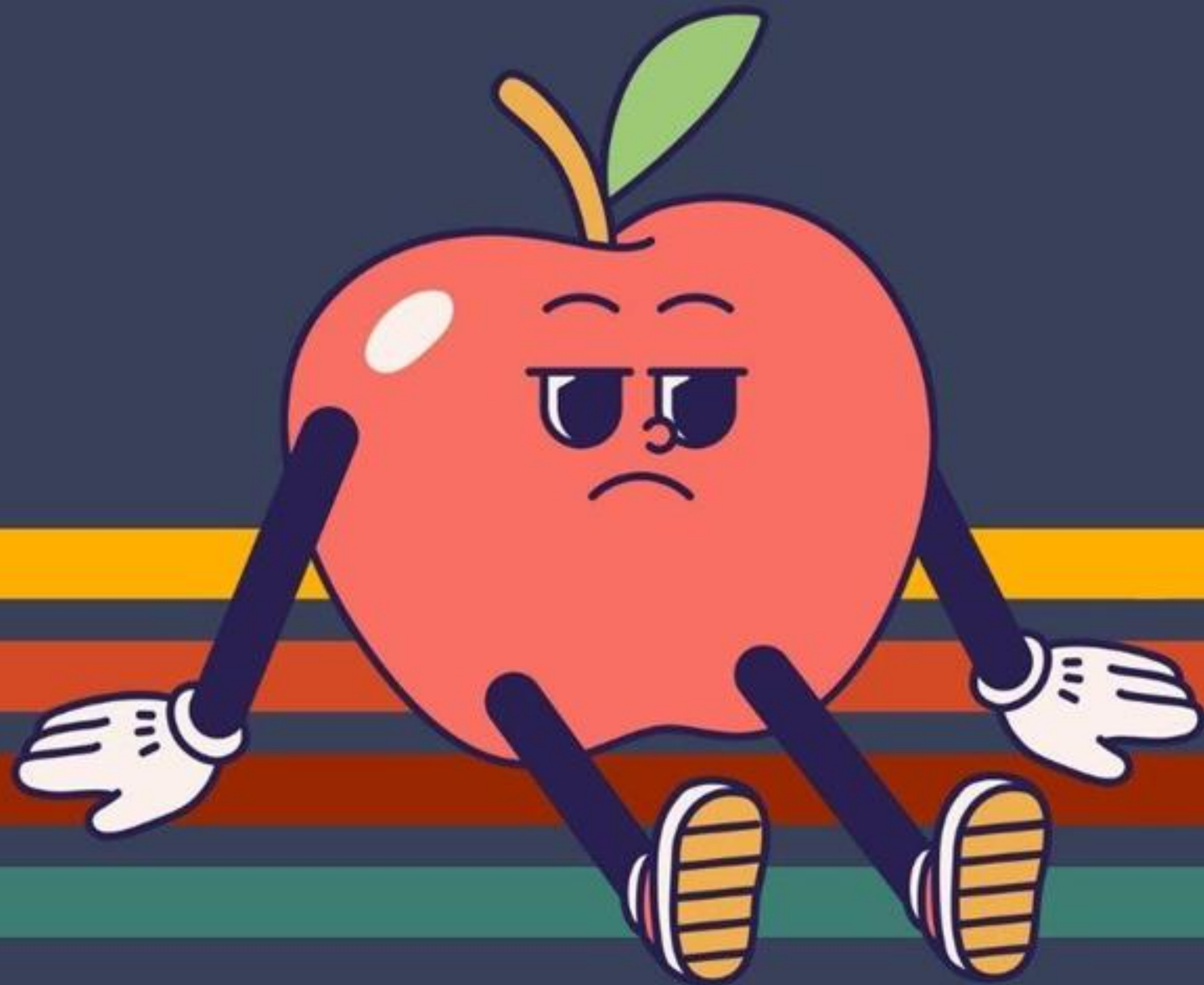
OVER-COMMUNICATE

- Proactively share information with distributors and retailers about
 - Inventory levels
 - Delivery schedules
 - New products
 - Out of stocks
- Regularly touch base with distributor personnel to ensure your brand stays top of mind



TOP
TIPS

DON'T BE AN
A-HOLE



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your
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ROI OF YOUR SALES EFFORTS

Time Vs Revenue

The Sales Rep Question

Chain Business

Selling Activities

Going Digital



TIME VS REVENUE

- Item Profitability
- Account Profitability
- Stop chasing the Whales
- Profitability of Promotions



HIRING A SALES REP

- When to hire
 - Salary roughly equals about 10% of the revenue they produce
 - It will be higher than 10% at first
 - It will be lower than 10% as your rep progresses
- Non-traditional sales help
 - Brokerage - shared reps
 - Part-time or contract
- Hire for soft skills
 - Product information is easy to teach
 - Operations are easy to teach
 - Soft skills are very hard to impart



CHAIN BUSINESS

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO BE A
HUGE BRAND
TO SELL IN
NATIONAL
ACCOUNTS
ANymore

ONE
PLACEMENT
COULD
EQUATE TO A
TON OF NEW
VOLUME

YOU DON'T HAVE
TO BE IN EVERY
STORE,
STATEWIDE OR
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ROI OF YOUR TIME



Prospecting

Target Lists

Commitment Follow-Ups

Staff Training

Prospecting

Target Lists

Commitment Follow-Ups

Staff Training



GO DIGITAL!

TOP
TIPS

- Wholesale focused digital ad campaigns
- Retailer only email campaigns
- Digital prospecting
- Using CRM, ERP, and data portal technology
- Provide digital assets for distributors and retailers





PARTNER PROMOTIONS

Other Small Businesses

Branding Collaborations

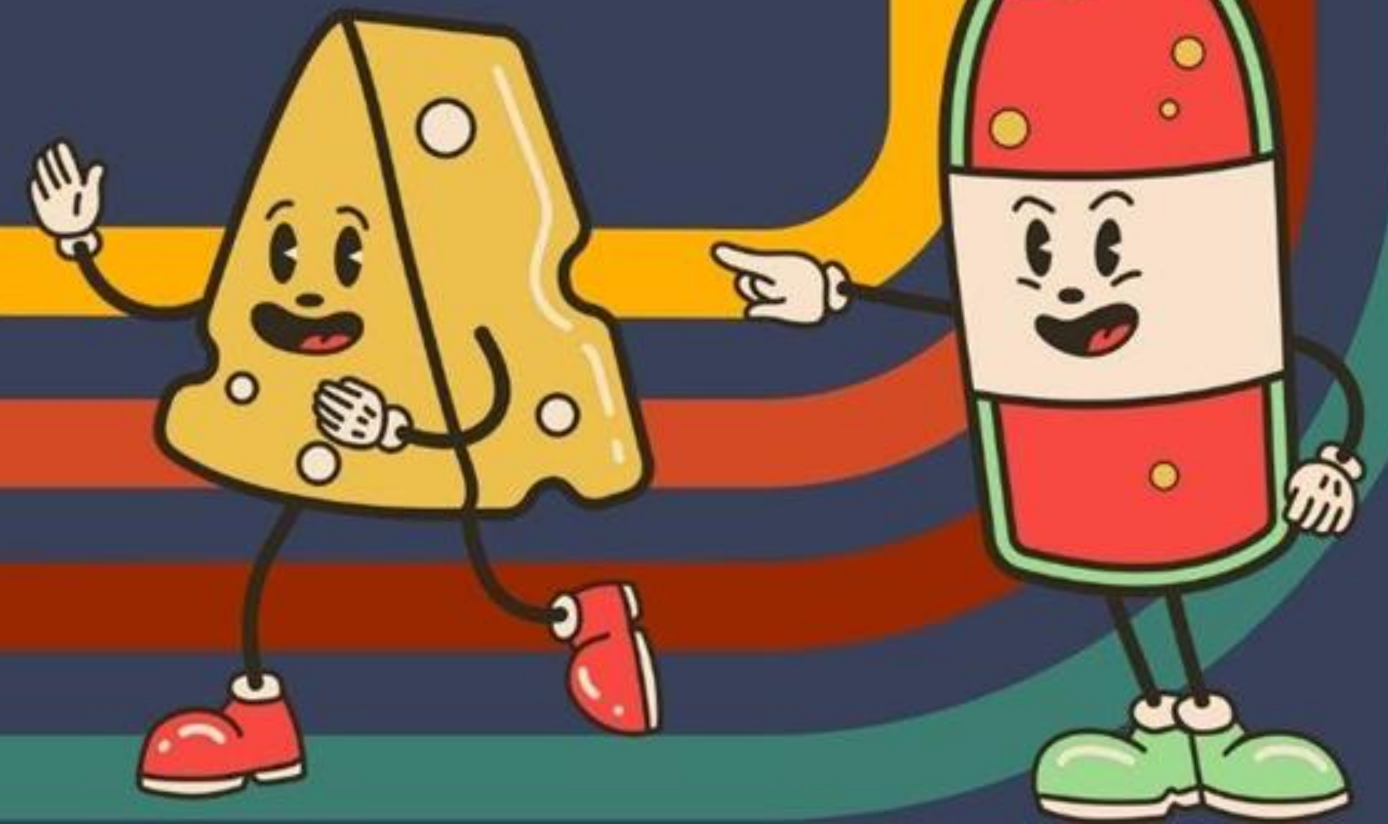
Cross-Promotional Events

Working With Influencers








STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Find other small businesses to partner with that have the same target audiences as your brand
- Collaborate with complimentary brands to boost awareness
- Partner with a cause that's important to your brand values
- Engage with influencers or micro-influencers - social proof works!



NEXT STEPS

-  Audit your sales data
-  Audit your profitability
-  Set up target lists & distribution touch points
-  Investigate new software tools
-  Develop a 90 day plan to boost placements by 10%



SCAN HERE FOR YOUR DIGITAL SWAG BAG



THANK
YOU

Questions



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www.notyourhobbymarketing.com

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