



Sales Distribution Efficiency and Retailer Engagement in FMCG: A Field-Based Study of ITC Limited's Personal Care Business in Pune

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Abstract

General Trade continues to serve as the dominant route to market for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) in India, and within the Personal Care category, outlet-level execution — coverage, retailer engagement, scheme pitching and follow-up — substantially shapes whether distribution reach is realised as an actual sale. This paper presents a field-based, descriptive-exploratory MBA study conducted during a two-month On-the-Job Training (OJT) engagement with ITC Limited in the General Trade channel of Pune and adjoining Pimpri-Chinchwad, from 15 May to 15 July 2026, in a field sales role within the Personal Care category. The research problem is the extent to which beat/route coverage, distributor-level execution, retailer engagement and competitive context are associated with outlet-level sales conversion. Primary data were drawn from an internship-maintained outlet-level record covering 17 unique retail outlets across two distributor groups and ten beats, supplemented by ITC's own corporate disclosures for company-level context. The record captured potential value, conversion outcome, retailer-response remarks, follow-up status and competition-loyalty status for each outlet. Descriptive analysis found an overall observed conversion rate of 35.29 percent (6 of 17 outlets), with 73.41 percent of total recorded potential (₹92,500 of ₹1,26,000) concentrated in non-converted outlets. Conversion rates differed markedly between the two distributor groups (80.00 percent versus 16.67 percent) and between competition-loyal and non-loyal outlets (71.43 percent versus 10.00 percent), and "Think Later" was the most frequently recorded reason for non-

conversion. Because the sample was small, non-random and drawn from a single assigned beat structure, the findings are treated as descriptive and associative rather than causal or generalisable. The paper closes with field-grounded recommendations on follow-up structuring, outlet segmentation, and improvements to field-data capture.

Keywords: FMCG, General Trade, Sales Execution, Retailer Engagement, Route-to-Market, Outlet Conversion, Personal Care, ITC Limited

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

General Trade continues to be the dominant route to market for FMCG products in India, and the Personal Care category in particular depends on frequent, low-value purchases made at neighbourhood outlets. In this setting, the retailer functions as the final and most decisive point of contact between a manufacturer's brand proposition and the consumer. A company's distribution scale and scheme design can translate into sales only if the retailer accepts the proposition and the outlet is serviced regularly. This paper examines that translation process at the outlet level, drawing on field evidence gathered during a structured internship engagement.



1.2 FMCG and General Trade Context

The FMCG sector in India operates through a layered distribution chain — manufacturer, warehouse or carrying-and-forwarding agent, distributor, retailer and consumer — with General Trade continuing to coexist alongside Modern Trade, e-commerce and quick commerce. Because General Trade outlets vary widely in size, product requirement, brand loyalty and willingness to accept new propositions, retailer engagement at the point of sale remains a central operational concern for FMCG companies (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Rosenbloom, 2013).

1.3 ITC Personal Care Context

ITC Limited operates a diversified FMCG portfolio that, according to its own published disclosures, includes food, Personal Care, Education and Stationery, Safety Matches and Agarbattis, distributed through General Trade, Modern Trade, e-commerce, quick commerce, institutional, direct-to-consumer and cash-and-carry channels reaching close to 70 lakh outlets nationally. Within Personal Care, the company's principal brands include Fama, Vivel, Engage and Savlon. The present study is situated within the General Trade distributor-to-retailer stage of this network, in the Personal Care category, as experienced directly during the internship.

1.4 Problem Context

During the internship, considerable variation was observed in how individual retail outlets responded to the same product and scheme proposition: some outlets accepted immediately, others deferred a decision, and others declined outright citing outlet size or existing brand loyalty. The internship also required the maintenance of an outlet-level record capturing distributor, beat, potential value, conversion outcome, retailer remarks, follow-up status and competition loyalty. This record forms the empirical foundation of the present study.

1.5 Research Problem

The research problem addressed in this paper is the extent to which beat/route coverage, distributor-level execution, retailer engagement, scheme pitching and competitive context are associated with outlet-level sales conversion in the ITC Personal Care General Trade environment of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, and what execution-related factors appear, on the basis of a small internship dataset, to be linked with conversion versus non-conversion outcomes.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to convert field observations and the internship's outlet-level records into a structured analysis of sales execution and retailer response, and to use that analysis to generate field-grounded, practical recommendations for improving conversion productivity in General Trade Personal Care selling.

1.7 Research Objectives

- Objective 1: To examine the sales-execution process — beat planning, outlet coverage and retailer interaction — observed during the internship.
- Objective 2: To analyse retailer response and sales-conversion outcomes arising from scheme and product pitching.
- Objective 3: To compare outlet-level performance across distributors, beats/routes and competition-loyalty status using the internship dataset.
- Objective 4: To identify the recorded reasons for non-conversion and their implications for follow-up practice.
- Objective 5: To develop data-driven, field-grounded recommendations for improving retailer engagement and sales-execution productivity.



1.8 Scope of the Study

The study is confined to the field-sales activity personally observed during the internship, in the Personal Care category and General Trade environment of Pune and adjoining Pimpri-Chinchwad, over the period 15 May to 15 July 2026. It does not estimate ITC's national or Pune-wide market share, category-level sales, or company-level financial performance, and it does not extend to Modern Trade, e-commerce or other channels outside the assigned beats.

2. Literature Review

2.1 FMCG Distribution and Sales Execution

Distribution channel theory explains that manufacturers rely on intermediaries — distributors, wholesalers and retailers — because they cannot economically reach a large, dispersed retail base directly (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Rosenbloom, 2013). In General Trade, this structure places the distributor's field representative, and interns supporting that representative, at the final stage before the product reaches the consumer. Execution at this stage — coverage, pitching quality and order support — determines whether upstream brand and category investment is realised as an actual transaction (Bowersox, Closs, & Cooper, 2013; Christopher, 2016).

2.2 Retailer Engagement and Relationship Management

Retailer engagement is commonly framed as the maintenance of a productive channel relationship through regular contact, trust and service (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing holds that a channel relationship is sustained by cooperation, communication and repeated interaction between the parties involved (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Applied to General Trade, this suggests that a distributor's or field representative's familiarity with a retailer can shape how receptive that retailer is to a new proposition, independent of the proposition's inherent merit.

2.3 Route-to-Market and Beat Planning

Route-to-market theory addresses how a company organises territory, beats and visit frequency to reach its retail base (Kotler, Armstrong, & Opresnik, 2020). A beat or route groups a set of outlets visited on a defined day and revisited on a cyclical basis, allowing repeated retailer contact over time. Because outlet mix, size and potential differ across beats, route-level comparisons require caution when the number of outlets per beat is uneven.

2.4 Trade Marketing and Scheme Pitching (Push Strategy)

Trade-marketing activity is typically described through the interaction of push and pull strategies: a push strategy encourages channel members to stock and sell a product through retailer-facing schemes and field support, while a pull strategy builds consumer demand through advertising (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Scheme pitching to retailers — communicating a trade offer intended to encourage stocking — is a push-oriented activity, and its effectiveness depends on the retailer perceiving the scheme as commercially relevant to their outlet (Jobber & Lancaster, 2015).

2.5 Sales Conversion and the Sales Funnel

The sales-funnel concept describes a sequence from prospect identification through interaction, requirement understanding, proposition, evaluation and conversion (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005). A central implication of this framework is that interaction and conversion are distinct stages: an outlet can be visited and pitched without an order resulting, so field programmes that measure only visit counts may overstate productive activity relative to outcomes actually achieved.

2.6 Competitive Environment in FMCG General Trade

FMCG categories such as Personal Care are typically served by several national and regional competitors, and a retailer's existing relationship with a competing brand can act as a barrier to switching (Anderson, Narus, & van Rossum, 2006). At the same time, industry reporting on Indian FMCG suggests that General Trade retailers continue to evaluate multiple



supplier relationships concurrently rather than committing exclusively to one company (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2025), which raises the possibility that a retailer's attachment to one brand does not necessarily preclude engagement with another.

2.7 Research Gap

The literature reviewed establishes that distribution structure, route-to-market design, relationship quality and trade-marketing execution jointly influence retail channel performance. However, much of this literature is conceptual or drawn from broad industry-level data, and offers limited outlet-level field evidence connecting beat coverage, distributor execution, competition loyalty and recorded retailer response to actual conversion outcomes within a single FMCG company's Personal Care General Trade operations. This study addresses that gap in a bounded way: it reports field-level, descriptive evidence from a two-month internship engagement with ITC Limited in Pune, and does not claim to offer a controlled, causal or nationally representative account.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and exploratory, field-based observational design. The descriptive component addresses outlet coverage, conversion outcomes and potential value as recorded in the internship's outlet-level workbook; the exploratory component addresses retailer-response patterns and competitive observations noted during fieldwork. The design does not include a controlled experiment, a matched comparison group or inferential statistical testing.

3.2 Research Context

The research was conducted during a structured OJT engagement with ITC Limited, in the General Trade channel, Personal Care category, in Pune and adjoining Pimpri-Chinchwad, over the period 15 May 2026 to 15 July 2026, under the academic guidance of Dr. Abhijit Bobde, School of Business, Indira University.

3.3 Data Sources

Primary data: outlet-level records maintained during the internship, covering 17 unique outlet observations across two distributor groups and ten beats/routes, together with direct field observation of retailer interaction, scheme pitching and retailer response.

Secondary data: ITC Limited's Report and Accounts 2026 and official company disclosures, used solely for company- and sector-level context in Section 4.

3.4 Sampling / Field Coverage

Field coverage followed the beats assigned to the distributor accompanied during the internship, rather than a statistically designed or randomly drawn sample. The internship workbook records 17 unique outlet observations ($N = 17$) across the routes Bijlee Nagar, Sangli, Wakad, Akurdi, Belacasa/Balewadi Road, Wakad Road Phase 2, Phase 3, Hinjewadi-Bhumkar, Punewale and Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum. This non-probability, beat-based coverage should be read as the assigned territory covered during the internship rather than a representative sample of ITC's wider General Trade network in Pune.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The field process followed a consistent sequence: outlet visit, retailer interaction, requirement understanding, product/scheme pitching, recording of retailer response and, where the retailer accepted, distributor-supported order taking. Outlet-level fields recorded in the workbook included distributor, beat, outlet name, potential value, conversion outcome (Yes/No), non-conversion remark, follow-up status and competition-loyalty status (Yes/No), together with occasional competitor-scheme observations.



3.6 Variables / Indicators Examined

Table 1 summarises the variables drawn from the internship dataset and examined in this study.

Variable	Description	Level of Measurement
Distributor	Distributor group responsible for the outlet (Rakesh / BALI)	Categorical
Beat / Route	Geographic route cluster covered on a given day	Categorical
Potential Value	Estimated opportunity value recorded at the outlet (₹)	Numeric
Conversion	Recorded Yes/No sales-conversion outcome	Binary
Retailer Remark	Reason or comment recorded for non-conversion	Categorical
Follow-up Status	Whether a follow-up was recorded for the outlet	Binary
Competition Loyalty	Observed retailer attachment to a competing brand	Binary

Table 1: Research variables and indicators drawn from the internship dataset

3.7 Data Analysis Method

Data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics — counts, percentages and simple cross-tabulations — applied to conversion status, potential value, distributor group, beat/route and competition-loyalty status. No inferential statistical testing (e.g., chi-square or regression) was performed, as the sample size ($N = 17$) and non-random field coverage do not support such testing. Where a table analyses a subset smaller than $N = 17$, the subset size is stated explicitly so that percentages are read against the correct denominator.

3.8 Research Ethics and Confidentiality

Retailer contact details and other personally identifying information collected during the internship have been omitted from this paper. Data are used in aggregated, outlet-level form solely for academic analysis. No formal institutional ethics review was sought, consistent with the standard confidentiality expectations of an academic internship engagement rather than a funded research study.

4. Company / Case Context

4.1 ITC Limited

ITC Limited is a diversified Indian company incorporated in 1910, with businesses spanning FMCG, Paperboards, Paper & Packaging, Agri Business, Hotels and IT services, listed on the National Stock Exchange of India and BSE Limited.

4.2 ITC FMCG Business

ITC reports standalone gross revenue from products and services of approximately ₹80,867.49 crore for FY2025–26, against ₹73,466.61 crore in FY2024–25, with FMCG reported separately under Cigarettes, Branded Packaged Food Products and FMCG Others — the last of which includes Personal Care alongside Education and Stationery, Safety Matches and Agarbattis, and should therefore not be read as a standalone Personal Care revenue figure.

4.3 ITC Personal Care Portfolio

The company's Personal Care portfolio, as relevant to this study, comprises Fiama (personal wash), Vivel (soaps and body wash), Engage (deodorants and fragrances) and Savlon (hygiene and antiseptic products).



4.4 Distribution Structure

ITC's disclosed distribution ecosystem covers General Trade, Modern Trade, E-Commerce, Quick Commerce, Institutional, D2C and Cash & Carry channels, reaching close to 70 lakh outlets. The present study is situated at the Distributor → Retailer stage of the General Trade channel.

4.5 Relevance of the Case to the Study

The scale of ITC's distribution network provides the organisational backdrop against which the much narrower field observations of this study — 17 outlets across ten beats in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad — should be read: as a bounded, outlet-level case study within one company's much larger General Trade operation, rather than as evidence about that operation as a whole.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Outlet Coverage

The internship dataset comprises 17 unique outlet observations, recorded under two distributor groups (Rakesh and BALI) across ten beats/routes. Table 2 summarises the structure of the dataset.

Indicator	Value
Unique outlets recorded (N)	17
Distributor groups	2 (Rakesh, BALI)
Beats / routes covered	10
Study period	15 May 2026 – 15 July 2026 (internship window)
Geographic scope	Pune and adjoining Pimpri-Chinchwad

Table 2: Structure of the internship outlet-level dataset

5.2 Overall Conversion Performance

Conversion	Number of Outlets	Percentage
Yes	6	35.29%
No	11	64.71%
Total	17	100.00%

Table 3: Overall outlet conversion status ($N = 17$)

Interaction and conversion are conceptually distinct: an outlet visit and pitch does not guarantee an order. In the observed data, just over one-third of pitched outlets (35.29%) converted, while nearly two-thirds (64.71%) did not convert during the period observed.

5.3 Potential Value by Conversion Status

Status	Potential Value (₹)	Share of Total	Outlets	Average Potential (₹)
Converted	33,500	26.59%	6	5,583
Non-converted	92,500	73.41%	11	8,409
Total	1,26,000	100.00%	17	7,412

Table 4: Recorded potential value by conversion status ($N = 17$)



Non-converted outlets in this sample carried a higher average recorded potential ($\approx ₹8,409$) than converted outlets ($\approx ₹5,583$), indicating that recorded potential value alone did not predict conversion. This figure represents recorded opportunity value and should not be interpreted as actual billed sales, since the internship workbook did not capture a complete actual-sales field.

5.4 Distributor-wise Conversion

Distributor	Outlets	Converted	Conversion Rate	Potential (₹)	Converted Potential (₹)
Rakesh	5	4	80.00%	31,500	28,500
BALI	12	2	16.67%	94,500	5,000
Total	17	6	35.29%	1,26,000	33,500

Table 5: Distributor-wise conversion and potential ($N = 17$)

Because the two distributor groups differ in outlet count and route mix, this comparison is treated as a managerial signal warranting further investigation into distributor practices — route execution, retailer relationship and follow-up discipline — rather than as a conclusive performance ranking.

5.5 Competition Loyalty and Conversion

Competition Loyalty	Outlets	Converted	Conversion Rate
Yes	7	5	71.43%
No	10	1	10.00%
Total	17	6	35.29%

Table 6: Competition loyalty and conversion outcomes ($N = 17$)

This finding runs counter to an initial expectation that competitor attachment would reduce conversion likelihood. In this small sample, outlets marked competition-loyal were commercially active outlets that proved comparatively more responsive to the proposition offered. Given the sample size, the association is reported descriptively and is not read as a causal relationship.

5.6 Route/Beat-wise Observations

Beat / Route	Outlets	Converted	Conversion Rate	Potential (₹)
Bijlee Nagar	1	0	0%	3,000
Sangli	2	2	100%	21,000
Wakad	1	1	100%	3,500
Akurdi	1	1	100%	4,000
Belacasa/Balewadi Road	1	1	100%	2,000
Wakad Road Phase 2	2	1	50%	8,000
Phase 3	3	0	0%	29,000
Hinjewadi-Bhumkar	2	0	0%	3,000
Punewale	1	0	0%	6,000



Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum	3	0	0%	46,500
Total	17	6	35.29%	1,26,000

Table 7: Route/beat-wise outlet coverage, conversion and potential ($N = 17$)

Outlet counts per beat are uneven (one to three outlets), so a 100% or 0% rate based on a single or few outlets should not be read as a stable route-performance benchmark. Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum carried the highest recorded potential (₹46,500 across three outlets) with zero conversions, and Phase 3 similarly recorded ₹29,000 in potential with zero conversions — both beats are flagged as warranting diagnostic follow-up rather than simply additional visit frequency.

5.7 Highest-Potential Non-Converted Outlets

Sample basis: $n = 8$ highest-potential outlets selected from the 11 non-converted outlets; overall dataset $N = 17$.

Outlet	Beat	Potential (₹)	Recorded Remark
INGSA Mart LLP	Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum	37,000	Think Later
Real Mega Mart	Phase 3	19,000	Think Later
Metro Super Mall	Phase 3	8,000	Not Interested
Daily Basket	Punewale	6,000	Think Later
Green Mart	Wakad Road Phase 2	5,000	Think Later
Shree Aai Mart	Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum	5,000	Think Later
Ashapura Mart/Super Shoppe	Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum	4,500	Think Later
Manpasand Shoppy	Bijlee Nagar	3,000	Ask to discuss later

Table 7a: Highest-potential non-converted outlets ($n = 8$ of 11 non-converted; $N = 17$ overall)

The two highest-potential non-converted outlets — INGSA Mart LLP (₹37,000) and Real Mega Mart (₹19,000) — were both recorded as "Think Later", suggesting that at least part of the unconverted potential may be recoverable through structured follow-up rather than representing a permanent loss.

5.8 Reasons for Non-Conversion

Sample basis: $n = 11$ non-converted outlets; ten had a recorded remark and one had no remark recorded.

Recorded Remark	Number of Outlets
Think Later	7
Ask to Discuss Later	1
Not Interested	1
Small Outlet	1
Not recorded / no remark	1
Total non-converted	11

Table 8: Recorded reasons for non-conversion ($n = 11$)

"Think Later" was by far the most common recorded remark, indicating that most recorded non-conversion in this sample reflected a deferred decision rather than an outright rejection, and reinforcing the case for structured follow-up rather than



treating every "No" outcome as equivalent.

5.9 Competitor / Scheme Observations

Qualitative competitor-scheme observations were recorded for a subset of outlets, referencing HUL, L'Oréal and P&G (for example, percentage target-linked scheme notes). These are field notes from the outlets actually visited rather than the output of a structured competitor-tracking instrument or the competitors' official policies, and are reported here as indicative context rather than as a systematic competitive audit.

5.10 Summary of Key Indicators Mapped to Objectives

Objective	Theme	Evidence from the Dataset
1	Sales execution and beat coverage	17 outlets across 10 beats; distributor-supported order taking observed
2	Retailer response and conversion	35.29% overall conversion; "Think Later" the dominant non-conversion remark
3	Distributor, route and competition comparison	Rakesh 80.00% vs BALI 16.67%; competition-loyal 71.43% vs non-loyal 10.00%
4	Reasons for non-conversion	7 of 11 non-converted outlets recorded "Think Later"
Objective	Theme	Evidence from the Dataset
5	Recommendations	Follow-up structuring, segmentation and data-format improvements (Section 7)

Table 9: Objective-wise summary of findings

6. Discussion

This section connects the results in Section 5 with the literature reviewed in Section 2, distinguishing what the data shows, what the literature suggests, and the field interpretation offered here, together with the limitation attached to each finding.

6.1 Overall Conversion and the Sales Funnel

Finding: the observed conversion rate was 35.29%, with 64.71% of outlets not converting during the period observed. Interpretation: this is consistent with the sales-funnel view that interaction and conversion are separate stages (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005) — a large share of pitched outlets did not translate into an order within the observed window. Managerial implication: a field programme built primarily around visit counts may overstate productive activity relative to actual conversion outcomes, and there may be scope to improve outlet prioritisation and follow-up discipline rather than simply increasing coverage. Limitation: the sample ($N = 17$) is small and drawn from a single assigned beat structure, so the rate should not be generalised to ITC's wider Pune General Trade network.

6.2 Potential Value Does Not Guarantee Conversion

Finding: non-converted outlets carried a higher average recorded potential ($\approx ₹8,409$) than converted outlets ($\approx ₹5,583$). Interpretation: this suggests that opportunity size and conversion likelihood are not the same construct — a proposition's relevance, timing, and the retailer relationship may matter independently of the outlet's commercial size (Palmatier et al., 2006). Managerial implication: outlet prioritisation should combine potential value with response status rather than potential alone. Limitation: with only 17 outlets, this pattern cannot be tested for statistical significance and may not hold in a larger sample.



6.3 Distributor-wise Differences

Finding: the Rakesh group recorded an 80.00% conversion rate against 16.67% for BALI. Interpretation: relationship-marketing theory suggests that trust and repeated cooperation between a distributor and retailers can shape receptiveness to a proposition (Morgan & Hunt, 1994); the difference observed here is consistent with, though not proof of, such an effect. Managerial implication: distributor practices — route execution, retailer familiarity, pitch quality and follow-up — merit closer comparison. Limitation: the two groups differed in outlet count (5 versus 12) and route mix, so the comparison is a signal for further investigation rather than a performance ranking.

6.4 Competition Loyalty and Conversion

Finding: competition-loyal outlets showed a 71.43% conversion rate against 10.00% for non-loyal outlets — the opposite of an initial expectation that competitor attachment would depress conversion. Interpretation: this is broadly consistent with the observation that General Trade retailers often maintain concurrent supplier relationships rather than exclusive ones (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2025); a commercially active, competition-loyal outlet may still be open to an attractive proposition. Managerial implication: competitor attachment should not, by itself, be treated as a reason to deprioritise an outlet. Limitation: the association is based on 17 outlets and should be read descriptively, not causally.

6.5 "Think Later" as a Deferred Opportunity

Finding: "Think Later" accounted for 7 of the 11 non-converted outlets, including the two highest-potential non-converted outlets. Interpretation: consistent with push-strategy literature, a retailer's initial non-acceptance of a scheme does not necessarily indicate permanent rejection (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Jobber & Lancaster, 2015). Managerial implication: a structured follow-up process, rather than a simple Yes/No field, could recover some of the ₹92,500 in recorded potential currently attached to non-converted outlets. Limitation: the workbook did not track whether any "Think Later" outlets were subsequently revisited or converted after the internship period, so the size of the recoverable opportunity cannot be quantified from the available data.

6.6 Route-Level Opportunity Gaps

Finding: Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum and Phase 3 together accounted for ₹75,500 of recorded potential with zero conversions. Interpretation: this is consistent with route-to-market theory's emphasis on differentiated, rather than uniform, coverage and service by outlet or route potential (Kotler, Armstrong, & Opresnik, 2020). Managerial implication: these routes are candidates for diagnostic review of pitch quality, competitive context and follow-up practice. Limitation: each of these beats contains only three outlets, so the pattern may reflect a small number of atypical outlets rather than a stable route-level effect.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations follow directly from the findings in Section 5 and are structured as What / How / Why, consistent with the internship's own project-based reporting format.

Recommendation	What	Why (Linked Finding)
High-potential follow-up programme	Rank non-converted outlets by potential and response status; prioritise high-value "Think Later" outlets	₹92,500 of potential sits in non-converted outlets (Table 4)
Structured follow-up tracking	Replace a simple Yes/No follow-up field with follow-up date, next action and outcome	"Think Later" is the dominant non-conversion remark (Table 8)
Retailer segmentation	Group outlets by potential and response (e.g., high-potential/non-converted; low-priority) to allocate visit time	Wide potential range (₹1,000–₹37,000) across outlets



Recommendation	What	Why (Linked Finding)
Distributor-level review	Compare distributors on a common set of KPIs beyond conversion rate alone	80.00% vs 16.67% observed conversion gap (Table 5)
Route-level diagnostic review	Review pitch quality and competitive context on high-potential, zero-conversion beats	Maan-Pirangut-Bhukum and Phase 3 (Table 7)
Structured competitor tracking	Record competitor brand, scheme and retailer preference rather than a Yes/No loyalty flag	Competition-loyal outlets converted at a higher rate (Table 6)
Separate potential from actual order value	Add an actual-order-value field distinct from potential value	₹1,26,000 is recorded potential, not actual billed sales
Product-availability tracking	Add SKU-wise availability and stock fields to the outlet record	Availability was not captured in a structured format in the current workbook

Table 10: Recommendations and their link to findings

8. Limitations of the Study

- The dataset contains only 17 recorded outlet observations, drawn from beats assigned during a single internship; findings cannot be generalised to all ITC outlets in Pune.
- The study covers only the internship window of 15 May to 15 July 2026 and does not capture seasonal variation.
- The internship workbook records potential value, not actual billed sales; ₹1,26,000 should not be interpreted as realised revenue.
- Product availability was not captured in a structured, product-wise format, so no reliable availability percentage could be calculated.
- Competition loyalty was recorded as a binary Yes/No field and does not capture the depth or monetary significance of the competing relationship.
- Outlet counts differ across beats and between the two distributor groups, limiting the comparability of route- and distributor-level percentages.
- Field remarks such as "Think Later" reflect the researcher's and distributor's contemporaneous interpretation of retailer responses and may carry some subjectivity.
- No inferential statistical testing was performed; all reported associations are descriptive and should not be read as causal.
- Retailer-reported and field-recorded information was not independently verified by a third party.

9. Conclusion

This study examined sales-execution and retailer-engagement outcomes in the General Trade, Personal Care channel of ITC Limited, drawing on field evidence gathered during a two-month OJT engagement in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad. Across 17 recorded outlets spanning two distributor groups and ten beats, the observed conversion rate was 35.29%, with 73.41% of recorded potential concentrated in non-converted outlets. Conversion differed markedly by distributor (80.00% versus 16.67%) and by competition-loyalty status (71.43% versus 10.00%), and "Think Later" was



the most frequently recorded reason for non-conversion. These findings suggest that recorded potential, distributor practice and follow-up discipline — rather than outlet coverage alone — are associated with conversion outcomes in this small, field-based sample. Because the dataset is small, non-random and specific to the beats covered during the internship, the study is offered as a bounded, descriptive field case rather than a generalisable or causal account of ITC's General Trade performance. It nonetheless provides a practical, evidence-linked basis for the follow-up, segmentation and data-capture recommendations set out in Section 7.

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