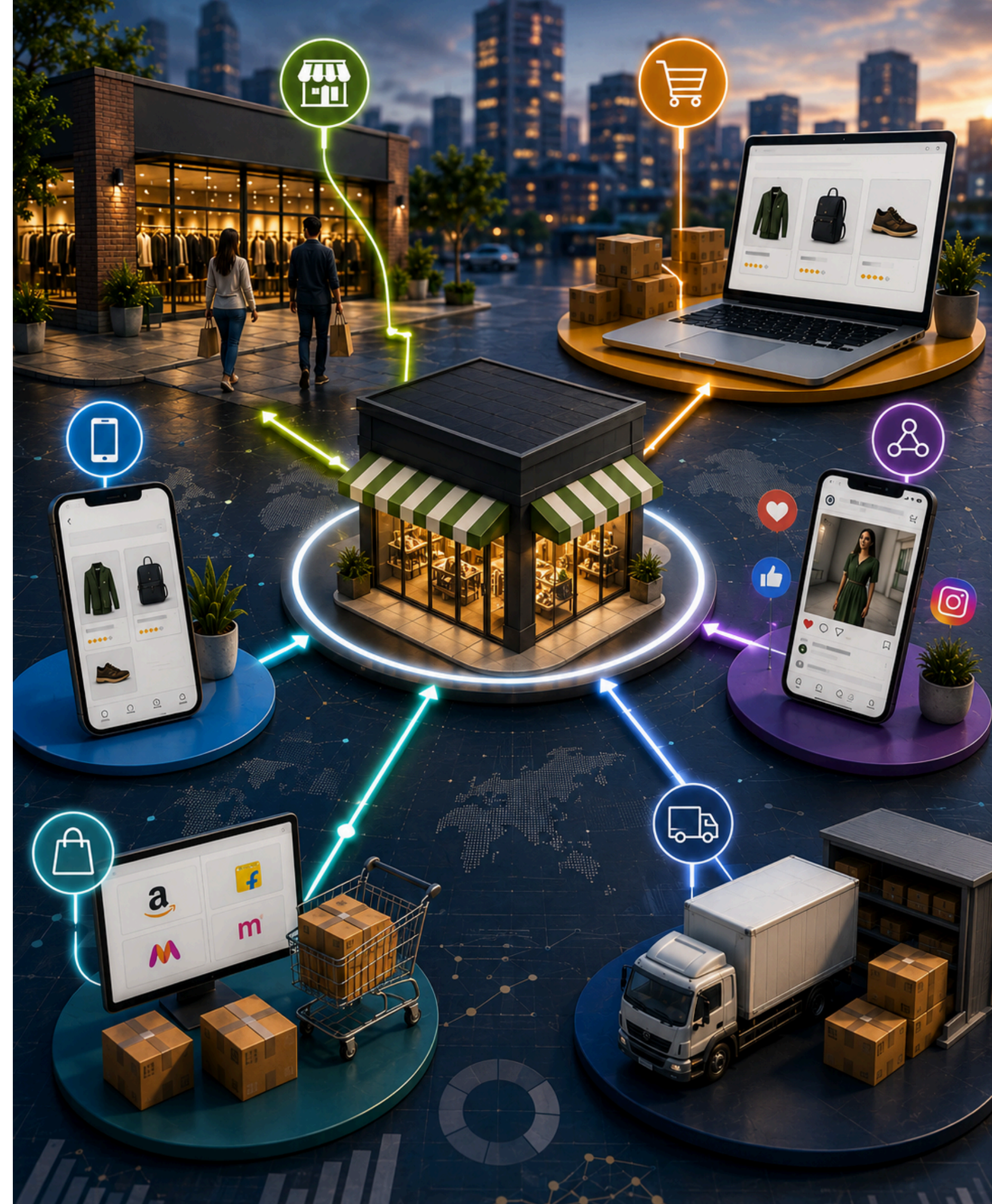


Managing Complexity *across multiple* Sales Channels

July 2026 Edition





Why multi-channel growth depends on building an organisation that can coordinate customers, inventory, operations and profitability at scale?



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INDUSTRY	Retail & Distribution
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ABOUT VALUESCOPE™ PERSPECTIVES	ValueScope™ Perspectives is Cuma's thought leadership series exploring the strategic, operational and financial issues shaping India's mid-market businesses. Each publication offers practical perspectives designed to help business leaders identify opportunities to create, recover and sustain enterprise value.
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Managing Complexity Across Multiple Sales Channels

Selling products has never been easier. Customers can discover, evaluate and purchase products through physical stores, distributors, marketplaces, e-commerce platforms, social commerce channels and direct sales teams.

For retail and distribution businesses, this creates significant opportunities for growth. It also creates complexity. As businesses expand across multiple sales channels, they often find themselves managing different customer expectations, pricing structures, inventory requirements, fulfilment models and operating processes simultaneously. Growth becomes increasingly dependent on the organisation's ability to coordinate these moving parts effectively.

The challenge is no longer simply selling more products. The challenge is creating a business that can operate consistently and profitably across multiple channels. A multi-channel strategy can help businesses:

- Reach new customer segments
- Increase market penetration
- Improve customer convenience
- Reduce dependence on a single channel
- Strengthen brand visibility
- Create new revenue streams

For many organisations, channel expansion becomes a natural part of growth. However, adding channels without strengthening the operating model can create unintended consequences. What begins as a growth initiative can gradually become a source of inefficiency, cost and organisational complexity.



Many businesses manage each channel independently. Sales teams focus on revenue. Operations focus on fulfilment. Finance focuses on profitability. Marketing focuses on customer acquisition. Over time, disconnected decisions begin to create friction across the business.

Common symptoms include:

- Inconsistent pricing across channels
- Inventory shortages in one channel and excess stock in another
- Conflicting customer experiences
- Margin erosion from channel-specific promotions
- Duplicate processes and reporting
- Increasing operational costs
- Limited visibility into channel profitability

As channel complexity grows, leaders often find it harder to answer a simple question:

A ValueScope™ Question?

If one of your largest sales channels doubled in size next year, would your operating model absorb the growth—or would the resulting complexity begin to reduce the value that growth creates?



A channel that generates significant revenue may not necessarily generate attractive profitability. Similarly, a smaller channel may create stronger margins, lower acquisition costs or more loyal customers. High-performing businesses therefore evaluate channels through a broader lens. They assess:

- Revenue contribution
- Gross margin performance
- Customer acquisition costs
- Order fulfilment costs
- Working capital impact
- Customer lifetime value
- Strategic importance

This enables leaders to make decisions based on value creation rather than revenue alone.

Successful retail and distribution businesses do not eliminate complexity. They design systems that manage it effectively. This requires:

- Integrated planning and forecasting
- Consistent pricing and promotion governance
- Unified inventory visibility
- Standardised performance measurement
- Clear channel strategies
- Data-driven decision-making

The objective is not to maximise the number of channels. The objective is to create an ecosystem where channels work together to support customer experience, profitability and growth.

Channel expansion is often a sign that a business is growing and adapting to changing customer behaviour. The challenge is ensuring that growth strengthens the business rather than overwhelms it. When complexity is managed effectively, multiple sales channels can become a source of competitive advantage. When it is not, complexity can quietly erode profitability, customer experience and organisational effectiveness.

RETAIL & DISTRIBUTION

Managing Complexity Across Multiple Sales Channels

More channels. More touchpoints.
More data. Unified strategy is the key to delivering customer value and driving profitable growth.



CHALLENGES



THE SOLUTION: INTEGRATE. ORCHESTRATE. OPTIMIZE.

A unified approach across people, processes and technology enables you to manage complexity and create seamless customer experiences.



BEST PRACTICES



THE IMPACT



Managing complexity across multiple sales channels isn't just about reaching more customers—it's about creating value everywhere they choose to engage.



The Value Lens

Multiple sales channels create opportunity, but they also introduce operational, financial and organisational complexity. Sustainable growth depends on a business's ability to manage both.



DISCOVER

Understand how different channels contribute to revenue, profitability, customer value and operational performance. Identify where complexity is creating friction, inefficiency or hidden costs.



RECOVER

Address disconnected processes, inventory imbalances, pricing inconsistencies and decision-making gaps that reduce the effectiveness of a multi-channel strategy.



CREATE

Build an integrated operating model that improves visibility, strengthens customer experience and enables profitable growth across channels.

The goal is not to operate more channels. The goal is to create more value from every channel you operate.

 RETAIL & DISTRIBUTION

Managing Complexity Across Multiple Sales Channels

Executive Reflection

Complexity is inevitable. Value is optional. Use these reflection prompts to assess your current state and identify where you can simplify, align and lead.



 REFLECTION PROMPTS

 CHANNEL STRATEGY Are our channels clearly defined, aligned, and optimized for different customer needs? _____ _____ _____	 DATA & VISIBILITY Do we have unified, real-time visibility across channels, customers, inventory and performance? _____ _____ _____	 INVENTORY & FULFILLMENT Are we managing inventory across channels efficiently to meet demand and reduce stockouts or overstock? _____ _____ _____
 PRICING & PROMOTIONS Are our pricing and promotional strategies consistent, competitive and channel-appropriate? _____ _____ _____	 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE Is the customer experience seamless and consistent across every touchpoint? _____ _____ _____	 CHANNEL PERFORMANCE & CONFLICTS Do we actively monitor channel performance and address conflicts or cannibalization? _____ _____ _____

 TURN INSIGHT INTO ACTION

 1. PRIORITIZE What is the #1 area of complexity we need to address first? _____ _____	 2. PLAN What steps will we take to simplify, align and create value across our channels? _____ _____	 3. MEASURE How will we track progress and ensure our channel strategy drives business impact? _____ _____
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 **LEAD THE SHIFT**
Simplify complexity. Align your channels. Deliver exceptional value—everywhere.

“ The goal isn’t more channels. It’s better experiences and stronger results across every channel. ”

Where Do You Go From Here?

Expanding into new channels is often easier than managing them effectively.

At Cuma, we help retail and distribution businesses evaluate channel performance, improve operational alignment and create scalable operating models that support profitable growth.

By bringing greater visibility and discipline to multi-channel operations, businesses can turn complexity into a source of competitive advantage.

The next question isn't how many channels your business serves.

It's how effectively those channels work together to create value?



About Cuma

Cuma is a strategy and performance advisory firm helping India's mid-market businesses create sustainable enterprise value through strategic clarity, operational excellence, financial discipline and organisational capability.

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