



CASE STUDY

**Building and Scaling eCommerce
Categories**

OVERVIEW

Founded in 2012, the eCommerce aggregator is a leading eCommerce platform in Southeast Asia, operating in six countries, including the Philippines. By 2014, just two years after its inception, it had established a significant presence in the Philippine market.



BACKGROUND

In 2014, the company was in its early growth stage in the Philippines, expanding its assortment, optimizing operations, and refining category management. The local eCommerce industry was still in its infancy, with key challenges such as market and merchant skepticism, logistical inefficiencies, and unstructured category strategies. Many sellers, accustomed to offline retail, required education and strategic support to transition online.

Initially, Category Managers were hired based on industry expertise, assuming deep product knowledge would drive success. However, as the platform scaled, analytics-driven decision-making, cross-functional coordination, and fast execution proved more critical. This led to a shift toward hiring Category Managers with strong analytics backgrounds to implement a more structured approach to pricing, assortment, and promotions.

I was brought in as part of this shift to apply data-driven methods in category management, leveraging my analytics and operations experience from the shipping industry to drive scalable and sustainable growth, scalable and sustainable in an increasingly competitive market.

CHALLENGES

As one of the earliest eCommerce players in the Philippines, the company faced rapid expansion while navigating the complexities of an evolving digital marketplace. While consumer adoption was growing, structural inefficiencies in merchant acquisition, category management, and pricing strategies posed challenges to sustaining performance at scale.

Within the Lifestyle major category, the company faced key challenges:

- **Scaling Merchant Engagement & Revenue** – Many merchants were unfamiliar with eCommerce dynamics and required education on pricing, promotions, and fulfillment strategies to ensure sustainable growth.
- **Building a Cohesive Category Strategy** – The lack of a structured approach to category development resulted in inconsistent sales performance and inefficient resource allocation.
- **Expanding Assortment & Inventory Commitment** – A continuous focus on assortment growth was necessary to increase consumer adoption. This required:
 - Analyzing subcategory-level gaps to fill assortment needs.
 - Ensuring best sellers had available stock at optimal pricing, even if it meant sourcing from different merchants.
 - Identifying emerging market trends based on sales data and consumer demand to introduce new relevant products.
- **Optimizing Home Appliances (HA)** – After stabilizing Home & Living (HL), I was moved to HA in March 2016, which required a full overhaul to improve performance and support Lifestyle's overall revenue targets.

SOLUTIONS

Rather than implementing isolated initiatives, I developed a structured approach to category growth that addressed merchant engagement, pricing strategy, and inventory optimization holistically

To drive sustainable growth and category stability, multiple initiatives were executed simultaneously to enhance merchant performance, optimize pricing strategies, and improve inventory management. By leveraging data-driven decision-making, aligning cross-functional teams, and securing strategic partnerships, I was able to create a more scalable and sustainable approach to category management.

- **Merchant & Vendor Acquisition:**
Increased onboarding of sellers across key subcategories to diversify product availability and drive category growth. Developed pricing strategies with vendors to ensure competitive yet sustainable pricing structures.
- **Assortment Expansion & Optimization:**
Conducted market research to identify high-potential product gaps, ensuring best sellers had available stock at the most competitive pricing. Analyzed subcategory-level data to introduce new SKUs aligned with consumer demand and trends.





- **Pricing & Promotional Framework:** Managed pricing tiers between break-even, loss leaders, and margin-driving products to optimize revenue. Leveraged sales trends and seasonal data to create targeted promotional calendars. Ensured promotions aligned with broader category goals.
- **Cross-Category Synergies & Marketing Alignment:** Collaborated with marketing to integrate promotions across complementary categories, ensuring optimized visibility and campaign effectiveness.
- **Operational & Fulfillment Readiness:** Worked with operations to improve fulfillment efficiency, reducing stockouts and ensuring seamless last-mile delivery.
- **Strategic Brand Partnerships:** Secured partnerships with key brands to enhance category credibility and drive targeted promotions that aligned with consumer demand.



This structured approach ensured sustainable revenue growth and long-term category performance. Rather than implementing isolated initiatives, I developed a structured approach to category growth that addressed merchant engagement, pricing strategy, and inventory optimization holistically.

RESULTS

The eCommerce company was where I honed my ability to build, stabilize, and scale in an unpredictable environment. The experience shaped my approach to holistic category management, emphasizing fast execution, structured growth, and cross-functional collaboration—making me an adaptable leader in the eCommerce space.

- ✔ Developed merchant engagement strategies, increasing product variety and improving stock availability.
- ✔ Implemented a pricing & promotional framework, optimizing break-even SKUs to drive conversions.
- ✔ Collaborated across marketing, operations, and logistics, ensuring category-wide alignment.
- ✔ Delivered more than a 100% increase in GMV in 2015 for HL, proving that a structured approach could yield massive results.
- ✔ Strengthened HA's merchant pipeline, securing key brands and improving seller engagement.
- ✔ Implemented a structured pricing & promotional approach, ensuring category-wide profitability while maintaining competitive pricing.



-  Created clear operational workflows, streamlining internal processes and merchant support.
-  Drove significant revenue growth (18% from previous year), making HA a core driver of Lifestyle's performance.

Key Takeaways

- **Proven Category Leadership:** My experience in HL established me as a strong builder, leading to my transfer to HA.
- **Full-Scope Category Management:** Beyond just sales, I handled strategy, operations, vendor management, and cross-functional execution.
- **Impact at the Division Level:** HA's turnaround directly influenced how Lifestyle as a whole was managed and measured.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Inspired by this success story?
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