



# A Field Guide to Channel Strategy: Building Routes to Market

*By Dr. Anne T. Coughlan*

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Building a route to market is fundamental to sales and survival. This book demystifies marketing channel strategy by focusing on how to do channel design and management. We provide practical tools and frameworks for key decisions and highlight the critical tradeoffs and pitfalls. Many channel strategies are built like the wood towers used in popular stacking games. You hope your tower is sturdy and strong. But over time, you may replace or add partners, add or subtract routes to market, and change your product lines - so your channel strategy must adapt in order to prevent your tower from collapsing or breaking apart. This Field Guide introduces you to the channels landscape, helps you understand your building block options, and unpacks the physics of adding and subtracting channel components, to give you the tools you need to keep your go-to-market strategy resilient, responsive, and a source of competitive advantage.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **About the Author**

Anne T. Coughlan is the Polk Bros. Chair in Retailing, and Professor of Marketing, at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. She has been at Kellogg since 1985. Her research interests are in the areas of distribution channel management and design; sales force management and compensation; pricing to end-users and through the channel; and competitive strategy. She has worked with dozens of companies on these issues over the years, and is the Academic Director of the Distribution Channel Strategies program at Kellogg's Allen Center for Executives. Her writings include many academic articles as well as business cases and books. She has been on the editorial boards of several leading journals and is the Editor of Social Science Research Network's Marketing e-Journals. She also taught at the University of Rochester's business school (1981-85) and INSEAD (1997-98). She earned a Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University. She enjoys family, travel, and growing exotic plants from around the world in her greenhouse. Sandy Jap is Professor of Marketing at the Goizueta Business School at Emory University. She joined the school in 2001 and was a co-founder of the Emory Marketing Analytics Center (MAC). Her research centers on the development and management of interorganizational relationship and multichannel strategy as well as e-procurement design of industrial reverse auctions. She has won numerous awards for her impact on the field and her research efforts have been conducted in a number of industries, including the aerospace, automotive, chemical, petroleum, high-tech and consumer product industries. Her work has received significant attention from the academic community and the marketplace, and she is the author of *Partnering with the Frenemy*. She is an editorial board member at leading marketing journals and serves as President of the American Marketing Association's Foundation and is on their Board of Directors. She was on the faculty at the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1995-2001 and was a visiting Associate Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida (Go Gators!), and enjoys life with her kids. Tennis, red wine, and New England summers come in a very close second.

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**Chris Manley:**

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