



Cooperative Education Report

Field Sales Performance and Government Regulation: A Study of the Nepalese
Tobacco Market

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Abstract

This report presents a comprehensive account of my 16-week cooperative education internship at **Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd.**, a principal sales and distribution company in Nepal operating under the umbrella of CG Corp Global and responsible for the strategic market placement of Camel cigarettes. Commencing on June 17, 2025, and concluding in October 2025, my role primarily functioned as a high-frequency **Sales Representative/Intern**. My core mandate was intensive market coverage, requiring me to execute daily sales visits to approximately 60 retail outlets, accumulating a weekly target of nearly 300 shops across the assigned territory.

The internship was centered on achieving primary and secondary sales targets, ensuring optimal product visibility, and gathering critical market intelligence while navigating the stringent regulatory landscape governing tobacco product sales in Nepal. The experience provided a robust platform to apply theoretical knowledge from academic courses—particularly in Marketing Management, Sales Force Management, and Distribution Strategy—to real-world scenarios.

Key learning outcomes include mastery of high-volume sales execution, detailed understanding of the FMCG supply chain's "last mile," and proficiency in managing retailer relationships under compliance pressures. The report documents the systematic approach to daily work, highlights the unique challenges posed by competition and illicit trade, and offers

strategic recommendations for enhancing the company's field operations and retailer compliance initiatives.

Keywords: Field Sales Execution & Market Coverage, Regulatory Compliance under TPCRA, FMCG Distribution & Retailer Relationship Management



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Company Profile

Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. is a key player in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector in Nepal, specifically operating within the highly regulated tobacco industry. As a subsidiary operating under the strategic umbrella of **CG Corp Global**, one of Nepal's largest and most diversified conglomerates, Perfect Blends holds the critical responsibility for the importation, manufacturing, sales, and distribution of the internationally renowned **Camel** brand of cigarettes across the entire Nepali market. This strategic positioning provides the company with both the robust logistical backing of a corporate giant and the specific market focus required for a competitive product.

1.1.1 History and Evolution

Perfect Blends Nepal Pvt. Ltd. traces its operational foundation to the strategic vision of CG Corp Global to dominate key segments of the domestic consumer market. The company was established to manage the localized operations for premium international tobacco brands, fulfilling the role of both a manufacturing unit (for final assembly/packaging) and the national distribution arm. This evolution reflects a deliberate strategy to control the value chain from raw material procurement, often imported from international partners like JT International, to the final point of sale, ensuring quality control and brand consistency mandated by global standards.

1.1.2 Vision

The overarching vision of Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. is to be the **undisputed market leader** in the premium and mid-segment tobacco category in Nepal. This is pursued by ensuring unwavering regulatory compliance, maximizing consumer preference for the Camel brand, and upholding responsible business practices that sustain market leadership under the reputable portfolio of CG Corp Global. The vision extends beyond mere sales volume to establishing a benchmark for operational integrity within a challenging sector.

1.1.3 Mission

The mission of the company is threefold:

1. Product Consistency: To ensure a consistent supply of premium-quality Camel cigarettes that strictly meet consumer demand across all geographical segments of Nepal.

2. Distribution Excellence: To continuously maintain and strengthen its intensive, multi-layered distribution networks, fostering strong, collaborative retailer relationships, particularly through its dedicated field sales force.

3. Compliance and Ethics: To operate with stringent compliance with health, safety, and legal regulations (specifically the TPCRA) in every aspect of its production and sales processes, concurrently striving to optimize cost and operational efficiency while upholding corporate social responsibility standards.

1.1.4 Core Values

Perfect Blends operates on a set of deeply ingrained core values that govern decision-making from the factory floor to the last retail outlet:

- **Quality and Consistency:** Non-negotiable standards in product manufacturing and presentation.
- **Compliance and Integrity:** Absolute adherence to legal and regulatory norms, maintaining ethical conduct in all trade practices.
- **Customer Centricity:** Focusing on the needs of the consumer and, crucially, the retailer, who serves as the final gateway to the market.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring that every team member, especially field representatives, is accountable for their designated territory and performance.
- **Operational Excellence:** Continuous innovation in supply chain, distribution, and market execution to minimize waste and maximize reach.

1.1.5 Product Ranges and Descriptions

Perfect Blends' primary focus is the **Camel** brand portfolio, which typically includes several variants to cater to different consumer price points and taste preferences.

- **Camel Filter Cigarettes:** The core, classic offering, often positioned in the premium-to-mid segment.
- **Camel Light/mint:** Variants focusing on reduced strength, catering to a specific consumer segment.

The company is also involved in the importation of essential raw materials used in the final assembly in Nepal, such as acetate filter rods, cigarette paper, tipping paper, and packaging materials, ensuring a smooth and controlled production flow.

1.1.6 Strategic Alignment and Partnerships

The operational success of Perfect Blends is intrinsically linked to its strategic alliances:

- **CG Corp Global:** Provides financial backing, high-level corporate governance, robust logistics infrastructure, and brand capital.
- **International Tobacco Firms (e.g., JT International):** Maintains licensing/manufacturing agreements that allow for the local production of the globally standardized Camel brand.
- **Global Suppliers:** Reliance on foreign suppliers (India, Malaysia, Indonesia) for key raw materials (e.g., filter rods), emphasizing international standards in the supply chain.
- **Governmental/Regulatory Bodies:** Constant engagement and compliance with Nepalese regulatory bodies governing tobacco sales, advertising, and taxation.

1.2 Organizational Structure

1.2.1 Organizational Overview

Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. is structured hierarchically, reflecting its nature as a manufacturing and distribution hub under the CG Global conglomerate. Key functional pillars include Manufacturing, Supply Chain/Logistics, Finance, Regulatory/Legal, and the core revenue-generating unit: **Sales & Marketing**. The sales function is the most decentralised, operating with Area Sales Managers (ASM) and Trade Marketing Executives (TME) who manage the field Sales Representatives like myself.

1.2.2 Functional Divisions and Key Roles

Division	Key Responsibility	Key Roles Interfaced With
Sales & Marketing	Revenue generation, market coverage, retailer relationship management, brand activation.	Sales Manager, Trade Marketing Executive (TME), Distribution Head.
Supply Chain/ Logistics	Inventory management, importation, warehousing, distributor dispatch, and last-mile coordination.	Logistics Manager, Dispatch Team.
Regulatory & Compliance	Ensuring TPCRA adherence, managing legal risks, and health and safety.	Compliance Officers, Legal Counsel.
Finance & Accounting	Costing, budgeting, credit control, and collection management.	Credit Manager (for retailer/distributor payments).

1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships and External Resources

The company leverages external resources to secure its market position.

- **National Distributor Network:** A tiered system of distributors and wholesalers who are responsible for primary sales (selling from the company warehouse to distributors) and secondary distribution (distributor to retailer).

- **Technology Providers:** Use of Sales Force Automation (SFA) or a similar TME-lite software for real-time sales reporting and data capture by field staff.
- **Retail Outlets (300+ Weekly):** The ultimate channel partners for sales, their operational health and willingness to stock the product are critical.

1.2.4 My Position in the Organisation

My role as a **Sales Intern** was strategically placed at the cutting edge of the organization's revenue stream—the field. I was tasked with the direct execution of sales strategy within an assigned high-volume territory in Kathmandu. I reported directly to the **Area Sales Manager (ASM)** and collaborated daily with the Trade Marketing Executive (TME) to align field promotion execution with national marketing campaigns.

1.2.5 My Job Position in the Company's Organizational Structure

I was positioned within the **Sales & Marketing Division**, specifically within the **Field Sales Team**. My function was not administrative; it was an operational role focused on *execution*. This position required a high degree of autonomy and accountability, bridging the gap between the company's strategic goals and the retailer's practical needs. My daily activities were the direct driver of the secondary sales figures that fed into the national sales performance metrics.

1.3 My Intention and Motivation to Join Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd.

As a Marketing student, my primary motivation to join Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. was the opportunity to gain **high-impact, hands-on experience** in a uniquely challenging and competitive sector. The high-volume sales structure—visiting 300 shops per week—was a specific draw, promising an immersion into the rapid-fire decision-making inherent in FMCG sales. I intended to:

- **Validate Marketing Theory:** To empirically test academic concepts like channel marketing, trade promotions, and competitive positioning in a live, highly competitive market.
- **Develop Sales Acumen:** To transition from theoretical understanding to practical mastery of the entire sales cycle, from cold-calling (first-time visits) to negotiation and relationship management with high-frequency repeat customers (retailers).

- **Master Compliance Marketing:** To learn how a global brand maintains relevance and market share when traditional advertising tools are heavily restricted, forcing innovation in *in-store* merchandising and retailer collaboration.
- **Build Resilience:** The sheer physical and mental demand of the 300-shop commitment was seen as an opportunity to build an unparalleled work ethic, stamina, and resilience—qualities essential for future leadership roles.

1.4 Strategic Analysis of Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. (SWOT Analysis)

Category	Factors	Elaboration
Strengths	<p>1. CG Corp Global Backing: Provides strong financial stability, robust distribution network access, and high-level corporate infrastructure.</p> <p>2. Camel Brand Equity: A globally recognized, premium-quality brand that commands consumer loyalty and willingness to pay.</p> <p>3. Intensive Coverage Model: The large sales force (of which I was a part) ensures maximum market penetration and product availability, directly counteracting competitor gaps.</p> <p>4. Supply Chain Control: Localized assembly/packaging operations ensure immediate</p>	<p>This combination of global brand recognition and local corporate Power creates an impenetrable competitive barrier in logistics and trust.</p>

	<p>quality control and reduced reliance on fully imported, finished goods.</p>	
Weaknesses	<p>1. Regulatory Handcuffs: Sales are heavily restricted by the TPCRA, limiting promotional creativity and brand visibility through traditional channels.</p> <p>2. Health Sentiment: Operating in an industry facing increasing public health scrutiny and anti-smoking campaigns.</p> <p>3. High Operational Costs: Dependence on Imported raw materials create exposure to currency fluctuation risk and high duties/taxation.</p>	<p>The inability to openly advertise places the entire marketing burden is on in-store execution and the sales team's ability to influence the retailer.</p>

Opportunities	<p>1. Premiumization Trend: Growing disposable Income in Nepal allows for the introduction of premium/niche variants (e.g., slim or capsule filters) within the Camel brand.</p> <p>Digital Sales Tools: Adoption of advanced SFA/CRM systems to increase efficiency and data quality from the massive 300-shop visit schedule.</p> <p>3. Focus on Trade Advocacy: Leveraging retailer partnerships to become the 'most compliant and reliable' supplier in the market.</p>	<p>Opportunities exist by innovating on <i>product</i> and <i>process</i>, rather than on banned <i>promotion</i>.</p>
Threats	<p>1. Illicit Trade & Smuggling: High taxes incentivize smuggling, particularly near porous borders with India, which undercuts the legal product's price and market share.</p> <p>2. Taxation & Legislation Risk: Continuous threat of steeper excise taxes or even tighter TPCRA regulations</p>	<p>Illicit trade directly attacks the company's revenue and the government's tax base, making it the most immediate operational threat.</p>

	<p>(e.g., 90% graphic health warnings).</p> <p>3. Competitive Pressure: Intense competition in the mid-to-high segment from established domestic and other international brands.</p>	
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1.5 Statement of the Report

This report serves as a formal documentation and critical reflection of my cooperative education internship. Its primary focus is to:

- **Detail the high-volume sales execution model** employed by Perfect Blends, specifically analysing the challenges and mechanisms involved in maintaining a weekly average of **300 retail shop visits** and converting that frequency into tangible sales figures.
- **Evaluate the practical application of Marketing and Sales theory** within a unique regulatory framework.
- **Document key learning outcomes** concerning field challenges, problem-solving, and professional skill development gained from June 17, 2025, to the conclusion of the internship.
- **Propose data-informed, actionable recommendations** for improving the sales force's efficiency, regulatory compliance adherence, and strategic positioning in the dynamic Nepalese market.

1.6 Objectives of the Co-operative Studies

The key objectives defining this co-operative study were:

- To understand the operational and strategic dynamics of a leading tobacco company in Nepal, particularly its distribution and 'last mile' logistics under CG's management.
- To apply theoretical business concepts (marketing, sales, supply chain, finance) in a real industry setting, focusing on maximizing product availability (placement) and retailer incentives (promotion/pricing).
- To gather first-hand insights into regulatory, taxation, and compliance issues unique to the tobacco sales sector in Nepal and develop skills in navigating these legal constraints.
- To develop necessary professional skills: market research, advanced sales tracking, detailed report preparation, negotiation, and high-frequency stakeholder management.
- To assess the current market positioning and competitive landscape for the Camel brand in key urban and semi-urban territories.

Chapter 2: Co-op Study Activities

2.1 Job Description: The High-Frequency Sales Representative Role

My official title was Sales and Marketing Intern, but the core function was an intensive, target-driven **Field Sales Representative** role. This is the most crucial operational role, as it is the final link in the supply chain. The job required immense dedication, autonomy, and excellent relationship-building skills to manage the high volume of contact points.

The primary objective was the consistent attainment of three non-negotiable daily KPIs:

- **Sales Target (Value & Volume):** Achieving the assigned daily sales target (secondary sales) to the retailers.
- **Coverage Target (Visits):** Completing the mandated 60-shop route daily, equating to 300 quality visits per week.
- **Merchandising Target (Visibility):** Ensuring all approved Point-of-Sale (POS) materials were properly installed and the product was displayed in the optimal, compliant manner.

2.2 My Daily and Weekly Duties and Responsibilities

My duties were a rigorous combination of physical fieldwork, relationship management, and meticulous data reporting.

2.2.1 The 300-Shop Weekly Coverage Cycle

The responsibility of visiting 300 shops per week was the defining element of the internship. This translated into approximately 60 shop visits per day over a five-day work week.

- **Morning Huddle (8:00 AM - 8:30 AM):** Reviewing the previous day's sales report, discussing any out-of-stock (OOS) issues with the Area Sales Manager (ASM), and receiving the day's specialized focus (e.g., push a new promotional offer, focus on competitor counter-strategy).
- **Field Execution (8:30 AM - 4:00 PM):** This was the core activity. The day was spent entirely on the assigned route, covering 6-8 micro-territories to complete the 60 visits. The pace required efficient movement, minimizing travel time, and dedicating an average of 5-7 minutes per retailer for a quality sales interaction.
- **The Sales Interaction:** Focused on checking existing stock, writing new orders (based on fast-moving variants), negotiating a high share of shelf space, ensuring compliance, and educating the retailer on product features or promotions.
- **Data Capture (Real-Time):** Every sale, stock-out, non-compliant display, and competitor sighting was logged immediately into the TME-lite application on a mobile device to ensure data accuracy and real-time reporting.
- **End-of-Day Reporting (4:00 PM - 4:30 PM):** Finalizing the daily sales and coverage reports, reconciling any payment collections (if applicable), and organizing the route plan for the following day.

2.2.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

My performance was strictly measured against:

- **Secondary Sales Value (SSV):** The total monetary value of product sold from the distributor/retailer to the end consumer (measured by orders placed with me).
- **Numeric Distribution (ND):** The percentage of the 300 target shops that stocked at least one unit of the Camel brand (aiming for 100%).
- **Weighted Distribution (WD):** The percentage of sales volume captured by the retailers I visited, ensuring the highest volume retailers were covered frequently.
- **POS/Merchandising Adherence:** A quality check metric ensuring compliant and optimal product display.

2.3 Activities in Coordination with Co-Workers and Departments

The success of the field role depended heavily on fluid communication with internal teams:

- **Trade Marketing Team:** Collaborating to ensure that all promotional materials were not only visually appealing but also strictly compliant with the TPCRA. This required finding creative ways to display the *pack* as the only permissible form of advertising.
- **Logistics and Supply Chain:** Essential for communicating stock shortages and delivery failures. If a retailer placed an order with me, the logistics team had to ensure the distributor delivered it promptly. I often acted as the frontline troubleshooter for delayed deliveries.
- **Area Sales Manager (ASM):** Daily reporting and seeking strategic guidance on how to penetrate tough accounts or resolve territory disputes. The ASM was crucial for approving promotional discounts or credit terms.
- **Finance/Credit Control:** Reporting any credit-related issues, or collecting payments if required, to ensure the retailer's account health remained positive for future orders.

2.4 My Standard Job Processes and Field Execution Methodology

The methodology for managing 300 weekly accounts was highly systematic, built on efficiency and maximizing the return on every visit.

2.4.1 Route Planning and Time Management

My approach utilized a modified "**Chevron**" **model** for route efficiency:

- **Territory Segmentation:** The territory (e.g., a cluster of wards in Kathmandu) was divided into six daily micro-zones.
- **Prioritization:** Within each micro-zone, the highest-volume retailers (Key Accounts) were slotted first, ensuring they received attention early in the day.
- **Minimizing Backtracking:** The route was mapped using a logical path (e.g., a circular or snake pattern) to eliminate unnecessary travel time between shops, crucial for fitting 50 visits into a single workday.

2.4.2 The Five-Step Retailer Visit Model

To standardize the high-frequency interactions, I followed a rigid, five-step interaction model:

- **The Approach (The Check-In):** Immediate, professional greeting. Using the SFA app to quickly verify the retailer's last order and credit status.
- **The Stock Audit:** Physically checking the retailer's cigarette cabinet/rack for Camel products. Identifying any Slow-Moving Stock (SMS) or Out-of-Stock (OOS) situations for fast-moving items.
- **The Consultative Pitch:** Presenting the order, not just asking, "How many packs do you need?" but advising, "Based on last week's sales of Variant X, I recommend increasing your order by 5 packs to prevent a stock-out before your next delivery."
- **The Merchandising/Compliance Check:** Physically cleaning the rack, ensuring Camel has prime visibility in compliance with size and distance restrictions (TPCRA), and placing compliant POS materials.

- **The Intelligence and Check-Out:** Collecting data on competitor activities, listening to retailer feedback on pricing or consumer demand, and logging the order instantly before moving to the next shop.

2.4.3 Data Collection and Reporting Cycle

Data was the lifeblood of my role. Failure to report accurately meant the company operated blind.

- **Real-Time Data Capture:** Utilizing the TME-lite system to capture the following at *every* shop: GPS-verified check-in/check-out time, sales order quantity, current stock level, competitor pricing, and a photo verification of the compliant display.
- **Daily Roll-Up:** At the end of the day, the 50 individual shop reports were compiled and analyzed for immediate performance feedback and to flag any red alerts (e.g., major stock-outs).
- **Weekly Synthesis:** A detailed weekly report was generated, moving beyond raw numbers to provide qualitative insights on market trends, retailer sentiment, and the effectiveness of trade promotions.

2.5 Contributions as a Co-op Student in the Company

My contributions were immediate, measurable, and directly impactful on the company's bottom line:

2.5.1 Direct Sales and Revenue Impact

- **Sustained Coverage:** The most significant contribution was maintaining the rigorous **300-shop per week coverage target**, ensuring the Camel brand remained top-of-mind and consistently available, directly translating into stable, high-volume secondary sales and preventing consumers from switching to alternatives due to OOS.
- **Growth in Numeric Distribution:** Focused efforts on under-penetrated accounts led to an incremental increase in the number of retailers stocking the full Camel variant portfolio in my territory.

- **Improved Cash Flow:** By diligently ensuring collections were processed accurately and promptly, I supported the Finance department in maintaining healthy retailer credit accounts, crucial for uninterrupted sales flow.

2.5.2 Enhancement of Market Intelligence

- **Accuracy of Competitor Benchmarking:** My detailed, geo-tagged reports provided management with the most accurate, real-time data on rival pricing changes, new product introductions, and promotional intensity. This field-level intelligence was critical for the ASM to formulate rapid, effective counter-strategies.
- **Retailer Feedback Loop:** I served as the primary voice of the retailer, channeling feedback on product quality, packaging durability, and the effectiveness of trade schemes directly back to the Trade Marketing team, leading to more responsive future promotions.

Chapter 3: Learning Process and Outcomes

3.1 Challenges Encountered in the Field Sales Environment

The internship provided a stark realization of the operational challenges inherent in the highly competitive and regulated tobacco FMCG sector.

3.1.1 Regulatory Complexity and Compliance Friction

The most pervasive challenge was the strict enforcement of the **Tobacco Product Control and Regulatory Act (TPCRA)**.

- **Advertising Ban:** The near-total ban on conventional advertising meant driving sales depended purely on shelf presence and the personal conviction of the retailer, making every shop visit a high-stakes, low-tool effort.
- **Display Restrictions:** Retailers were prohibited from displaying products near schools or in specific, non-compliant ways. My role often involved having to *undo* a retailer's preferred (but non-compliant) display and installing a compliant, yet less visible, one, which often led to resistance and negotiation friction.

- **Sale of Loose Cigarettes:** Though prohibited, the practice of selling single sticks remains common. Educating retailers on this ban while still aiming to maximize sales was a delicate ethical and commercial balancing act.

3.1.2 Competition and the Threat of Illicit Trade

My territory faced dual competitive pressures:

- **Branded Competition:** Direct competition from established international and local brands, particularly when they launched an aggressive short-term price war or offered better credit terms to distributors.
- **The Illicit Market:** The major threat was the prevalence of smuggled, untaxed, or counterfeit cigarettes. Since these products avoid government excise tax, they can be sold significantly cheaper, directly undermining the legal price of Camel and the value proposition I presented to the retailer. Convincing a retailer to stock the legal, higher-priced product over a cheaper, grey-market alternative required powerful arguments rooted in quality and long-term business integrity.

3.1.3 Physical and Mental Demands of High-Frequency Visits

The commitment to 300 shops per week imposed severe demands:

- **Physical Exhaustion:** Navigating busy urban areas of Kathmandu, often on foot or a two-wheeler, for 7+ hours daily to maintain the 50-visit pace was physically draining, particularly during the challenging monsoon season.
- **Mental Fatigue:** Maintaining a high level of enthusiasm, product knowledge, and persuasive energy across 50 distinct business negotiations every single day required exceptional mental fortitude and the ability to compartmentalize setbacks. Dealing with repeated rejection or non-payment issues without letting it impact the next visit was a constant learning curve.

3.2 Problem-Solving Approaches Used

Facing these challenges necessitated a flexible and data-driven approach to sales:

3.2.1 Consultative Sales and Relationship Building

- **Shifting from Seller to Advisor:** Recognizing that retailers are business owners, I adopted a **Consultative Sales Approach**. Instead of merely pushing product, I used the market intelligence I gathered to offer advice (e.g., "The demand for the Blue variant is up 15% in the adjacent area; you should increase stock to match that trend"). This built trust and secured long-term loyalty, making compliance discussions easier.
- **Emphasizing Quality and Legality:** To counter illicit trade, I focused the pitch on the **superior quality, standard legality, and reliability of supply** of Camel, reassuring the retailer that stocking legitimate product protected their business from government fines and maintained consumer trust.

3.2.2 Data-Driven Adjustments to Route and Strategy

- **The Power of OOS:** The most critical data point was the Out-of-Stock (OOS) rate. If a retailer was frequently OOS, it meant my order writing was insufficient. I used the SFA data to identify these "hot spots" and prioritize a deeper interaction, adjusting their recommended order size based on actual sales velocity, not guesswork.
- **Dynamic Route Adjustment:** When a major competitor launched a promotion in a specific micro-zone, I was able to dynamically shift my route the next day to flood that zone with our counter-offer and reinforce retailer relationships, acting as a rapid, physical response mechanism to market changes.

3.3 Examples of Problem Resolution and Critical Incidents

Incident Category	Problem Encountered	Solution Implemented	Learning Outcome
Compliance Friction	A retailer with a prime display location insisted on placing the product non-compliantly, citing better visibility and fearing a loss of sales if moved to the legal area.	I demonstrated a compliant display setup using a sample, proving that moving the product and using the correct (but small) compliant POS material still maintained visibility due to the brand's prominence.	The need for demonstration and peer-to-peer reassurance is more effective than pure enforcement in the field.
Illicit Competition	Noticed a new, cheap, brand aggressively undercutting Camel's price in a semi-urban area causing retailers to decline my orders.	I immediately reported the price point and packaging details. The data led the Trade Marketing team to authorize a very specific temporary Free-pack promotion for that micro-zone only, neutralizing the	Understood the agility required to Use freebies as a surgical weapon against illicit trade, requiring rapid deployment and withdrawal.

		competitor's advantage.	
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3.4 Recommendations to the Company

Based on my time on the ground, these strategic recommendations focus on maximizing the return on the Sales Force's intense effort and managing the regulatory environment:

3.4.1 Recommendation 1: Digital Tool Enhancement

Problem: The current TME-lite tool, while functional, is primarily for data entry and lacks advanced analytical and predictive features.

Recommendation: Upgrade the SFA system to incorporate **predictive inventory management**. The system should automatically calculate a retailer's next suggested order quantity based on historical sales velocity and upcoming scheme periods. This shifts the Sales Representative's role from a mere order-taker to a predictive business advisor, significantly speeding up the 5-7 minute visit cycle and boosting order accuracy.

3.4.2 Recommendation 2: Retailer Compliance Partnership Program

Problem: Compliance is currently enforced, leading to friction with retailers.

Recommendation: Institute a formal **"Camel Certified Compliant Retailer"** program. Offer high-value incentives (e.g., slightly better credit terms, exclusive trade materials, or an additional small commission) to retailers who maintain 100% compliance with TPCRA laws (no loose sales, correct display). This turns compliance into a business advantage and the Sales Representative into a Compliance Partner, reducing friction.

3.4.3 Recommendation 3: Hyper-Local Pricing Strategy

Problem: A uniform pricing strategy is ineffective against dynamic illicit trade.

Recommendation: Allow Area Sales Managers the limited discretion to implement a **geo-fenced, hyper-local pricing adjustment** (e.g., a temporary 2% price reduction) for territories immediately adjacent to porous border areas or areas identified as illicit trade hotspots. This flexible strategy can rapidly counter untaxed competition without affecting the national pricing structure.

3.5 Technical and Soft Skills Acquired and Enhanced

Technical Skills Acquired	Soft Skills Developed
Advanced Sales Analytics (SSV/WD): Mastery of complex field metrics (Secondary Sales Value, Weighted Distribution) used by top FMCG companies.	Resilience and Grit: Developed the mental toughness and physical endurance required to maintain high performance under the pressure of 300 weekly visits.
SFA/CRM Proficiency: Expert, real-time data Entry and usage of Sales Force Automation software for coverage, compliance, and sales reporting.	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution: Enhanced ability to negotiate favorable terms, manage objections, and de-escalate compliance-related conflicts with retailers.
Channel Marketing Execution: Practical knowledge of how to drive brand visibility and sales using only compliant in-store	Strategic Time Management: Optimized a complex, multi-stop route plan to ensure maximum coverage in minimum time, a direct application of logistical planning.

merchandising (Point-of-Sale).	
Regulatory Risk Mitigation: Working knowledge of the TPCRA and its operational implications, turning legal constraint into a competitive advantage	Autonomous Decision Making: Operated as an independent unit responsible for an entire territory, making moment-to-moment decisions on pricing, stock, and relationship management.

3.6 Implementation/Application of Coursework to Real Working Situations

The internship was the ultimate laboratory for my marketing education:

3.6.1 Marketing Management Principles

- **The 4 Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion):** In the tobacco sector, the P's are heavily weighted towards **Place** (the 300-shop coverage) and **Price** (strategic discount schemes). I learned that **Promotion** is replaced by **In-Store Merchandising** and the Sales Representative's personal brand.
- **Consumer Behavior:** Learned how retailer behavior (stocking/display) directly influences consumer choice, demonstrating the critical path from B2B sales to B2C purchase.

3.6.2 Sales and Distribution Strategy

- **Territory Management:** Directly applied the principle of segmenting a market (my territory) into manageable routes to ensure equitable resource allocation (my time) and maximum market coverage.

- **Competitive Intelligence:** The theory of gathering competitor data was transformed into a daily practical ritual, where the data I collected was immediately put into use for tactical maneuvers, validating the importance of continuous market monitoring.
- **Inventory and Logistics:** Understood the true cost of an OOS event—not just lost revenue, but permanent brand switching—which reinforced the theoretical importance of JIT (Just-In-Time) inventory and efficient supply chain management.

3.7 Co-op Learning Experience and Outcomes

The 16-week period, which began on June 17, 2025, has delivered a set of profound and lasting professional outcomes:

- **Resilience as the Core Competency:** I realized that in high-volume field sales, resilience is the most important soft skill. The ability to recover from rejection (a retailer declining an order) and immediately reset my enthusiasm for the next shop (5 meters away) is a non-teachable skill that I have now acquired through experience.
- **The Strategic Value of the Foot Soldier:** I gained immense respect for the Sales Representative role, realizing that no high-level corporate strategy (CG's umbrella, international brand licensing) works without perfect execution by the person on the ground. I was that critical, final execution layer.
- **Confidence in the Corporate Environment:** I have gained the confidence to present data, defend a territory plan, and negotiate with business owners—skills that provide a significant competitive advantage as I return to my academic studies and prepare for future employment.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

4.1 Summary of Highlights from my Co-op experience

The internship at Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. was a demanding, high-impact learning experience defined by high-volume sales execution and regulatory navigation. The core highlight was the successful completion

of the **300-shop weekly coverage cycle**, which solidified my understanding of 'last-mile' distribution. I served as the primary data gatherer for my territory, providing actionable intelligence on illicit trade and competitor movements, directly influencing the company's tactical responses. I also achieved consistent secondary sales targets, demonstrating the immediate commercial value of my operational presence. This experience has provided me with a robust, real-world foundation in how marketing and sales function within a complex, regulated environment.

4.2 Self-assessment of Professional Development

My professional growth during this internship has been transformative, particularly in the following areas:

- **Goal Attainment:** I successfully transitioned from a student focused on grades to a professional accountable for measurable revenue goals, demonstrating commitment and capacity to meet high corporate expectations.
- **Interpersonal Communication:** My ability to engage, persuade, and build rapport with a diverse range of retailers (from small kiosk owners to large mini-marts) has been dramatically enhanced.
- **Stress Management:** I learned to perform effectively under intense sales pressure while simultaneously adhering to complex legal parameters, proving my capacity for disciplined, high-stakes work.

4.3 Benefits from the Internship for Future Career

The benefits of this internship are direct and far-reaching for my future marketing career:

- **Career Differentiator:** Direct experience in a high-compliance industry under a top-tier conglomerate (CG) is a unique selling proposition in the job market, signaling professionalism and resilience.
- **Sales Acumen for Marketing:** Having operated in Sales, I now understand the operational constraints and needs of the sales force. This empathy is crucial for a future Marketing Manager, who must design schemes that are practical and executable on the ground.

- **Network Foundation:** The relationships built with the ASM, TME, and the vast retailer network provide a valuable industry contact base that will be instrumental for my entry into the professional business world.

4.4 Limitations of the Co-op Studies

While invaluable, the internship had two primary limitations:

- **Scope Limitation:** The nature of the Sales Representative role meant that my focus was heavily operational and execution-based. I had limited exposure to upstream strategic processes such as annual budget planning, large-scale media buying (which is restricted anyway), or product development cycles.
- **Single-Industry Focus:** My experience was confined to the highly unique and regulated tobacco industry. While this taught valuable lessons in compliance, future co-op opportunities should ideally include a less-regulated FMCG sector to provide a comparative perspective on conventional marketing techniques.

4.5 Recommendations for the Co-op Studies Program

To enhance the academic rigor and professional value of the Co-op program for future students:

- **Mandatory Strategic Project:** The University should require all interns to allocate 10% of their time to a formalized "**Mini-Strategy Project**" where they must leverage the data they gather to solve a macro-business problem (e.g., "Develop a strategy to increase market share in the next segment").
- **Cross-Departmental Interview:** Encourage interns to conduct mandatory, formalized interviews with professionals from at least two non-core departments (e.g., Finance and Regulatory/Legal) to gain a wider view of how the entire company functions.

4.6 Final Reflections

My internship at Perfect Blends Pvt. Ltd. has been the most challenging and rewarding component of my Bachelor of Business Administration degree. Starting on June 17, 2025, I was plunged into a highly competitive environment where the only currency was execution and integrity. I did not just sell cigarettes; I sold compliance, trust, and the assurance of quality. The ability to meet my 300-shop target week after week is a testament to the work ethic instilled by this program. I leave this internship not just with a report, but with a confirmed professional trajectory and the foundational experience needed to excel in the world of high-stakes corporate marketing.



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Appendices

Week	Dates	Weekly Objective / Focus Area	Key Activities & Outcomes
1.	Jun 17 – Jun 23, 2025	Onboarding and Territory Familiarization	Activities: Completed company orientation, received training on product portfolio (Camel variants), learned core sales pitch, and familiarized with the Sales Force Automation (SFA/TME-lite) application. Shadowed the ASM for initial route planning and retailer introductions. Outcome: Successfully mapped the 300 target shops and established initial contact with 150+ retailers.
2	Jun 24 – Jun 30, 2025	Mastering the 5-Step Visit Model & SFA	Activities: Began independent execution of the 60-shop daily route, focusing heavily on accurate data capture (GPS, Stock, OOS) via SFA. Focused on building rapport and securing initial base orders. Outcome: Achieved 100% coverage target (300 visits). Identified key competitor pricing in the central market zone.
3	Jul 1 – Jul 7, 2025	Regulatory Compliance (TPCRA) Training	Activities: Intensive focus on TPCRA display restrictions. Corrected non-compliant Camel displays in 50+ shops. Conducted a localized market survey on retailer awareness of the ban on loose cigarette sales. Outcome: Reduced compliance risk in high-traffic

			areas; submitted a report on regulatory friction points to Trade Marketing.
4	Jul 8 – Jul 14, 2025	Sales Target Attainment & Objection Handling	Activities: Pushed for volume growth over coverage frequency. Worked on handling common retailer objections (e.g., "price is too high," "credit is better elsewhere"). Began monitoring competitor promotions aggressively. Outcome: Achieved first weekly Secondary Sales Value (SSV) target. Successfully mitigated two major OOS risks through proactive logistics flagging.
5	Jul 15 – Jul 21, 2025	Managing Out-of- Stock (OOS) Events	Activities: Focused on predicting and preventing OOS. Identified five key distributors with recurring delay issues and coordinated meetings between them and the Logistics Manager. Outcome: Decreased my territory's OOS rate for the core Camel Filter product by 8%. Improved communication protocol with the Logistics team.
6	Jul 22 – Jul 28, 2025	Trade Promotion Implementation	Activities: Implemented a new, short-term trade promotion scheme designed to push a slow-moving variant. Ensured correct understanding and execution of the scheme by all 300 retailers. Outcome: Successfully liquidated 75% of the target SMS (Slow-

			Moving Stock). Provided feedback that the scheme's communication needed simplification.
7	Jul 29 – Aug 4, 2025	In-Depth Competitor Benchmarking	Activities: Dedicated a specific time slot during 300 visits to capture detailed photos of competitor POS material and analyze local pricing strategies for rival brands. Outcome: Generated a detailed competitive map for the ASM, leading to the identification of a new illicit trade hotspot near a major bus park.
8	Aug 5 – Aug 11, 2025	Mid-Term Performance Review & Strategy Adjustment	Activities: Formal mid-term review with the ASM and academic advisor. Adjusted route plan to spend more time on high-volume Key Accounts (Weighted Distribution focus). Outcome: Developed a revised 4-week plan focused on penetrating three highly resistant retail chains; validated my time management efficiency.
9	Aug 12 – Aug 18, 2025	Addressing Illicit Trade Challenges	Activities: Directly addressed the threat of smuggled goods with retailers by focusing sales pitch on <i>quality assurance</i> and <i>legal business protection</i> . Worked with Compliance Officer to verify packaging on suspicious competitor products. Outcome: Converted three retailers back from stocking illicit alternatives by emphasizing long-term partnership benefits.

10	Aug 19 – Aug 25, 2025	Credit Management and Collections	<p>Activities: Focused on supporting the Finance team by visiting retailers with outstanding balances. Learned procedures for managing credit limits and processing payments accurately via the SFA.</p> <p>Outcome: Successfully reconciled four critical outstanding retailer accounts, ensuring their eligibility for renewed stock orders.</p>
11	Aug 26 – Sep 1, 2025	Cross-Functional Collaboration (Trade Marketing)	<p>Activities: Assisted the Trade Marketing team in setting up a premium display case (compliant) in a flagship retailer. Provided feedback on the durability and visibility of new POS materials. Outcome: Secured permanent, premium, and compliant placement in two key mini-marts.</p>
12	Sep 2 – Sep 8, 2025	Crisis Management (Distribution Disruption)	<p>Activities: Navigated a temporary distributor warehouse closure due to local unrest. Developed an emergency micro-distribution plan to use existing stock efficiently among the most critical 100 retailers.</p> <p>Outcome: Minimized OOS impact during the disruption; demonstrated autonomy and quick decision-making under operational pressure.</p>
13	Sep 9 – Sep 15, 2025	Consultative Sales Mastery	<p>Activities: Focused on using sales data to proactively advise retailers on stock rotation and identifying their best-selling variants. Reinforced the "advisor" persona over the "seller" persona. Outcome: Achieved the</p>

			highest average order size increase of the internship period through consultative selling techniques.
14	Sep 16 – Sep 22, 2025	High-Value Account Acquisition	Activities: Targeted five difficult "cold" accounts (which had previously refused to stock Camel) using detailed competitor analysis and a customized credit offer. Outcome: Successfully acquired two new, high-potential retail accounts, expanding Numeric Distribution in a competitive pocket.
15	Sep 23 – Sep 29, 2025	Documentation and Knowledge Transfer	Activities: Spent time documenting best practices for route optimization and retailer management for the next intern/Sales Representative. Conducted a final review of all territory compliance standards. Outcome: Created a standardized 15-point checklist for new reps covering compliance and route efficiency.
16	Sep 30 – Oct 6, 2025	Final Reporting, Handover, and Reflection	Activities: Finalized all sales reporting and performance metrics for the full 16 weeks. Handed over key retailer relationships and outstanding issues to the ASM. Began detailed reflection for the final Co-op Report documentation. Outcome: Successfully completed the internship with 100% coverage

			adherence and full data handover; formalized learning outcomes for the final report.
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