



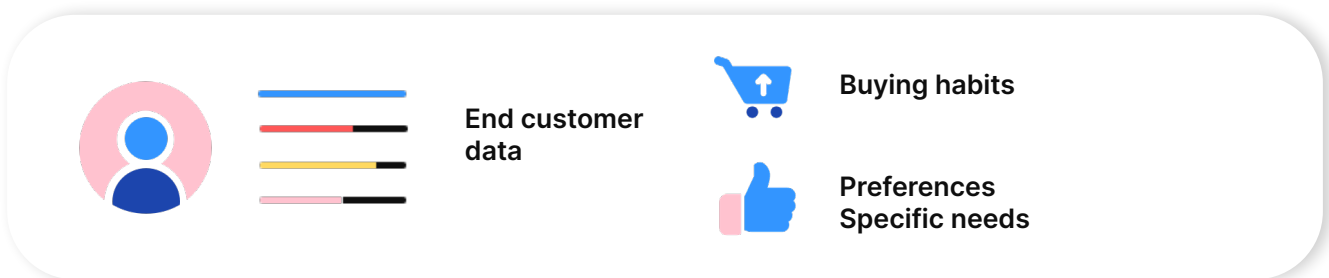
# 5 tips for a thriving distribution network



This is a crucial strategic matter which can sometimes be a nightmare for sellers and brands. Onboarding your distribution network isn't easy, yet it is an **essential process for boosting and optimising sales.**

Your distribution network is a powerful and sometimes underestimated asset. It is your closest and most direct link to the people who matter the most: your customers.

Thanks to this network, you can gain access to key information that allows you to understand your **customer types**:

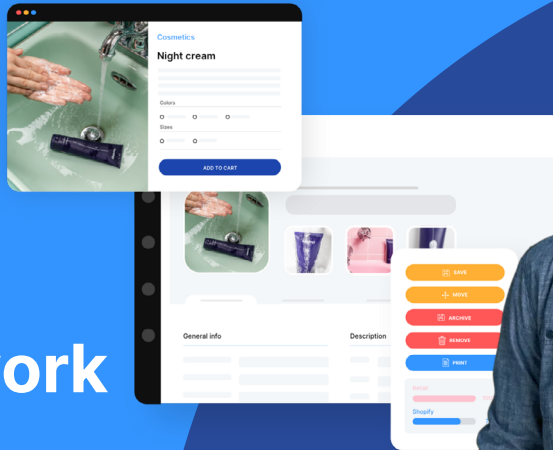


In most cases, this network also offers you great **visibility** for your products, generates **traffic**, and entices a lot of **interested and qualified visitors** to physical or online shops. Whether in the industrial, mass market, or fashion sectors, these distribution networks are vibrant and **dynamic**, which makes a considerable difference for your end customers.

## So what are the pitfalls stopping you from leveraging your distribution network?

Unsurprisingly, there are quite a few of them. These networks often work independently. An **inescapable** rift forms between the manufacturer and their network, making exchanges and communication difficult. Reseller training cycles are sometimes **too long** and fail to capture the attention of trainees, so they don't push your products afterwards. Offer documentation not up to date, **ill-adapted** sales and marketing supports, difficulties disseminating these documents; all these upsets interfere with the promotion of your products, whether directly on sales floors or on marketplaces. Lastly, the presence of other brands including your direct **competitors** makes the task even harder: all the alternatives to your products are in the same place where the customer can make quick comparisons.

# Brand relationship / distribution network



The relationship between your brand and your reseller network is the baseline, the foundation and focal point of your product distribution. It goes without saying: a trust relationship with regular interaction helps you stay fresh in the minds of your resellers.

By sending regional and zonal managers for regular visits to shop floors, you can listen to your distributors and adapt your sales approach, events and marketing actions in consequence.



Smooth communication with regular exchanges and ongoing training on your products can only be beneficial.

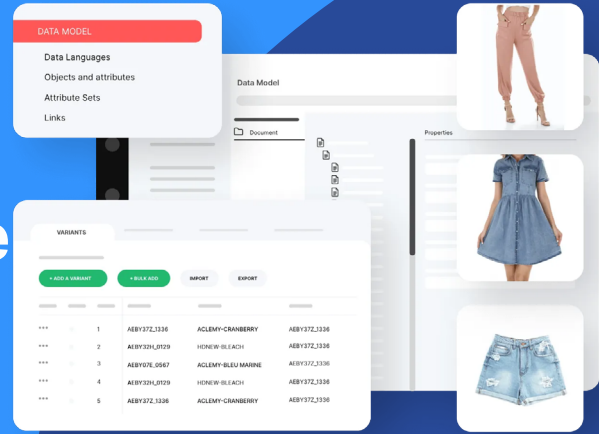
Having a quality relationship with your resellers and network means knowing them on a deeper level: who are their customers (your end customers), what kinds of merchandise do they buy? How often do they buy? Which are the other brands and manufacturers able to reach out to them efficiently? How do they do it? What schemes or best practices do they put in place? What are their market trends?



In the answers to all of these questions, there is a bounty of useful data to help you fine tune your understanding of your network and adapt your sales and marketing actions accordingly.

Doing this groundwork and analysis will give you the ability to individualise and personalise your network-brand relationship with a pitch and product offering that are perfectly suited and super pertinent.

# Get equipped with an ultra-collaborative platform: the PIM



To forge and maintain a unique and smooth relationship with your distribution network, it is essential to be equipped with a collaborative platform like Quable PIM.



**Setting up and implementing a PIM enables you to provide your resellers and distribution network with reliable and qualitative information that is always up to date.** So no more mistakes, duplicates or misunderstandings over data or product information.

**Manage your product catalogue with ease** (B2B or B2C), **set up a brand portal** (like our client ARC), **send out permanent or ephemeral POS** (commonly used by brands in fashion or cosmetics like our client Sisley), **or make complexity around products easier to manage** (in the food sector for example, with legal aspects linked to products, our client AdVini being a perfect example). These are the numerous opportunities Quable brings you to efficiently and persistently engage with your distribution network.

**Quable brings a huge amount of added value to customers** by collating information and media linked to products, **by heightening marketing content and sending information out** in multiple languages to your distribution networks abroad. It also allows you to sort the information and to direct customers where you want, towards a particular high quality reseller for example.



In short, the Quable solution enables you to quickly and efficiently send out all the information linked to your products on all your sales channels both simultaneously and uniformly, which is a surefire way to optimise the product experience for your end customers and guarantee optimal and efficient collaboration with your network.

# Pamper your distribution network



After carefully segmenting your distribution networks (each distribution network being different with different needs), comes another indispensable step to keep your resellers devoted and committed to your brand: the pampering stage. This step will allow you to further personalise your relationship with them, to ensure it is even more unique and truly different to your competition.

There are a number of techniques and strategies to pamper your distribution network:



## PERSONALISED LETTERS

to keep them abreast of your news, new products and services.



## EXCLUSIVE GIFTS

for the resellers or points of sale with the best sales performance over a given period, or through an incentive system.



## SPECIAL OFFERS

on your products reserved solely for resellers.



## SEMINARS

to sum-up past sales performance and motivate the network for the next sales objectives.

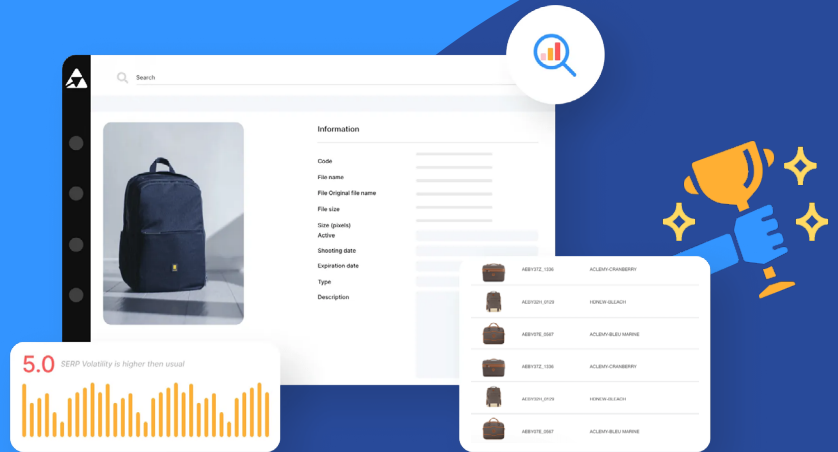


## UNCONVENTIONAL GET TOGETHERS

like themed events to present your new product range, collection, or product, or events which aim to celebrate your partnership between your brand and resellers.

If you don't know where to start targeting your resellers, start with the biggest in terms of turnover and / or those with the greatest potential. The trick is to know how to be innovative while keeping a close relationship with resellers.

# Set inter-network challenges



Getting all the resellers and the entire sales force including the executive teams to adhere should also be a compulsory part of your distribution network strategy.

**Inter-network challenges** between different retailers or competing brands tend to get resellers a lot more involved than competitions which are based on luck. The fundamental principle when setting one up is to incentivise networks based on sales figures and objectives.



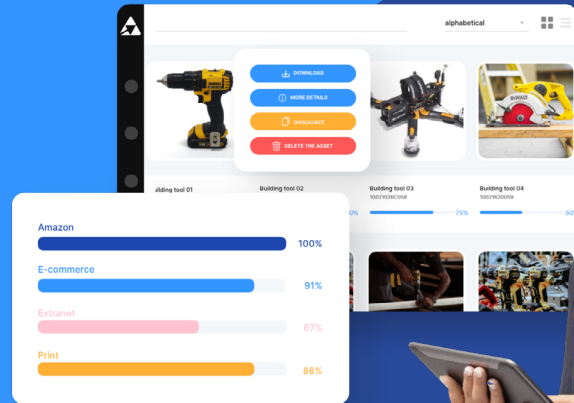
These kinds of challenges can be based on **target turnover for a new product or range over a given time period**. It can be a challenge between shops of a specific brand who can win **prizes** or a best shop **medal**. You could also set a **challenge for competing networks**.

The challenge “rewards” should be **attractive enough to build enthusiasm among all your resellers**. The period for the challenge shouldn’t be too long to ensure motivation stays high and the challenge has maximum impact. Make sure to be meticulous in your communication ahead of the challenge with a teasing, a countdown to the start and why not to the end of the challenge, so your network doesn’t lose focus.



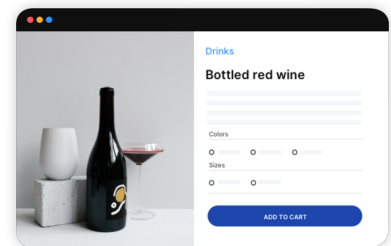
As well as increasing brand engagement and visibility among your networks, there is an energetic knock-on effect with your end customers. This is all in the name of federating, motivating and creating engagement within your distribution network(s). Once the challenge is over, it’s time to celebrate, if all the objectives have been reached of course.

# Involve your network in the product offering

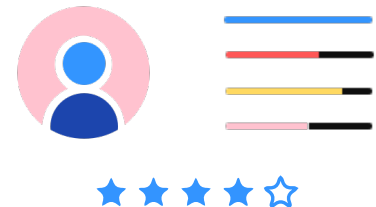


As they are out in the field, your resellers are the closest to your end customers. They are the ones who know best about their habits, feelings and emotions towards your brand and everything it evokes for them.

Naturally, these are the best people to **give you precious feedback on your products or services**. By getting them directly involved in the product offering, you show you value them, by giving them a special role to play that builds on the relationship you have cultivated since the start of your commercial contract.



**By encouraging them to provide customer feedback on everything down to the product design, you get them fully involved in the co-creation of your offer.** With this participative marketing strategy, you systematically **place your customer at the center** of new product creation or improvements to existing products.



Not only do you get quality feedback at source, you also show that as a brand you are extremely sensitive to your distribution network's thoughts and open to their opinions. You show a glimpse of your **innovative side**, your brand knows how to accept criticism, whether positive or negative, and sees the final **customers' opinions as precious**. By getting your **distribution network directly involved** in the product offering, you show total transparency on product optimisation topics, which further strengthens trust. To do this, why not create a dedicated email address, a monthly form, or similar, to make it easy to send you direct feedback?

Rallying and implicating your distribution network around the optimisation of your offer gives you the opportunity to create a real community around your brand (community of resellers, networks and even end customers), to be innovative, and to truly differentiate your positioning.

# In conclusion

Smooth communication, collaboration, exchange, transparency... these are the hallmark principles of an efficiently run and thriving distribution network.

Getting your resellers onboard is a long-winded task, but it truly pays off when everything comes to fruition. With a fine-tuned knowledge of your end customers, great visibility of your product offering, and the end goal of boosting your sales, you will **reap benefits** that make your business turnover skyrocket with a **long-term** lasting effect.

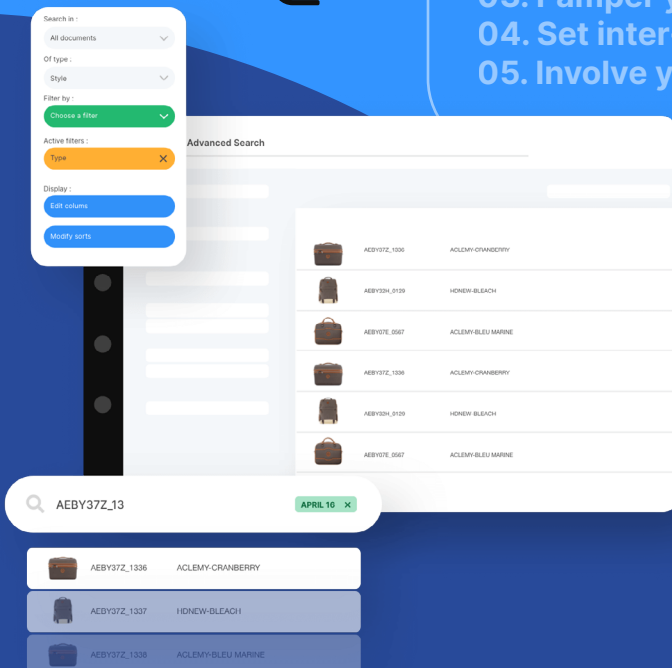
You will naturally need to be equipped with adequate high performance tools suited for this task, such as a PIM. As well as facilitating the relationship with your resellers and distributors by making the right information available, up to date and exact, the PIM allows you to personalise this relationship by playing on the access to information made available to resellers. By allowing access to certain media, assets, images or videos, you create vast business possibilities: access to assets for marketing campaigns, to photos shot in the studio, or to information provided by the product team.



01. Brand relationship / distribution network
02. Get equipped with an ultra-collaborative platform: the PIM
03. Pamper your distribution network
04. Set inter-network challenges
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The PIM is the unique tool to propel your brand. »



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