



# CATEGORY, STRATEGY & INSIGHT

Roundtable Summary

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**CMA (2025) define category management as:**  
**“Trading partners collaborating to determine the point of optimisation in pricing, promotion, shelving and assortment to maximise profitability and shopper satisfaction.”**

All contributions anonymised.  
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*“We already have what we need - the data, the consumer understanding, the commercial perspective. The challenge now is to make category impossible to ignore.”*



STORYTELLING

## We Are Meaning-Makers

Category goes far beyond data. The human insight, connecting contradictory behaviours, is something AI cannot replicate. Curiosity is the defining trait of great category managers.



RELATIONSHIPS

## Trust Is the Core Currency

The moment a retailer finds that your recommendations were shaped by your commercial team, the relationship is damaged, often permanently. Objectivity is the function's greatest asset.



INCLUSION

## The Gender Gap Is Structural

Women are well-represented at analyst and manager level, then disappear. Career paths are unclear, reporting lines misaligned, and self-promotion harder. This deserves dedicated attention.



INNOVATION

## Challengers Win on Insight

You cannot compete on data budgets. You can win on interpretation, agility and honesty. A focus group with real shoppers can outperform a commissioned study.



AI & FUTURE

## AI Is an Opportunity If We Act

Human intuition plus AI-enhanced analysis is more powerful than either alone. The risk is not replacement but a misperception of what great category people actually do.



LEADERSHIP

## Take the Seat Because No One Gives It

If category was going to be given a seat at the top table, it would have happened by now. The function must own its narrative, align its KPIs and make its value impossible to ignore.