

# Simon Blackburn

*A results orientated Strategy Consultant with in depth experience designing and delivering strategic projects. Adaptable to different working environments, as an independent consultant, in-house, or part of a larger consulting team. I pride myself in a highly collaborative approach that delivers pragmatic, lasting solutions.*

## Experience

### January 2016 – present

### Freelance Strategy Consultant, UK & Australia

I collaborate with my clients to build and execute compelling strategies and improve ways of working. I leverage my hybrid Strategy/Finance background to design solutions in areas such as commercial strategy, pricing, range, strategic planning, and customer value propositions. Projects include:

#### High level growth strategy design for Biffa waste management, London

Sub-contracted by Teneo consulting to provide support in developing a high-level growth strategy for Biffa's collection division.

##### Achievements

- Leveraged multiple disconnected data sources to create their first single source of truth on customer profitability, enabling deeper understanding of customer profitability dynamics than previously
- Identified and quantified six new opportunities for the business to improve profitability by 3-9%, including improving customer health analytics to reduce profitable churn and an improved segmentation-led sales acquisition strategy
- Developed the benefits case and high-level roadmap, collaborating with client teams to assess feasibility

#### Major Range rationalisation & Pricing strategy for Asda Supermarkets, Leeds

Customer function lead for a major range reset, and promotions optimisation projects. Led a multi-disciplinary internal team that worked alongside BCG to design and deliver strategies to focus price investment and customer communications on the most appealing products/propositions for target customer groups.

##### Achievements

- Established a multi-disciplinary team of six Pricing, Marketing, and Insights experts to deliver effective price investments and customer comms following a major range rationalisation. Developed a comprehensive methodology to help trading teams allocate price investment more effectively, using customer segmentation data to inform decision making
- Led a third-party agency in developing an investment tool to help Pricing and Buying teams make quicker, more focused price investment decisions
- Co-authored a Pricing policy to drive disproportionate improvement in value perception through more strategic price setting
- Led a small promotions team in designing and delivering an executive level evaluation of past promotions, improving visibility of key promotional metrics, and leading to the development of promotional guardrails that guided commercial teams towards running more strategic promotions

#### Retail pricing strategy for Akzo Nobel, Manchester

Interim Head of Pricing. Established a new pricing function to improve the strategic direction for pricing over 50,000 products. Trialed, refined, and launched a new Pricing strategy in market, delivering +4.9% revenue growth.

##### Achievements

- Established the UK Pricing team. Worked with existing functions to define the team's role, cross-functional ways of working, and pricing governance. Embedded Price decision making as a core element of business planning & review processes
- Managed a team of two analysts, training them on pricing acumen, price modelling, storytelling, and commercial capabilities. Within a year they were identified as best practice globally, and playing a leading role on key Global initiatives
- Introduced new analytical techniques (such as promo evaluation, basket analysis and competitor analysis) to improve depth and quality of insight, leading to improved commercial decision making
- Oversaw the integration of four acquired businesses into the organization from a Pricing perspective, including working with the businesses to minimise customer disruption and simplify the customer journey
- Led the launch of a new Pricing strategy and architecture across 220 stores nationwide, changing over 600,000 prices, and training over 250 people on the strategy, marketing campaigns, customer benefits, and revised processes. The project launched on time in full, with a +5% increase in customers and +4.9% increase in revenue
- Improved existing ways of working by driving forward mechanisms to improve communication between head office and field, resulting in significant back-office time savings and process workflow

- Developed improved regular reporting for the executive team
- Developed a multi-year roadmap for change, detailing a series of initiatives that will improve the use of pricing levers, attracting more customers, and countering competitor strategies

### Major Range rationalisation for Woolworths Supermarkets, Sydney

Contracted to work alongside BCG and internal Strategy & Buying teams for Australia's largest Supermarket. Outcomes included a significantly reduced range, improved cost prices and enhanced customer shopping experience.

#### Achievements

- Managed range reviews for 6 product categories, totaling c.\$400m in revenue. Conducted customer-led analysis of existing ranges by distilling insights from customer loyalty data as well as decomposing the commercial dynamics of the category
- Tried new ranges, layouts, and prices to evaluate the impact on customers and profitability, as well as providing insights to leverage in supplier negotiation. Collaborated with teams to improve performance reporting and root cause analysis
- Achieved a c.8% reduction in range whilst leveraging competitive tension for space which resulted in significant long-term COGS and margin benefits. The remaining range improved the customer shopping journey and loyalty.
- Streamlined elements of BCG's range review process, such as refining the methodology and automating their financial forecasting tool

### Integration and market assessment for a collection of charities, London

Sub-contracted by Moorhouse consulting to advise on a potential merger between two major national charities.

#### Achievements

- Provided a robust evaluation of their combined P&L, including financial/non-financial synergy benefits over time, integration cost forecasts, and potential risks
- Evaluated justice sector policy drivers and key government strategies. Distilled key insights to identify and quantify future opportunities a combined organisation might enable

### Pricing for SSP Global Travel Retail, London

Designed a new Pricing architecture for SSP's portfolio of 70 bars, maximizing profitability across 2,500 products and streamlined their price setting processes.

#### Achievements

- Developed commercial principles to guide future pricing/profit decisions within commercial teams
- Created a user-friendly repeatable model and methodology to rapidly apply pricing principles across a complex set of thousands of products to output a pricing architecture. These changes delivered c.£1m annual profit improvement

### August 2015 – December 2015

Co-founder - [www.arlians.com](http://www.arlians.com), London

Co-founder of Arlians, a B2B network for SME's that uses a dating site style algorithm to automatically connect businesses who share mutual benefits in forming a strategic relationship. I participated in all aspects of the product launch, such as product design, GTM strategy, marketing, and business case development.

### February 2014 – August 2015

Senior Consultant – Fifth P Strategy Consulting, London

Experience in revenue growth management, pricing, promotions, and Commercial planning. Fifth P's small size meant I was engaged in all aspects of consulting including Business Development and value proposition development. Projects included:

### 5-year Price Pack strategy for Mars Chocolate, London

Designed and embedded a 3-5-year pricing strategy. Led 1 of 3 project work streams, responsible for stakeholder engagement and workshop co-creation.

#### Achievements

- Developed a strategy creation process, to transform high level corporate vision into coherent pricing principles and detailed KPI's for local teams. Delivered cross functional workshops to evaluate future market/competitor changes, allowing for clear strategic and financial direction to guide decision making
- Developed a detailed 5-year financial projection of the confectionery market, creating profit forecasts for 5,000 products, and enabling commercial teams to evaluate the volume and financial implications of different strategies
- Synthesized insights from shopper analysis, market data and competitive intel to formulate a 5-year commercial roadmap, including detailed monthly promotions tactics and price changes, improving profitability by c.£13m

- Built a KPI dashboard for reporting price indexes and market share changes to the board to track progress against the KPIs and commercial roadmap developed earlier in the project

### Commercial business planning for Coca-Cola Europe, London

Project manager, tasked with delivering improvements to the client's commercial planning process. Managed analyst resource, and overall client delivery.

#### Achievements

- Created a promotions planning tool that allowed the Revenue Management team to rapidly build a full week by week promotions plan by retailer. This resulted in a more effective, data driven evaluation of their commercial plan and facilitated cross team collaboration between Revenue Management, Sales, Marketing, and Finance

### Price Pack strategy for Coca-Cola Europe, Stockholm

Client engagement lead. Developed a streamlined methodology for formulating Price Pack Promotions strategies.

#### Achievements

- Gathered and synthesized shopper data, competitive intelligence, customer insights, and financial analysis to evaluate strategic opportunities. Ran a series of cross functional workshops to share these insights and co-create potential options to improve their growth trajectory over 3 years
- Successfully integrated a bespoke approach to developing Price Pack Promotions strategies

### February 2013 – February 2014

### Finance consultant (CFO advisory) – Deloitte MCS Limited, London

Finance Consultant (CFO advisory), with experience in Finance transformation, Cost modeling, and Finance business partnering. Projects included:

### Cost modeling and Investment appraisal for the Ministry of Defence, Bristol

Business partnered a multi-disciplined team of civil servants on a 50-year defence project.

#### Achievements

- Successfully guided the project through cost assurance and investment approvals stage gates including performing Monte-Carlo simulations on long-term projected costs. The projects ongoing financial management received government recognition as best in class, winning support from senior civil servants
- Trained the clients Finance team in cost modelling best practice and business case development

### September 2010 – January 2013

### Finance graduate scheme – Cadbury plc, London/Birmingham

Business partnered marketing and sales teams in budgeting, forecasting, and building financial cases for NPD.

#### Achievements

- Created and owned a process for reporting weekly revenue predictions to the FD and MD, resulting in improved alignment with their counterparts in the U.S. and Europe
- Successfully guided 6 marketing teams through the integration between Cadbury and Kraft, including converting their P&Ls from UK to USGAAP, resulting in a successful go live, and significantly improved brand financials reporting

## Education

### October 2010 – February 2014

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

- CIMA qualified (all first time passes)

### October 2005 – June 2008

Durham University

- 2:1 BSc (hons) in Natural Sciences

### September 2003 – July 2005

St Mary's College, Liverpool

- A-Levels: 5 A's (Maths, Business Studies, Psychology, History, General Studies), 1 B (further Maths)

## Interests

I have a passion for sustainability, specifically how systemic changes, finance, and technological advances can accelerate progress towards sustainability development goals.