

The Rise of Integrated Commerce in the Premium Beverage Industry

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As consumer demand for premium, health-focused beverages continues to rise, brands are increasingly rethinking how they expand across international markets. The convergence of e-commerce, retail media, data analytics, and omnichannel distribution is creating new opportunities for beverage companies to scale faster while maintaining premium brand positioning.

One company at the forefront of this transformation is Komerz, a global commerce and brand growth platform that recently secured the full omnichannel distribution mandate for premium natural mineral water brand AQUA Carpatica in the UK. Following remarkable growth on Amazon UK, where the brand reportedly expanded from £250,000 to £4.8 million in annual sales within just 16 months, the partnership has evolved into a broader strategy aimed at building AQUA Carpatica into a leading premium hydration brand across multiple channels.

In this exclusive interaction with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Global CEO of Komerz, discusses the factors behind AQUA Carpatica's rapid marketplace success, the growing opportunities in the premium bottled water segment, the role of integrated commerce models in international brand expansion, and how Komerz is leveraging recent acquisitions to strengthen its omnichannel capabilities across Europe and beyond.

Komerz recently secured the full omnichannel distribution mandate for AQUA Carpatica in the UK. What were the key factors that contributed to this expanded partnership following the success on Amazon UK?

The expansion of the partnership was driven by a combination of measurable commercial performance, operational execution, and a shared long-term vision for building AQUA Carpatica into a premium omnichannel beverage brand in the UK and beyond.

Over the last 16 months, we demonstrated that premium water can scale rapidly in the UK when marketplace growth is integrated with broader retail and consumer demand generation strategies. Beyond delivering strong sales growth on Amazon UK, we were able to establish disciplined stock management, premium content execution, high service levels, and profitable growth metrics that gave the brand confidence to extend the mandate across the full omnichannel ecosystem.

Importantly, our approach is not limited to distribution. We operate across the entire commerce funnel — from attributable media and retail media optimisation to demand forecasting, pricing architecture, fulfilment, analytics, and retail execution. That creates a much more unified growth engine for brands entering international markets.

For AQUA Carpatica specifically, we saw strong resonance among UK consumers who are increasingly seeking premium hydration products with clean provenance, low-sodium credentials, and elevated brand positioning. The opportunity was clearly larger than a single channel, and both companies aligned around building a consistent premium experience across ecommerce, grocery retail, convenience, foodservice, hospitality, and on-the-go consumption occasions.

Effectively, we at Komerz have become a single point brand growth business with customer development, brand management and commercial teams all rolled into one effective platform which works on shared prosperity model.

AQUA Carpatica's sales reportedly grew from £250,000 to £4.8 million annually on Amazon UK within 16 months. What specific marketplace strategies or operational efficiencies drove this rapid growth?

The growth was achieved through a combination of data-led marketplace optimisation, premium brand positioning, and full-funnel performance management.

One of the most important factors was treating Amazon not simply as a sales channel, but as a consumer acquisition and brand-building platform. We implemented a highly attributable media model that connected advertising investments directly to conversion, repeat purchase behaviour, basket economics, and long-term customer value.

Key drivers included:

Advanced retail media optimisation across sponsored search, display, and DSP campaigns

Deep catalogue optimisation with premium content, SEO, enhanced brand storytelling, and conversion-led PDP execution

Strategic price-pack architecture tailored to UK ecommerce buying behaviour, including multipack formats and subscription-led replenishment models

Strong inventory planning and forecasting to maintain availability during accelerated growth phases

Continuous data modelling to optimise contribution margins, customer acquisition costs, and repeat purchase performance

Leveraging Amazon insights to shape broader omnichannel customer JBPs and retail sell-in strategies

Working very closely with the category leads at Amazon to drive their objectives of revenues and margin within the category

Operationally, our integrated model allowed us to react faster to market signals. Because demand generation, inventory management, analytics, and fulfilment sit within a single operating structure, we can optimise performance in real time rather than through fragmented agency or distributor models.

Most importantly, we maintained a premium positioning throughout growth by implementing CPIs which was a great revenue growth management strategy and win win for Amazon as well as Aqua Carpatica. The objective was never to compete purely on discounting, but to build a premium hydration brand with strong consumer perception, repeat purchase loyalty, and sustainable economics.

Komerz has projected £100 million in GMV for AQUA Carpatica within three years. What market trends and

consumer behaviours in the UK premium bottled water category support this ambitious target?

We believe several structural shifts in consumer behaviour strongly support the long-term growth potential of premium hydration brands in the UK and wider European markets.

First, consumers are increasingly prioritising health, wellness, and clean-label consumption. Water is no longer viewed as a commodity category alone – consumers are actively seeking products with provenance, purity, mineral differentiation, and lifestyle alignment. Aqua Carpatica is bottled at source (the Carpathian mountains) and hence always has the highest purity standards.

Second, there is significant premiumisation occurring across beverages. Consumers are trading up into brands that deliver a stronger experience, elevated packaging, authenticity, and functional benefits. Premium water is becoming part of that broader premium lifestyle and wellness movement.

Third, omnichannel purchasing behaviour has fundamentally changed the category. Discovery now happens across marketplaces, social commerce, retail media networks, hospitality environments, and quick commerce platforms simultaneously. Brands that can maintain consistent premium positioning across all these touchpoints can scale significantly faster than traditional beverage models allowed. Having the right assortment for the right channels based on shopper missions is key to improved brand loyalty.

Another major factor is the growth of out-of-home premium consumption. Hotels, restaurants, caf  s, premium workspaces, gyms, and travel channels are increasingly looking for differentiated hydration brands that align with elevated consumer expectations. That creates strong opportunities beyond traditional grocery retail.

From a commercial standpoint, we also see substantial whitespace in the UK and EU markets for a premium water brand that combines strong product credentials with modern omnichannel execution and data-led retail expansion.

How do the recent acquisitions of Pathformance and Glassbox strengthen Komerz  s omnichannel retail and performance optimisation capabilities across Europe?

The acquisitions significantly strengthen our ability to operate as a fully integrated commerce and growth platform for global consumer brands.

Pathformance enhances our performance marketing, attribution, and retail media optimisation capabilities. This is increasingly important as brands demand clearer visibility into how marketing investments translate into actual commerce outcomes across marketplaces, retail media networks, DTC, and omnichannel retail ecosystems.

Glassbox strengthens our retail execution, analytics, and omnichannel operational capabilities, particularly around visibility into consumer journeys, conversion behaviour, and optimisation opportunities across digital commerce environments.

Together, these capabilities allow Komerz to build far more intelligent and attributable customer JBPs with retailers and marketplaces. Instead of treating trade investment, media spend, and distribution independently, we can model them together as part of a unified commercial growth strategy.

That is particularly important for premium brands like AQUA Carpatica, where maintaining pricing discipline, premium perception, and consistent brand execution across channels is critical to long-term equity creation.

The partnership highlights a shift toward integrated commerce models where one partner manages demand creation, stock ownership, distribution, and analytics. How do you see this model reshaping the future of international brand expansion in markets like the UK?

We believe the traditional model of fragmented international expansion is becoming increasingly inefficient for modern consumer brands.

Historically, brands often worked with separate distributors, agencies, retail media partners, ecommerce operators, and analytics providers. That creates disconnected decision-making, slower execution, and limited attribution across the consumer journey.

The future is moving toward integrated commerce models where one strategic partner can manage the entire growth ecosystem – including demand creation, media optimisation, stock ownership, fulfilment, retail relationships, marketplace operations, analytics, and consumer insights.

This model creates several advantages:

Faster market entry and scalability

Unified data visibility across channels

Better retail and marketplace customer JBPs

Stronger forecasting and inventory efficiency

More attributable media and trade investments

Greater pricing consistency and premium brand protection

Improved profitability and working capital efficiency

Single window brand management

For international brands entering markets like the UK, this approach reduces operational complexity while significantly improving speed-to-scale.

Ultimately, brands increasingly want partners that can deliver measurable commercial outcomes rather than isolated services. That is where the market is evolving.

As premium and health-focused beverage brands continue to expand globally, what opportunities do you see for AQUA Carpatica and Komerz beyond the UK market?

We see significant international potential for AQUA Carpatica across Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and selected North American channels, particularly as premium hydration and wellness consumption continues to grow globally.

The opportunity extends well beyond traditional retail. We see strong growth potential across:

Premium grocery and modern trade

Hospitality and HoReCa channels

Travel retail and aviation

Quick commerce and convenience

Corporate wellness and workplace consumption

Health, fitness, and lifestyle ecosystems

E-commerce marketplaces and subscription-led replenishment models

From a consumer perspective, there is increasing global demand for authentic premium brands with strong provenance, wellness positioning, and differentiated product credentials.

For Komerz, this partnership also demonstrates how modern omnichannel distribution can help scale premium consumer brands globally with far greater speed, control, and attribution than traditional export-distributor structures.

Our objective is not simply to increase distribution, but to build sustainable premium category leadership through intelligent omnichannel execution, data-led media optimisation, disciplined pricing architecture, and elevated consumer brand perception across every touchpoint.

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