



Фінанси, банківська справа, страхування та фондовий ринок

УДК 336.76:339.138

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15529763>

Financial Instruments of Strategic Key Account Management: The Case of Whirlpool in Ukraine and the International Perspective

Valeriia Medvetska

Key Account Manager, Whirlpool Ukraine LLC (2024 merger with Beko Europe)

Whirlpool Ukraine LLC, Velyka Vasylkivska St, 100, 02000, Kyiv, Ukraine,

valeriia.medvetska@beko.com | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8940-0398>

Прийнято: 09.05.2025 | Опубліковано: 20.05.2025

Abstract. *This article provides a comprehensive analysis of financial tools for strategic key account management, using the experience of Whirlpool in Ukraine as a case study, and benchmarking with leading European practices following the 2024 merger with Beko Europe. Purpose:* To assess the role and effectiveness of financial instruments in building long-term B2B partnerships with major retailers in a dynamic and competitive home appliances market. **Methods:** *The methodology incorporates quantitative KPI analysis, the evaluation of ROI-driven promotional campaigns, dynamic pricing models, and a comparative approach with key players in the EU (Electrolux, Bosch, Samsung). Results:* The findings reveal a substantial increase in investment profitability, inventory turnover, and market share in the premium segment due to integrated financial decision-making. The study underscores the necessity of cross-functional collaboration between sales, finance, and marketing for synchronized planning and business agility. **Conclusions:** Special attention is paid to international experience and the adaptation of best practices to the Ukrainian market, considering post-pandemic and wartime challenges. The article delivers practical



recommendations for managers and researchers interested in implementing financial tools in strategic customer relationship management to enhance business resilience amid uncertainty.

Keywords: *strategic management, financial analytics, key account, Whirlpool, B2B sales, ROI, trade marketing, international experience, Epicentr.*

**Фінансові інструменти стратегічного управління відносинами з
ключовими клієнтами: досвід компанії Whirlpool
в Україні та міжнародний контекст**

Медвецька Валерія Геннадіївна

Key Account Manager, Whirlpool Ukraine LLC (у 2024 році злиття з Beco Europe), вул. Велика Васильківська, 100, 02000, м. Київ, Україна,
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8940-0398>

Анотація. У статті проведено комплексний аналіз фінансових інструментів стратегічного управління відносинами з ключовими клієнтами на прикладі компанії Whirlpool в Україні в контексті сучасних викликів B2B-сектору та глобальних тенденцій після злиття Whirlpool та Beco Europe. **Мета:** Визначення ролі та ефективності фінансових підходів у побудові довгострокових партнерств із ритейлерами на динамічному ринку побутової техніки, враховуючи специфіку роботи в умовах невизначеності, інфляції, воєнного ризику та інтеграції в європейський економічний простір. **Методи:** Застосовано комплекс кількісного аналізу KPI, оцінки впливу ROI-орієнтованих промо-кампаній, інтеграції динамічного ціноутворення та моделювання сценаріїв. Проведено емпіричне порівняння з практиками ключових гравців ринку ЄС (Electrolux, Bosch, Samsung), використано дані внутрішньої фінансової та комерційної звітності, а також результати експертних інтерв'ю з топ-менеджментом і фінансовими директорами партнерських



компаній. **Результати:** Впровадження інтегрованих фінансових рішень дозволило досягти зростання рентабельності інвестицій, обігу запасів, підвищення частки ринку у преміум-сегменті та зменшення ризиків надлишкових залишків. Ефективне поєднання трейд-маркетингових інструментів, діджитал-аналітики та регулярного моніторингу KPI дало змогу сформувати гнучку модель роботи з ключовими клієнтами навіть у кризових умовах. Значна увага приділяється адаптації міжнародних *best practices*, зокрема стандартів ROI-контролю, крос-функціональної взаємодії та використання сучасних IT-рішень для прийняття оперативних рішень. **Висновки:** Дослідження підтверджує, що стратегічна інтеграція фінансових інструментів у систему управління відносинами з ключовими клієнтами підвищує стійкість бізнесу, сприяє довгостроковому партнерству з ритейлерами та забезпечує конкурентні переваги на ринку. Сформульовано практичні рекомендації для менеджерів і дослідників щодо впровадження фінансової аналітики, оптимізації трейд-маркетингової політики та подальшого розвитку системи стратегічного КАМ в Україні на основі міжнародного досвіду.

Ключові слова: стратегічне управління, фінансова аналітика, ключовий клієнт, Whirlpool, B2B-продажі, ROI, трейд-маркетинг, міжнародний досвід, Epicentr.

Problem Statement. The global home appliances market is characterized by fierce competition, volatile demand, and rapid digital transformation, which places increasing pressure on B2B suppliers to optimize their key account management (KAM) strategies. Traditional sales-focused approaches are insufficient to sustain growth and market share, especially in emerging markets such as Ukraine, where macroeconomic instability, inflation, and war-induced disruptions demand agile, data-driven, and financially robust solutions. The strategic transformation of KAM at Whirlpool Ukraine, particularly in its partnership with Epicentr, illustrates a paradigm shift from transactional to analytics-driven relationship management. Simultaneously,



global consolidation trends, such as the Whirlpool-Beko Europe merger, have accelerated the need for harmonized KAM standards, integration of advanced financial tools, and benchmarking against international best practices.

Literature Review. The evolution of Key Account Management (KAM) has accelerated over the past decade, driven by globalization, digital transformation, and the growing complexity of B2B customer relationships. The integration of financial tools into KAM is now recognized as a decisive factor in achieving sustainable competitive advantage, especially in volatile markets and in the context of large multinational organizations.

Piercy and Lane (2021) stress that advanced KAM systems must go beyond sales optimization and focus on long-term value creation, which requires robust financial analytics, risk assessment, and scenario planning [1, p. 122–135]. Similarly, Kaplan and Norton (2020) propose the alignment of KAM objectives with balanced scorecard principles, integrating ROI, profitability per account, and customer lifetime value (CLV) as core performance metrics [2, p. 76–91].

Recent empirical studies show that best-in-class companies such as Bosch-Siemens Hausgeräte (BSH), Electrolux, Samsung, and Philips have made significant investments in real-time financial dashboards, data-driven promotional planning, and dynamic pricing engines. Homburg and Schäfer (2020) highlight the impact of such tools on profit margins, especially in mature EU markets where margin pressure is intense [6, p. 33–47]. Kim and Lee (2019) confirm that dynamic, AI-powered pricing is now standard in major appliance brands, supporting rapid market response and inventory optimization [11, p. 33–49].

Consulting firms such as McKinsey, Accenture, and BCG have documented the shift towards cross-functional KAM teams in FMCG and durable goods industries, emphasizing the importance of real-time KPI monitoring and financial scenario modeling (McKinsey, 2022; BCG, 2023) [16, p. 18–29]. In these organizations, finance, sales, marketing, and supply chain experts jointly develop account strategies, utilizing collaborative planning software and predictive analytics. Bain & Company



(2022) report that in leading European and North American companies, more than 70% of KAM decisions on trade investments are now made with direct input from finance teams [17, p. 7].

Chang et al. (2021) and Rehme et al. (2021) provide case studies from Electrolux and LG Electronics, showing that digital transformation projects in KAM result in 20–35% higher promotional ROI and double-digit improvements in premium product sales [4, p. 210–223; 13, p. 102–117]. These studies emphasize the critical role of omnichannel strategies, where KAMs manage not only traditional B2B retail relationships but also direct-to-consumer (D2C) and e-commerce partnerships (Payne & Frow, 2020) [8, p. 60–72].

Best Practice in the Industry:

- At Bosch, key accounts are segmented by profitability, not just revenue, and KAMs are incentivized based on margin improvement and net new value creation (Johnston & Marshall, 2023) [15, p. 64–77].
- Electrolux uses a global KAM dashboard, integrating sell-in, sell-out, inventory, and financial performance data, with AI-based scenario analysis for all major accounts.
- Samsung and LG have developed automated promotional funding tools: all trade marketing investments require pre-approved ROI thresholds and post-campaign audits.
- Philips and Haier emphasize ecosystem management: their KAMs are responsible for nurturing long-term partnerships and co-creating value through joint business planning, collaborative innovation, and shared data platforms.

Digitalization is also transforming how KAM teams interact with clients. Lee and Grewal (2022) describe how virtual account reviews, remote performance dashboards, and shared digital workspaces allow for faster decision-making and increased transparency in multinational organizations [10, p. 140–153]. Miele and Gorenje have successfully adopted integrated CRM and financial analytics suites, linking customer



satisfaction, sales conversion, and financial outcomes in a unified data environment (BCG, 2023) [16, p. 21].

Research Gap: Despite significant progress in the implementation of financial instruments in strategic key account management in developed countries, their adaptation and effectiveness in post-crisis and unstable economies, particularly in Ukraine, remain underexplored. There is a lack of empirical evidence on the integration of analytical and digital solutions into KAM practice during periods of war and macroeconomic shocks. This article aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the Whirlpool experience in Ukraine and examining international best practices for adaptation to local realities.

Article Objectives: The purpose of this article is to investigate the effectiveness of modern financial tools in strategic key account management using the example of Whirlpool in Ukraine, as well as to assess the applicability of international experience under the conditions of a market affected by war and economic upheavals. The research focuses on developing practical recommendations for the implementation of innovative financial solutions to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of domestic business.

Summary: The reviewed literature supports the strategic integration of financial analytics, digital dashboards, and collaborative planning into KAM as a source of competitive advantage. However, more research is needed to explore how these tools function in environments characterized by instability and rapid market shifts—such as Ukraine.

International Benchmarking and Best Practices in Strategic Key Account Management

The rapid evolution of key account management (KAM) is clearly visible in the strategies of global industry leaders. These organizations systematically deploy advanced financial tools, integrated analytics, and cross-functional structures to drive both growth and resilience in turbulent markets. Below is a detailed comparative analysis of best practices across the leading home appliances and consumer electronics companies.



Bosch-Siemens Hausgeräte (BSH): Margin-Driven KAM and ROI Automation

At BSH, key account segmentation is strictly based on profitability and risk-adjusted value creation. Each KAM team uses a centralized digital dashboard (“KAM Cockpit”), integrating weekly sell-out, inventory status, margin per SKU, and customer lifetime value (CLV). Promotional investments are approved only after scenario-based ROI modeling; campaigns are continuously monitored, and post-event ROI is benchmarked against European and global averages. BSH has automated large parts of its promotional spend approval process with AI, allowing for dynamic adjustment of budgets in response to competitor moves or shifts in macroeconomic indicators. Cross-functional “Business War Rooms” bring together finance, supply chain, and marketing for real-time decision-making during high-impact campaigns (BCG, 2023) [18, p. 19–23].

Electrolux: Digital Transformation and Global KPI Dashboards

Electrolux has pioneered a global KAM dashboard that links sell-in, sell-out, inventory, promotional ROI, and channel profitability across more than 20 countries. KAMs work with “digital twins” of major accounts — virtual representations that simulate financial outcomes under different pricing, promotion, and inventory allocation scenarios. Trade marketing budgets are fully transparent; all investments must surpass predefined ROI and profitability benchmarks (Chang et al., 2021) [4, p. 210–223]. Electrolux uses cloud-based predictive analytics to anticipate customer churn and optimize stock replenishment, and collaborates closely with IT and business intelligence teams to standardize reporting and KPIs.

Samsung and LG: Automation, Omnichannel Integration, and Data-Driven Trade Marketing

Samsung and LG are recognized for their fully automated promotional investment approval workflows. All trade marketing budgets are managed via AI-powered platforms that require every campaign to pass a minimum ROI threshold before launch. The results are tracked in real time, with “traffic light” dashboards alerting KAMs to



underperforming activities that require intervention (Kim & Lee, 2019) [11, p. 33–49]. Both companies have developed omnichannel KAM teams responsible for harmonizing brand positioning, customer experience, and financial outcomes across offline and online channels. In many EU markets, Samsung’s KAMs are tasked with coordinating joint marketing with e-commerce leaders such as Amazon, AO.com, and MediaMarkt.

Philips: Collaborative Ecosystems and Financial Co-Planning

Philips focuses on ecosystem-based KAM, emphasizing joint business planning, long-term value creation, and collaborative innovation. Key accounts are engaged in annual co-planning sessions, where both parties agree on financial targets, marketing budgets, and innovation initiatives. Philips leverages advanced CRM and analytics suites that provide real-time visibility into sales, profitability, and customer satisfaction, linking these directly to financial outcomes (Payne & Frow, 2020) [8, p. 60–72]. Philips’ approach is especially effective for hospital, healthcare, and large retail partners, where lifecycle cost, service, and long-term financial partnership matter most.

Haier and Gorenje: Ecosystem Sales, Speed, and Localization

Haier’s unique “ecosystem sales” strategy in Europe is based on rapid localization, flexible pricing, and intensive data analytics. KAMs are empowered to make micro-adjustments to product portfolios and pricing by region, using AI tools that continuously scan competitor actions, online reviews, and local macroeconomic signals. Gorenje, as part of the Hisense group, applies a similar approach, emphasizing speed, digital agility, and collaborative trade marketing with key partners.

Miele and Siemens: Premium Positioning and Data-Driven Customer Experience

Both Miele and Siemens maintain premium market positioning through targeted investments in brand zones, high-quality in-store promoters, and exclusive bundled offers. Their KAMs are measured by incremental premium segment growth, customer NPS, and ROI on promotional activity. Miele’s CRM and data analytics platforms



allow the company to track end-to-end customer journeys, linking each touchpoint to financial impact (Johnston & Marshall, 2023) [15, p. 64–77].

Candy-Hoover and Beko: Cross-Regional Harmonization after M&A

The Whirlpool–Beko Europe merger and the earlier Candy–Hoover integration provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of post-merger KAM harmonization. Both cases highlight the importance of standardizing financial KPIs, promotional funding approval processes, and unified reporting standards. Successful harmonization leads to greater flexibility in investment allocation, faster scaling of best practices, and more robust risk management in volatile regions.

Comparative Table: Financial KAM Tools and Practices (Selected Companies)

Company	Main KAM Financial Tools	Key Practice Highlights	Tech/Analytics Level
Bosch-Siemens	KAM Cockpit, ROI Automation	Margin-based segmentation, AI scenario planning	Advanced
Electrolux	Global KPI Dashboard, Digital Twin	Predictive analytics, ROI benchmarks, cloud reporting	Advanced
Samsung, LG	AI Trade Marketing, Omnichannel CRM	Real-time ROI tracking, automated investment approval	Advanced
Philips	Collaborative Co-Planning	Ecosystem management, joint target setting	High
Haier, Gorenje	AI Localization Tools	Micro-regional pricing, fast adaptation	High



Company	Main KAM Financial Tools	Key Practice Highlights	Tech/Analytics Level
Miele, Siemens	Premium Segment Dashboards	Brand zones, NPS, CRM-linked financial analytics	Advanced
Beko, Candy	Unified KAM Standards	Post-merger harmonization, KPI risk management	Moderate– Advanced

Source: developed by the author(s) based on own analysis.

Key International Trends and Lessons

- **Real-time, AI-powered analytics** are now the gold standard for KAM financial decision-making in Europe, Korea, and North America.
- **Omnichannel and e-commerce integration** is mandatory: leading KAMs plan simultaneously for traditional retail, D2C, and online marketplaces.
- **Cross-functional teams and “business war rooms”** (especially in BSH, Electrolux, and Samsung) enable rapid scenario planning and crisis response.
- **Standardization of ROI and promotional approval processes** post-merger or after expansion accelerates synergy capture and risk reduction.
- **Localization and digital agility** (Haier, Gorenje, LG) allow rapid response to micro-market disruptions and regional consumer shifts.

Challenges in Emerging Markets

While these practices have delivered strong results in mature economies, their adaptation to emerging markets such as Ukraine faces specific challenges:

- Instability in demand and supply chains due to war or political risk.
- Limited digital infrastructure and workforce readiness.
- Currency fluctuations and economic shocks requiring more flexible ROI and risk modeling.
- Slower integration of advanced analytics and cloud platforms.



The **Whirlpool Ukraine–Epicentr** case demonstrates successful adaptation by prioritizing core financial KPIs, cross-functional planning, and selective transfer of best-in-class international practices.

Main Results: Empirical Findings and Comparative Analysis

Whirlpool Ukraine and Epicentr: Deep Dive into KAM Financial Transformation

Whirlpool’s journey in Ukraine, especially in cooperation with Epicentr, provides a real-world laboratory for the implementation of advanced financial KAM tools in an unstable, highly competitive market. In the context of the Whirlpool–Beko Europe merger, this case also highlights the adaptation of unified European KAM standards at the local level.

Key Pillars of the Transformation:

- **Integrated Data Flow:** Real-time sell-out and inventory data from Epicentr’s EDI system are integrated into Whirlpool’s internal dashboards, allowing weekly analysis of SKU-level profitability and enabling rapid tactical adjustments.
- **ROI-Driven Promotion Planning:** All trade marketing activities are subjected to strict ROI modeling and pre/post campaign audits. Campaigns failing to meet financial thresholds are quickly discontinued.
- **Dynamic Pricing and Margin Optimization:** Price positioning is adjusted weekly based on competitive monitoring and market elasticity modeling. This approach helps maintain target margins even during promotional peaks and economic turbulence.
- **Brand Zones and Trained Promoters:** Investment in premium branded zones and skilled in-store promoters led to a measurable uplift in conversion rates, especially in high-value product segments (e.g., built-in appliances).



Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Comparison (Whirlpool Ukraine, Epicentr):

Metric	2022 (Baseline)	2023 (Optimized)	% Change
Market Share (MDA)	12.5%	14.8%	+18.4%
Promo ROI	2.25	2.86	+27.1%
Stock Turnover	4.3	5.7	+32.6%
OOS Events	22/mo	17.6/mo	-20%
Promo Conversion	9.1%	11.3%	+24.2%

Source: Whirlpool internal reports, 2022–2023

Benchmarking with International Best Practices:

Bosch-Siemens

- Uses AI scenario modeling for trade spend.
- Weekly “War Rooms” synchronize KAM, finance, and logistics to avoid overstock and maximize promo ROI.
- KPI dashboards updated daily; deviation triggers immediate cross-team interventions.

Electrolux

- Cloud-based digital twins simulate account performance.
- Joint business planning with retailers includes co-designed promotions and shared risk/reward.
- KAMs incentivized for both topline and margin improvement.

Samsung/LG

- Automated ROI approval for all promotional funding.
- Unified omnichannel planning for traditional and e-commerce channels.
- Use of AI to detect early signs of promo fatigue or customer churn.

Haier/Philips

- Agile adjustment of product-mix and pricing per region.



- Ecosystem-oriented KAM: co-innovation with key accounts, not just transactional selling.
- Investment in partner training and post-sale support as a driver of long-term financial outcomes.

Comparative Table: Key Financial Instruments and Their Measurable Impact

Practice/Instrument	Whirlpool Ukraine	Bosch- Siemens	Electrolux	Samsung/LG	Haier/Philips
Real-time ROI Dashboards	+	+	+	+	+
AI-Powered Promo Audit	± (pilot)	+	±	+	±
Dynamic Pricing	+	+	+	±	+
Brand Zones & Promoters	+	±	+	±	±
Omnichannel Integration	±	±	+	+	+
Cross-functional “War Rooms”	±	+	±	±	±

Legend: + — widely adopted; ± — partially/only in pilot; – — not used

Source: developed by the author(s) based on own analysis.

Discussion: Key Insights, Success Factors and Challenges

The Whirlpool–Epicentr case confirms that **integration of financial analytics, real-time data, and cross-functional alignment** is no longer a Western luxury but a necessity for survival and growth in emerging markets. The transition from volume-driven to value-driven KAM, with strict attention to ROI and margin, has proven especially effective during periods of economic shock and market volatility.

Key Success Factors:

- **Top management support and cross-department buy-in** are critical for transforming KAM culture.



- **Investment in digital infrastructure and workforce upskilling** enables rapid adaptation of best international practices.

- **Collaboration with retail partners:** Joint business planning, data sharing, and scenario modeling improve agility and risk management for both supplier and retailer.

Adaptation Barriers in Ukraine and CEE:

- Incomplete digitalization of retail partners and fragmented data availability.

- Traditional focus on volume over margin in legacy KAM teams.

- Challenges in localizing global KPI standards due to macroeconomic instability, rapid inflation, and frequent regulatory changes.

Lessons from International Leaders:

- **Bosch and Electrolux** demonstrate that linking KAM incentives to profitability (not just revenue) drives a more sustainable business.

- **Samsung/LG's** AI-based trade investment management can be rolled out in Ukraine gradually, starting with pilot projects and focusing on measurable campaigns.

- **Philips/Haier** show the benefits of ecosystem thinking — not just “pushing product”, but co-creating solutions with key customers.

Future Directions:

- As digitalization and omnichannel retail develop in Ukraine, further integration of advanced KAM tools (e.g., AI-driven scenario planning, automated promo approval) will become essential.

- Post-merger harmonization (e.g., Whirlpool–Beko Europe) must focus on unified dashboards, real-time analytics, and standardized processes — allowing rapid best practice transfer across markets.

Conclusions.

The strategic deployment of financial tools in KAM — including real-time dashboards, dynamic pricing, ROI-based promotional planning, and cross-functional



management — significantly enhances key account profitability, market share, and long-term partnership stability. International benchmarking confirms that these practices are transferable, with appropriate localization, to the Ukrainian context. For Ukrainian and CEE companies, the path forward lies in digital upskilling, investment in integrated analytics, and close collaboration with both internal stakeholders and external partners.

Recommendations:

1. KAM teams should prioritize profitability and margin growth, not just sales volume.
2. Invest in digital dashboards and analytics to enable real-time, evidence-based decisions.
3. Foster cross-functional alignment: regular “war rooms” or planning sessions including finance, sales, marketing, and logistics.
4. Pilot advanced international practices (such as automated ROI approval, digital twins for accounts, or ecosystem partnerships) with select key accounts before broader rollout.
5. Strengthen partnerships with retailers through joint business planning, transparent data sharing, and mutual KPI targets.

Acknowledgments

The author gratefully acknowledges the invaluable cooperation of the management teams at Whirlpool Ukraine, Beko Europe, and Epicentr, as well as the insights shared by colleagues from Bosch, Electrolux, Samsung, and other industry partners. Special thanks to all frontline Key Account Managers whose practical experience made this research possible.

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