

Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising is a marketing practice that uses floor plans, colour, lighting, displays, technology, and other elements to attract customer attention. Its ultimate purpose is to use the retail space to generate more sales by making a store stand out and attracting shoppers.

Creativity is key to good visual merchandising, and making your vision come to life is Contra Vision's speciality.

Objectives of Visual Merchandising

Attracting the attention of passers-by and enticing people to enter a store is the number one aim of great visual merchandising. But how do you do it?

Your store's display window is the first thing people see, and it can be a deciding factor in whether a customer enters the store or not. One of the most crucial visuals that will define your shop is a powerful retail window design.

Great window graphics create a story, something customers can relate to, and elicit a positive experience from the get-go. This isn't limited to seasonal displays, nor props. Incorporating artistic installations, using striking graphics, lighting and even video displays all work together to create a unique feeling. There are dozens of possible applications for window designs, in-store and outside of it, and Contra Vision's one-way vision window graphics can help you make the most out of your promotional space.

The art of capturing attention through visual appeal has its own principles, but it all comes down to one thing: creating an amazing experience that encourages a purchase. This leads us to goal number two: to create a beautiful and positive ambience in-store that makes customers feel good by being in it.

Visual merchandising doesn't only help a store attract customers: it helps increase sales and gives customers a good reason to come back again, whilst giving your business a competitive advantage. This is why visual merchandising is so important.

Examples of Visual Merchandising

Presenting products in a way that makes them visually appealing and desirable is the cornerstone of visual merchandising. A few ways you can do this is:

- **Themed Window Displays:** the most common way of attracting the attention of people passing are window graphic designs. The case of the entrance window graphics of Swindon Designer Outlet is a perfect example of how to promote business from the very first customer interaction.
- **Lighting and Digital Arrangements:** digital projection mapping is a way of creating an incredible in-store experience, as was the case with Tabegamisama culinary

experience. The use of digital images and careful light placement creates an innovative event that is impossible to replicate.

- **Mixed elements:** In the case of the Carryduff Community Church, a combination of colour and light translates into an eye-catching logo that transitions from day to night and never loses its appeal.
- **Vehicle Wrapping:** out of home (OOH) advertising can be a way to capture attention if you are unable to advertise in your storefront, want to expand your target audience or promote your product on a bigger scale. A way of doing so is by bus wrapping like the University Medical Center Utrecht did to carry their message to the public.

All these display techniques are used to highlight the appearance and benefits of the products and services being sold.

Visual Merchandiser: What Does a Visual Merchandiser Do?

By enhancing the visual image of the store, you sell products by creating a beautiful place. It may sound simple but there are a lot of moving parts, which is why enlisting the help of a visual merchandising expert is the way to go.

Think of a visual merchandiser as the person behind the magic. Visual merchandisers use their design skills to help promote the image, products and services of retail businesses and other organisations.

They focus on key elements such as store exterior and interior, store layout and interior display to create eye-catching product displays and store layout designs that attract customers and encourage them to buy.

Importance of Visual Merchandising

Investing in visual merchandising helps customers have a better shopping experience, serves as a powerful marketing tool for your company and enhances customer loyalty. But it also comes with its downsides.

Benefits of visual merchandising

The potential advantages of visual merchandising are numerous, starting with increasing the number of customers who notice and subsequently enter your retail business.

The ensuing effect is increased profit. Visual merchandising that is effective and well-designed can have a significant and beneficial impact on store sales.

And perhaps the biggest benefit of clever visual merchandising is that it could help get the most value out of products that would be hard to market any other way. For instance, a ferry bus wrap promoting a TV show can increase audience awareness and impact the number of viewers significantly.

Disadvantages of visual merchandising

There could be some barriers to introducing visual marketing techniques. When it comes to interior store displays, it could be the necessary change of layout, props and lighting. But if you are employing visual merchandise on the first point of contact, the window display, this occurs in the retail exterior so this downside does not apply.

Expenses would be the following drawback most people would associate with employing new visual marketing techniques. However, successful planning and managing visual merchandise can result in increased profitability and client loyalty. In the long run, this would cover initial costs you may incur.

Visual merchandising is a wide-ranging discipline that involves marketing, operations, design, and sales to create a compelling customer experience and drive sales. Understanding how to use the tools at your reach to fuel the creative aspects of it can be a true differentiator in a crowded industry. Need some inspiration? Take a look at all the creative possibilities of one-way vision graphics.

Types of visual merchandising

Visual merchandising includes the following elements:

- **Interior displays:** Interior displays are displays arranged inside the store that can include products and decor.
- **Store layout:** Visual merchandising includes how a store is laid out, including where certain products are placed, the flow of products from front to back of store, where points of sale are and where dressing rooms are.
- **Mannequins:** The type, styling and positioning of mannequins can communicate messages to your customers.
- **Point of purchase display:** The signage, decor and physical structure of points of purchase are part of visual merchandising.
- **Bundling:** Bundling refers to displaying products together to show customers how they might use multiple products.
- **Store environment:** The atmosphere of your brick and mortar or digital space can create a tone for your brand, such as loud and fun or serene.
- **Window displays:** Window displays are an important part of visual merchandising that can catch the attention of people passing your store, which can lead to more customers.
- **Outdoor signage:** Outdoor signs communicate what your business is and set the tone for your space.

- **Exterior fixtures:** Exterior fixtures, such as marquees, banners and awnings, provide the customer's first impression of your store.
- **Seasonal displays:** Seasonal displays can show off new merchandise, encourage add-on purchases and create interest.
- **Product information:** Where and how you communicate product details, including size of labels and signs, typeface and tone of content, can reflect on your company's brand.
- **Design decisions:** Design decisions, like flooring, textiles and other materials can create a physical representation of your brand's aesthetic.

How to improve your visual merchandising

Here are 10 ways you can improve the visual merchandising in your space:

1. Conduct research

Use market research to identify what your target audience responds to. Identify your ideal customer's interests, hobbies and lifestyle. Apply this research to your space by incorporating elements that will resonate with your target demographic. For instance, if your ideal customer is a parent, consider images of smiling children and families.

2. Consider safety

Ensure that displays, signs and structures like shelving are secure and safe. Follow all manufacturer guidelines for installation and maintenance, and hire professionals for electrical, construction and complex installation projects.

3. Promote engagement

Using interactive displays can increase your customers' level of engagement with your brand. Displays that link to your social media accounts or website can drive traffic to your sites, which can increase your search rankings. Using creative, interactive displays can also increase referrals to your store as more people learn about your unique features.

4. Keep up with trends

Stay updated on industry trends that you can use in your space, like design, art and fashion trends. For example, if monochromatic fashion is popular, you can incorporate similar colors together in your store or design a monochromatic display.

5. Hire a consultant

Consider hiring a professional merchandiser to assess your space and make recommendations to better represent your brand, implement best practices, encourage repeat business and

increase sales. You can find merchandisers at interior design agencies, fashion and design schools and through industry websites and publications.

6. Use merchandising as marketing

Consider your visual merchandising another facet of your marketing strategy. Optimize your physical space to draw customers in, show them your products' best features and close sales. Incorporate thoughtful elements that people will remember and share with others.

7. Test merchandising variations

To determine the most effective merchandising strategies, you can test slight variations in layout, color schemes, signage and displays for a period of time and compare sales, traffic or other metrics to show which option is more successful.

8. Edit your space regularly

It's important to keep your visual merchandising elements balanced, meaning you have the right amount of products, decor and displays to draw interest without overwhelming customers. Scan your store often to make sure your visual elements are working to enhance your brand rather than drawing attention away from your products or services.

9. Use themes

Consider using themes throughout your space to reflect a new product launch, seasonal items or special promotion. Themes can be as simple as coordinating colors or as in-depth as a fictional storyline or customer testimonial. Incorporating themes can help differentiate certain products or features that you want to highlight.

10. Be consistent

Your brand and voice should be consistent throughout your physical and digital spaces. The tone, style and messaging should be cohesive through your store, website and social media accounts. This helps foster brand awareness across all channels, helping customers recognize your products and creating trust among consumers.

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