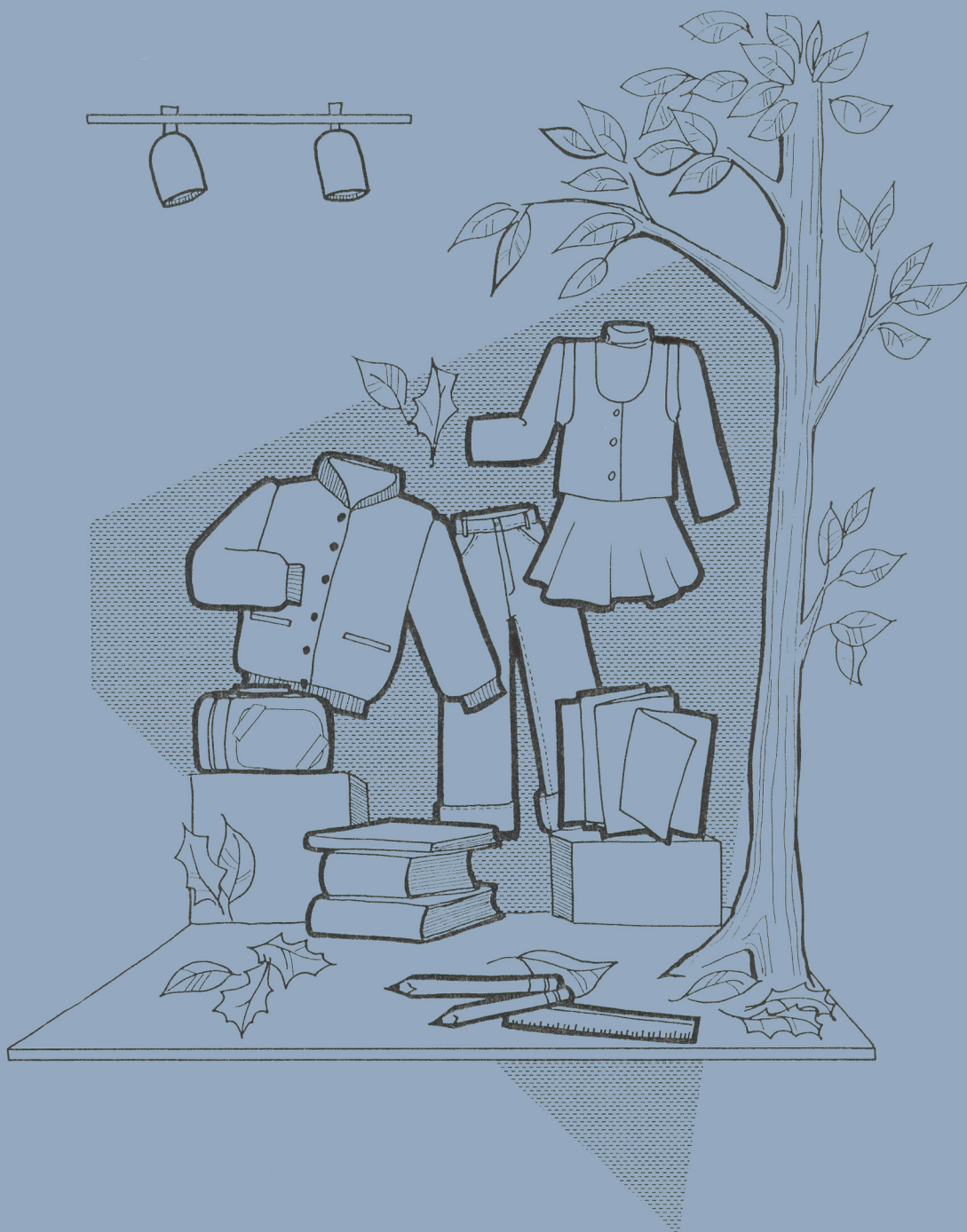


Visual Merchandising

**A GUIDE
FOR
SMALL
RETAILERS**



NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTER FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Visual Merchandising

A Guide for Small Retailers

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Dale Zetocha, North Dakota State University
Gregory Passewitz, The Ohio State University

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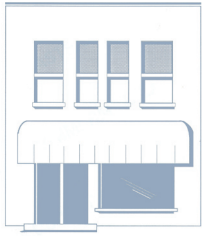
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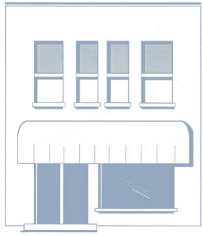
A Guide for Small Retailers



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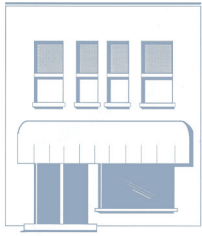
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Preface

In May 1986, Cooperative Extension Service directors of the North Central region appointed a 13-member task force to identify meaningful multistate and multidisciplinary education programs to meet the challenges of rural revitalization. Five critical issues were identified. They include:

1. Economic development in small communities.
2. Innovation in the organization, financing and delivery of community services.
3. Programs for farm and nonfarm families in transition.
4. Development of new income opportunities and rural entrepreneurship.
5. Leadership development in small communities.

There are many ways to assist small rural communities in addressing these interrelated issues. One strategy is to help small town merchants compete in a highly competitive environment. In light of the regionalization of consumer shopping to larger urban centers, many small town businesses are in need of effective marketing techniques. The following materials provide information on visual merchandising, an important part of any business' total marketing effort.

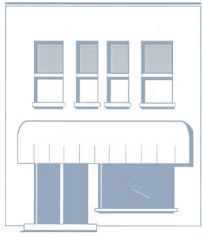
These materials were written by: Holly E. Bastow-Shoop, Ph.D., department of apparel, textiles and interior design, North Dakota State University; Dale Zetocha, small business specialist, North Dakota State University Extension Service; and Gregory Passewitz, leader, Natural Resources and Small Business, Cooperative Extension Service, The Ohio State University.

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Their intent was to initiate an educational program in rural revitalization that would have applicability to all states in the region. The materials include four slide-tape sets that closely follow this bulletin. These materials were designed to be used by extension service state, regional and county staff.

The authors would like to express their gratitude to those from the North Central region who reviewed the materials, and to Bud Crewdson, Minnesota; Gwen O'Neal and Mike Lloyd, Ohio; and Harold Caldwell, North Dakota, for contributing slides. Bill Pallasch also reviewed the materials and provided technical assistance, as well as contributing slides.

We are especially thankful to Peter Korsching, director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, and Tim Borich, extension associate at the center, for the assistance and support that enabled this multi-state effort to be completed. We appreciate the editing work by Julie Stewart and the computer work by Kristi Hetland, both of the NCRCRD, and the development of the genographic slides by Ann Misho of Ohio.



Visual Merchandising: A Guide for Small Retailers

A successful retailing business requires that a distinct and consistent image be created in the customer's mind that permeates all product and service offerings. Visual merchandising can help create that positive customer image that leads to successful sales. It not only communicates the store's image, but also reinforces the store's advertising efforts and encourages impulse buying by the customer.

Visual merchandising is a major factor often overlooked in the success or failure of a retail store. It is second only to effective customer relations.

Visual merchandising can be defined as everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer. A story can be told that communicates to the prospective customer what the store is all about. It includes the dramatic presentation of merchandise as well as other important, subtle features that create the store's overall atmosphere.

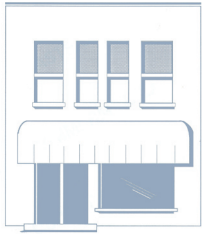
Eighty percent of our impressions are created by sight; that is why one picture is worth a thousand words. Each customer has a mental image of a store and its merchandise. A store should have an inviting appearance that makes the customer feel comfortable and yet eager to buy.

"Visual Merchandising is everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer."

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Some businesses maintain a minimum staff to reduce costs, which means it is even more important for the merchandise to sell itself. Greater effort must be spent on merchandise displays that make it easier for the customer to find and purchase the items they want or need.

The basic objective for visual merchandising is a desire to attract customers to a place of business in order to sell the merchandise. Visual merchandising is offered to the customer through exterior and interior presentation. Each should be coordinated with the other using the store's overall theme. Creating and maintaining a store's visual merchandising plan, however, is not a simple task. It is necessary to continually determine what the *customer* sees. This evaluation from the customer's perspective should start on the exterior and work completely through the interior of the store.



Exterior Presentation

The quality of a store front is a major determinant for a customer, particularly a new customer, and should not be underestimated. The exterior appearance of one store, a block of businesses or a cluster, silently announce what customers can expect inside. Good exterior visual merchandising attracts attention, creates interest and invites the customer into the business. The exterior presentation can offer a conservative, progressive, lavish or discount image to the customer.

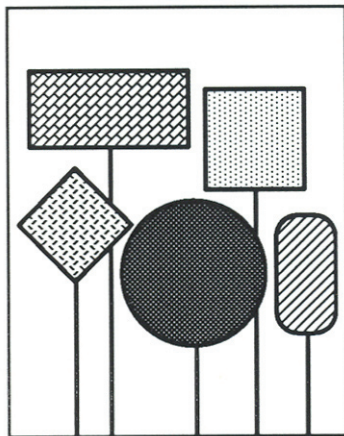
How a store visually welcomes customers has a lot to do with whether or not they enter the store. Although good prices and positive word-of-mouth advertising is important, it is hard to overcome the negative image of a poor store exterior. When examining a store's exterior, consider the following questions:

- How do customers locate the business?
- Are the sidewalks clean, safe and accessible?
- Are the exterior signs clean, fresh and readable?
- Does the store front need cleaning, painting or touch-up?
- Are the outside entrances clean and accessible?
- Are the windows clean, bright and inviting?
- Are the window display preparation materials such as tape, pins and packaging materials removed?
- Are the window displays frequently changed?
- Do the window displays carry a theme?

Exterior Signs

A sign is a silent salesperson, and part of a shopper's first impression of a store. In less than 10 seconds the sign

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must attract attention, tell who the business is and what it has to sell. An effective sign will communicate what type of business is being conducted.

Off-premise signs provide information and direction, especially for travelers and new residents. Signs can also help effectively communicate a poor location. The lettering should be large enough to read from 200 feet, which is the distance required to stop a car traveling 40 miles per hour. Signs with 8-inch letters can be read from a distance up to 250 feet. A car traveling 55 miles per hour needs about 400 feet to stop. A sign requires 12-inch lettering to be read at that distance.

A sign's design conveys a great deal about the business inside. A stark design and limited materials may suggest discount prices and no frills. Elegant and expensive sign materials may suggest luxury goods and services. Signs may also be used to target a specific market segment such as youth, women, senior citizens, singles, etc.

Where many signs compete for customers attention, design and logo become even more important. They should be unique, noticeable and readable. When preparing a sign to draw the customer's attention, consider size, shape, materials, lettering, height, placement and structure. For example, among several rectangular signs in close proximity to one another, construct an oval or circular sign that will stand out. Also consider a sign's relationship with its surroundings. A sign may look good on an individual store front, but very unattractive when viewed in conjunction with other buildings on the street.

Simple, brief, well-designed, well-lettered and easy-to-read signs will convey a feeling of welcome. Design graphics appropriate for the nature of the business, and create a message that is clear and simple. Focus on one or two key words to describe the business. A clean, clear message will have more impact.

Signs with unlit or missing light bulbs, flaking or faded paint, or cracked and peeling backgrounds can hurt the overall store image. A shabby or dilapidated sign implies a lack of concern with the business image, and a sloppy, poorly managed business. Signs should be well maintained, and painted every three years or sooner if they weather or fade.

A store's sign is its *signature*. It is personal, original and continuously recognizable to the public. It should create

an image that is consistently carried throughout the remainder of the store and its business actions.

■ Marquees

This special type of sign is used to display the name of a store. An effective marquee must stand out from the other businesses to attract attention. A marquee on some older buildings is a permanent canopy projecting over an entrance that provides protection from the elements. It can be used to announce a change in seasons, a special event or a promotion. The top of the permanent canopy (marquee) provides an opportunity to showcase seasonal displays or special promotional banners.

■ Banners

Banners are used increasingly as an inexpensive but colorful, eye-catching means of promotion. A new and interesting appearance can be offered by changing the banners frequently. Consumers will think exciting changes are taking place, and be drawn into the store.

Banners can be hung from flagpoles, projected from the building or hung flat against the exterior. To provide continuity, the same banner design, reduced in size and scale, can be hung from the marquee and displayed inside the store. However, do not overuse banners because shoppers will stop noticing them. With each new banner, select a different size, shape and color from those previously used.

Consistency is an important aspect of retailing used to maintain a businesses' image and identification. The design concept used on the banners will be more effective if an attempt is made to carry the colors and graphics throughout the store, and on promotional materials and newspaper ads.

■ Awnings

Color and appeal can be added to a store's exterior with the use of awnings. They provide the customer with protection from weather and makes viewing the window display more pleasant as it reduces heat, cuts down on glare and reflection, and prevents fading of the merchandise from exposure to the sun. However, an awning in poor condition may do harm by distracting from the total store image.

"Where many signs compete for customers' attention, design and logo become even more important. They should be unique, noticeable and readable."

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Many businesses are updating their storefronts with new back-lit awning systems. Other names for these may include electric awnings, interior lit canopy signs, and back-lit conventional awnings. These modern-looking awnings are used on new as well as older buildings and are usually bright and attractive, especially at night.

A variety of styles exist such as concave, convex, long dome, square and coop style. Most are interior lit with an egg crate type bottom that allows light to shine through and yet will not allow birds, etc. to enter into it. The illuminated awning fabric is a translucent vinyl that comes in a wide variety of colors. The store name is incorporated into it with a translucent (vinyl) film. Sign and awning companies can assist you in selecting and installing the right style, color and design of awning that would be appropriate for your building.

Walks and Entries

Approximately 75 percent of first time customers remember a store's entrance, which provides the first and last view of the store's interior. Picture walking up to an expanse of wall whose flat surface is pierced only by a plain glass door, as opposed to the protective feeling offered by walking under a porch or canopy.

A properly designed canopy or porch not only protects the customer in bad weather, but can add to the aesthetics of the building. When adding an entryway, be sure it is designed to blend or be consistent with the architecture of the building.

A cluttered entryway causes shoppers to indefinitely postpone entering a store, while an attractive, well-designed entrance is inviting to the customer. Entrances that allow shoppers to come into a store without being aware of their entering, is also becoming more popular. An example is a v-shaped window display that funnels window shopping traffic into the store.

Landscaping

Landscaping should lead the customer's eye to the focal point using color and texture to provide contrast and harmony. The focal point is the business sign and/or the building itself. Landscaping can also screen undesirable sights such as garbage receptacles, power transformers and refrigeration equipment.

The essence of good landscaping is simplicity; simple landscape designs that are easy to maintain. For example, uninterrupted expanses of grass are easier to maintain than areas cut up by several small beds of flowers or shrubs.

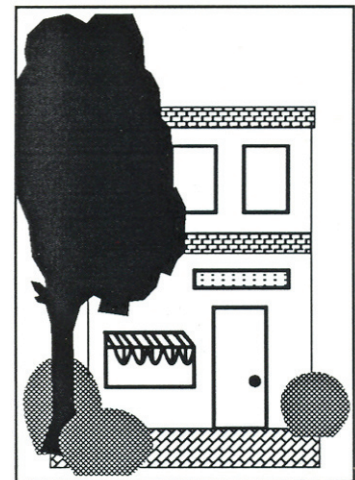
Planters, flower boxes and plants used in front of a store add to the general appearance, regardless of what type of merchandise is being sold. Plants (especially flowering bedding plants) enhance the overall look of the store, and also add to the store's positive reputation in terms of beautifying the community.

Planters placed below and in front of a display window actually strengthen the display by adding greater depth to the setting. Real flowers and plants are recommended over artificial ones; high quality silk flowers may be used in some cases. During the winter, artificial flowers should be removed from stores located in parts of the country where flowers do not grow in the winter.

Because of location and other factors, many businesses may be limited in the amount of landscaping that can be done. The following guidelines are suggested for stores that have flexibility:

- Concentrate hardy native tree species in groups at ends of buildings. This breaks long building lines and gives shade to the building and customers who have time to linger. Plant low-branched trees along back lot lines to reduce noise and give privacy to buildings.
- Most shrubs should be planted as individual specimens or in small groups. Do not plant too close to buildings, and allow ample space along walks to permit normal growth without crowding.
- Landscape fabric (black plastic, etc.) covered with rock, bark or other mulches under shrubs and small trees eliminates the tedium of mowing or weeding these areas.
- Hedges may be used at strategic points, such as street corners, where they must be kept low. Preference should be given to species that have an acceptable appearance and height without continuous trimming or pruning.
- Vines and other ground covers may be useful in shady spots and to protect banks against erosion.

Well chosen plants, properly placed and maintained, will go a long way toward welcoming customers. A



"As many as one in every four sales could be the result of a good window display."

landscape architect or horticulturist can assist in the layout and design of a landscaping program.

Well designed and sturdy benches for resting and relaxing can be a part of the landscape and may encourage customers to stay longer. Aesthetically designed and strategically located garbage receptacles for customer use will help keep the grounds free from litter.

Window Displays

Special emphasis should be placed on a store's window displays because they are the information link to the potential customer. Window displays can be as important, if not more important, than advertising. As many as one in every four sales could be the result of a good window display.

Window displays should attract attention, create interest and invite people into the store to purchase goods. There is less than 11 seconds to accomplish this, as that is the average amount of time an individual will spend looking at a window display. Be careful not to crowd too much merchandise into a window, as customers find it difficult to determine the message and what items are being promoted.

Shoppers also lose interest when the same window display is left up too long. It is especially important to frequently change window displays in small towns where customers pass by several times a week. New displays indicate that new, up-to-date merchandise is available. In malls and larger towns, customers pass by less frequently.

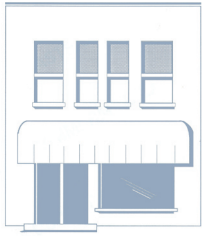
Properly lighted window displays can help sell specific products or ideas that promote a store's image. Window lights should be strong enough to overcome the reflections from outside objects, such as parked cars and buildings. At night, additional lights on overhead marquees and projecting cornices can make the window area look larger.

Closed-back windows require a high level of general illumination. Massed window displays are often lighted with overhead fluorescents which are supplemented by closely spaced clear incandescent lamps. Use miniature portable spotlights to accent small display areas, price cards and specific items in a massed display. Compact footlights help relieve shadows near the bottom of vertical displays.

Window displays are more successful when a dominate theme is carried throughout the display, regardless of whether the featured products are fashion-oriented, institutional or promotional in nature. Suggested window treatments that have proven successful include:

- A single object against seamless paper.
- Merchandise displayed as it would be utilized in a realistic setting.
- A theatrical setting using fantasy and drama.
- Straight merchandise glamorized with props.
- Animation, such as in holiday windows, that draws crowds of shoppers.
- The use of sculpture, paintings or art objects for a touch of class.
- Media tie-ins, with current area activities, films, stars or best selling books.

Window displays should be in harmony with the entire surroundings; a *whole* is being created rather than a fragment. When planning a window display consider the building facade, street, people and their perceptions, color harmony, lighting and viewing angle



Principles of Design

Interior Presentation

Selling space is the most important part of a store and therefore, efforts to utilize each square foot will help to maximize sales. One proven way to do this is through interior displays that effectively show merchandise to the customer. When planning interior displays, remember that the theme and image presented on the exterior must be carried throughout the interior of the store to provide consistency for the customer.

The purpose of interior display is to develop desire for the merchandise, show what is available, and encourage both impulse and planned buying. Three major goals of a store should be to: motivate the customer to spend money, project the image of the store and keep expenses to a minimum.

Promotion and advertising dollars are less effective or even wasted when efforts are not made *within* the store to effectively merchandise the products. Well-designed displays and in-store promotions are essential for a consistent theme and to help the customer find advertised items.

Although the percentage of in-store purchase decisions may vary by type of store and product, this is a critical selling point. Information provided by the Point of Purchase Advertising Institute (POPAI) indicates that nothing influences the consumer's purchase decisions more than advertising used where the sale is actually made—the point of purchase.

The three major goals of a store should be to:

- 1. Motivate the customer to spend money.*
- 2. Project the image of the store .*
- 3. Keep expenses to a minimum.*

As an illustration, researchers found that 64.8 percent of all purchase decisions were made inside a supermarket. This included impulse purchases along with substitutions and generally planned buys where the shopper had an item in mind, but no brand. Most people indicated they purchased the item because they saw it displayed. A National Retail Hardware Association survey indicated that 48 percent of all hardware customers purchased one or more items on impulse. Sixty-seven percent of items purchased in liquor stores are impulse items. Displays or advertising alone may not increase product sales substantially; however, combining advertising and display into an integrated promotional campaign will usually be more effective.

Some effective displays are created by suppliers or brand-name manufacturers, while others are developed from scratch. The main principles of design used in display are *balance, emphasis, proportion, rhythm, color, lighting* and *harmony*. These principles apply to all displays—window and interior.

■ Display Design

An effective way of attracting customers to a store is by having good displays, both exterior and interior. A customer will be attracted to a display within three to eight seconds; that is the time a customer spends to determine interest in a product. This is why it is critical to have a properly designed display. Every display should be planned and have a theme. Good design makes a visual presentation come together. This means the design attracts attention in a way that strengthens the store image, as well as introducing merchandise to the customer.

Before designing good displays, answer the following questions:

1. What is the store's image? Select an image to present to the public. The customer will identify a certain look with a store and expect that look to be carried throughout the business, be it trendy, elegant, off-price or discount. Do not mix images within one store, it will only confuse the customers.
2. What type of customer is being attracted? Use a display that reflects the targeted consumer. A display that works well in one community may be ineffective in another community.

3. What is the concept of the merchandise to be presented in the display? Display and highlight the merchandise, do not merchandise an attractive display. Items should be displayed as they are meant to be used or worn. If formal wear is combined with day wear and kitchen accessories, the consumer is confused and sales are lost.
4. Where is the display going to be set up and how will the location determine the design? There are many types of locations for display in every store: windows, walls, cases, gondolas or islands. The principles of display should help make the location work for the display.
5. Why is this merchandise being put on display as opposed to other merchandise? This reason will determine the visual presentation and design. For example, if the merchandise is on sale, it will be displayed differently than regular price merchandise. Keep in mind there should be enough backup stock to warrant a display. If not, do not display it.

Place sale or promotional goods in the front of the store for short periods of time only. If the sale or promotion lasts for several weeks, move the merchandise to the rear of the store. Interested customers will search out a bargain. Introduce the customer to new, exciting and creative merchandise with a display at the front of the store.

Principles of Design Used in Display

To execute a display that will sell merchandise, it is necessary to have a working knowledge of the principles of design. The primary principles of design used in display include balance, proportion, rhythm, emphasis, color, lighting and harmony. When applied appropriately, all parts of the display are pulled together to create a purposeful, effective and aesthetically pleasing presentation. An understanding of these principles will make it easier to design a display for all types of merchandise.

The principles are discussed separately to provide a clearer understanding of how each works. Five will be covered in this chapter, with color and lighting featured in the following chapter.

"The principles of design used in display include:

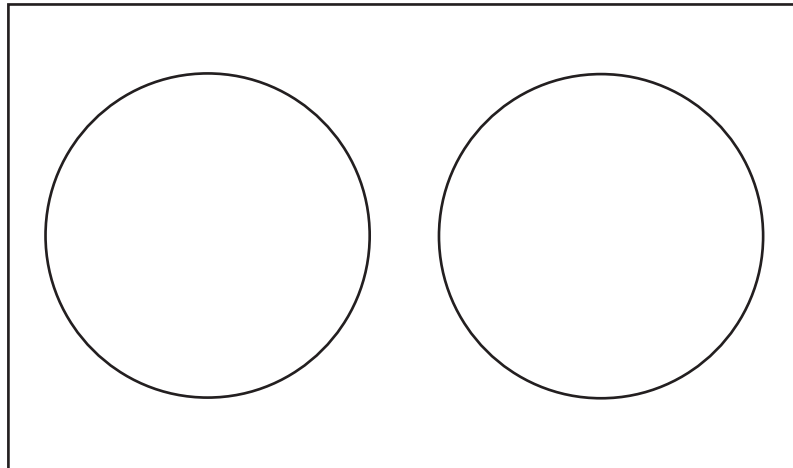
- *balance*
- *proportion*
- *rhythm*
- *emphasis*
- *color*
- *lighting*
- *harmony."*

■ Balance

Balance involves the equilibrium and weight of elements between two sides of a display. Balance is based on a theory of equals. Two types of balance include:

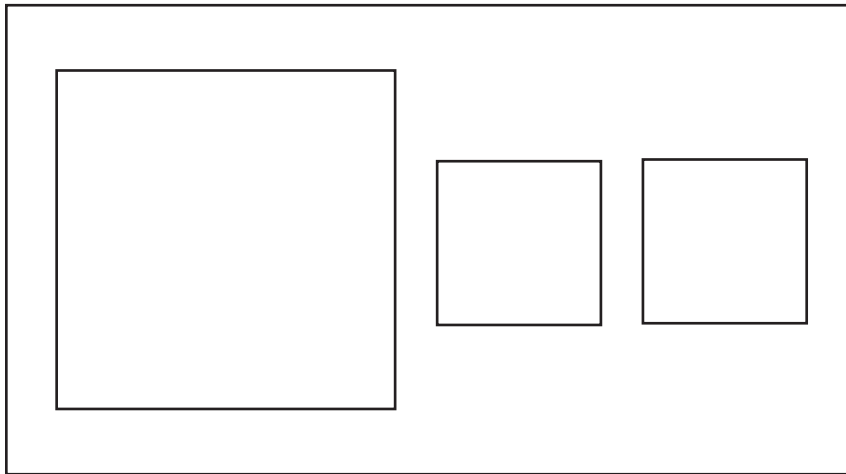
1. **Traditional or symmetrical balance** is large on one side and large on the other (Figure 1). This can be effective where expensive and quality merchandise is being presented.
2. **Informal or asymmetrical balance** creates flow or rhythm and a feeling of excitement. The two sides of the display appear to be of equal weight, but they are not replicas of each other. Something large can be balanced by several small items (Figure 2) or an expanse of empty space, a bright color or a shot of lights. Several soft colors in a large space can be balanced by one bright color because the intensity of the bright color will compensate for its small size.

Figure 1. Traditional Balance



When planning a display, consider the following points concerning balance:

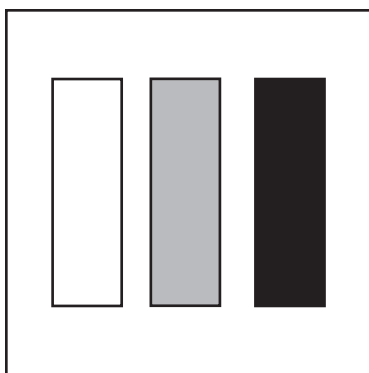
- If colors are too bright, they will overwhelm pastels.
- If several small objects are more exciting than the large object, they will overpower the large item.
- A large expanse of empty space will call attention to a single object placed within it.
- If an item is placed at an angle or to one side (off-center), the space on either side of that piece becomes important.
- If an object is centered, the empty space loses importance because its shape is predictable and therefore has less recognition as its own element.

Figure 2. Informal Balance

- A pleasing distribution of weight using merchandise of similar value will provide importance to both sides.

■ Emphasis

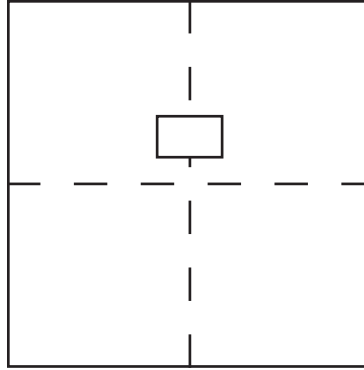
Emphasis is the point of initial eye contact. From this spot all other eye movements flow. Emphasis is therefore the formulation of a focal point, with all else in the display subordinate. There should be emphasis in all displays. This can be by virtue of the focal point's size, color or position. The merchandise is the focal point in a majority of displays.

Figure 3. Intensity

When planning a display, consider the following points concerning emphasis:

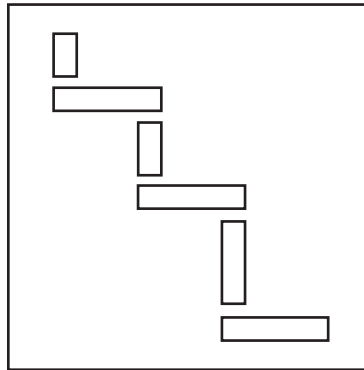
- A display needs to emphasize a theme or mood, such as the use of sports equipment, work equipment or leisure equipment set up in a lifelike situation. Themes may also depict seasons, anniversaries, celebrations, holidays and other special store events. All elements in a display must then reinforce one other and emphasize the mood created.

Figure 4. Optical Center



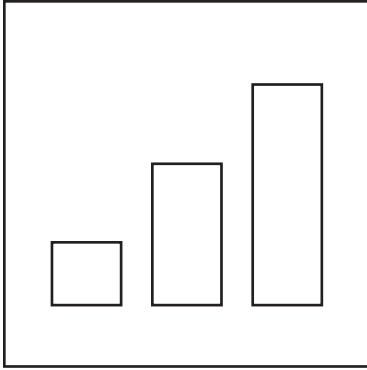
The focal point is the small square. The eye movement is from the square to the space below the dashed line.

Figure 5. Left to Right Movement

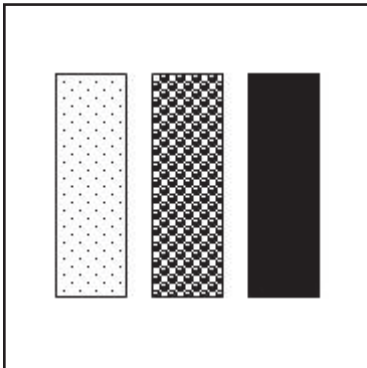


The focal point is in the upper left and eye movement is to the lower right.

- An isolated item can be emphasized when surrounded by blank space.
- Shiny surfaces emphasize and enlarge objects.
- Dull surfaces absorb light and help to de-emphasize an area.
- Color is a powerful medium for creating emphasis. Small amounts of advancing color, bright intensities, extreme tints or shades contrasts in the right places will provide striking accents.
- Unusual textures highlight an area.
- Emphasis is diminished with receding variations such as thin, fuzzy lines; nondescript shapes; regular spacing; even light absorption; cool hues, dull intensities, medium tints or shades; dull, opaque textures; and small, all-over or no pattern.
- Repetition usually means something is important; so repeated shapes, colors or motifs grouped together reinforces their importance, creating emphasis. Make sure if goods are used in repetition that these goods are emphasized for sale. For example, if attempting to sell lawn mowers, do not use a grouping or repetition of gas cans, because gas cans will be emphasized rather than lawn mowers.

Figure 6. Size

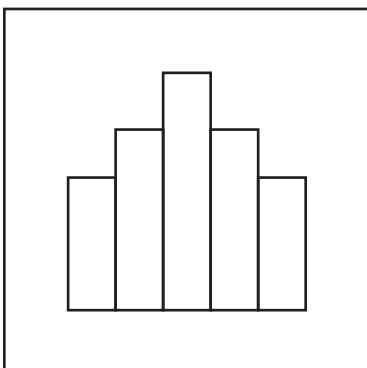
Another example of size difference and eye movement from small to large and left to right.

Figure 7. Texture

Eye movement is from left to right and represents a change in texture.

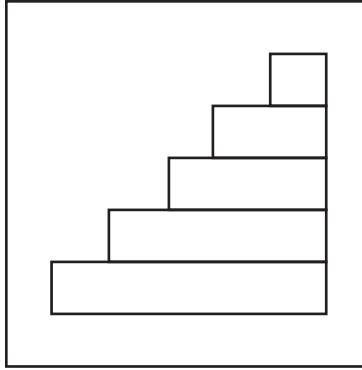
■ Proportion

Proportion is the ratio of the parts to the whole display. It is a comparative relationship of distances, sizes, amounts, degrees or parts. Each item may look *normal* when isolated, but if it is inconsistent in area or dimension with neighboring items, it seems *out of proportion*. Each piece of merchandise must be considered in relationship to all the other merchandise.

Figure 8. Pyramid

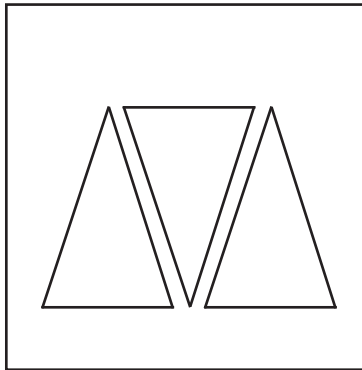
The blocks in the pyramid are all in proportion to each other. If not in proportion, then people have trouble looking at it.

Figure 9. Step



The size of these steps are also in proportion.

Figure 10. Repetition



Proportion is also important when repetition is used in a display.

When planning a display, consider the following points concerning proportion:

- Do not use all large objects, because there is nothing to break the monotony and sameness of that large feeling.
- Adding an odd number of smaller, related items to large pieces creates more interest and balance.
- Proportions take on more meaning when items define one another. For example the size of a dinosaur is defined when it is standing next to a two story house.
- Proportion and balance can best be accomplished when articles within the display play off each other through their size, shape and color.
- Ratio of merchandise to space is critical:
 - ▶ Each piece of merchandise must be considered in relation to others.
 - ▶ The ratio of props and show cards to merchandise must be in proportion to avoid the appearance of stressing or selling your props rather than your merchandise.
 - ▶ Each object should not be too large or too small, nor too heavy or too light in proportion to other items in display areas.

- Proportion and contrast are important elements of good display. Drastically changing the proportions and the color and texture can work wonders in attracting attention to a display. For example, a pair of baby shoes will appear smaller and more delicate when placed next to an enormous teddy bear.

■ Rhythm

Rhythm or flow involves the measurement of organized movement; a self-contained movement from object to object, background to foreground, and/or side to side. The rhythm in a display should lead the viewer's eye from the dominant object to the subordinated object(s) or from the primary presentation of the grouping down to the arrangement of accessories or alternate parts of the display.

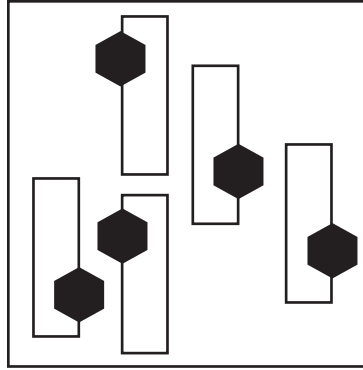
Rhythm may be broken-up or continuous; clearly stated or subtly suggested; repeated or vaguely similar. The initial pattern or design when repeated makes more of an impression on the viewer because it provides a continuous beat and completion, which is satisfying to the viewer. Rhythm entails an arrangement of organized motion and does not necessarily need repetition. However, it does gain impact from repetition.

A flow exists if the eye travels from one area of a display to another, covering the entire display. The eye should travel easily through the entire design. For example, if a very tall object, such as a mannequin, is placed next to several short baskets, there may be proportion but no flow. If dried or silk flowers or reeds are placed in the baskets (one and one-half times the height of the baskets), the height of the smaller objects is raised so the eye flows easily from the head and neckline of the mannequin to the baskets. A display can lead the eye with color, repetition, shadows created by light placement, lettering or texture.

When planning a display, consider the following points concerning rhythm:

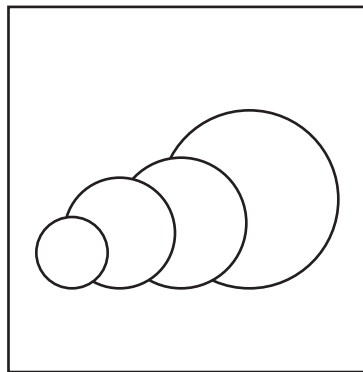
- English-reading people read from left to right. A left to right *reading* should be created in the display.
- Use elements that mean something together and relate to the merchandise.
- Create a pattern through the use of light and dark, either with color or light.

Figure 11. Flow



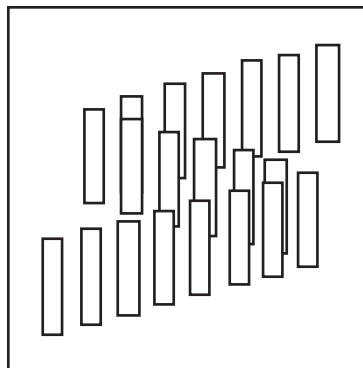
Flow is accomplished by repetition of items (shapes) which can be placed in a variety of positions in a display.

Figure 12. Progression of Sizes



Flow is created by a progression of sizes. For example, small to large.

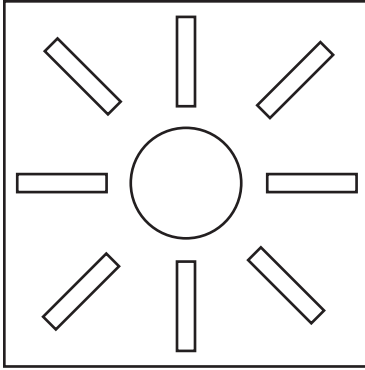
Figure 13. Continuous Line Movement, Rhythm



Flow is created by a continuous line movement created by the placement of the items in the display.

- Overlapping of objects placed together in the display area can prevent the blank space that could exist with an even number of items in a display. Overlapping is one of the most effective tools for creating good flow.
- It is usually recommended to use an odd number of items when displaying multiples.
- Use a fabric or color that unifies the theme.
- Use props that are repetitious either in form or theme.
- Use the technique of flying merchandise to create flow.

Figure 14. Radiation



Flow is created by radiation from the center or dominant object to subordinate objects in the display.

- Use lettering with repetition of similar items or with dominance by using oversized items to create flow.
- It is important that the eye is led throughout the display and does not leave until all parts have been seen.

■ Harmony

Harmony is a coordinating *umbrella* principle that can cover and incorporate every other principle. Harmony is agreement in feeling and consistency in mood; i.e., the feeling that all parts of a display relate to each other and to the whole display. Without harmony, the observer is uncomfortable and will not be enticed to purchase merchandise.

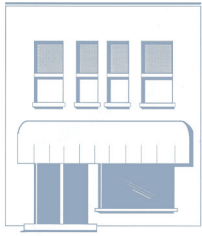
Three forms of harmony (functional, structural and decorative) must be in agreement in a display. **Functional harmony** deals with how something works physically, which means it must be realistic and must work. An example is a kitchen counter used in a display that is the appropriate height and depth for working.

Structural harmony is correctly fitting together all the pieces; merchandise should not be out of place in the display. For example, an electrical appliance is not structurally consistent in an outdoor or camping display. A good window display may have pots and pans, fishing gear and outdoor furniture all mixed together because these items truly would be used on a camping trip; hence a camping theme is carried out. All the merchandise is brought together as part of the trip and harmony would be created or a mood would be set.

Decorative harmony includes the parts of a display that are included only for decorative purposes. If an atmosphere of spring is being developed, butterflies and/or flowers may be used as props. These items are attractive and add to the theme.

"In a display, the three forms of harmony must be in agreement:

- *functional*
- *structural*
- *decorative."*



Color and Lighting

Color

Color contributes significantly to people's impression of a display, as well as a store's overall appearance. Color in a display can catch the eye and make people pause and look. The color combinations of the ceiling, walls, floor covering and the overall decor can affect the atmosphere of a store. Changing the color scheme can change people's attitudes and perceptions of a store, and can increase (or decrease) business.

Color can change the shape and add interest to a dull room, and can direct attention toward a specific object or away from problem areas. People tend to respond a certain way to different colors; these responses are outlined in the chart on the following page.

Warm colors (red, yellow, orange and colors with red or yellow hues such as yellow-green, beige, peach, brown and orange-red) are stimulating and cheery. They make a room feel warm and intimate. Warm colors make a room seem smaller while making objects in the room appear larger. A warm color on the end walls of a long narrow room will appear to shorten the room.

Blue, green, violet and colors containing blue, such as blue-green and violet-blue, are cool colors. These help create a relaxing atmosphere. Rooms decorated primarily in cool colors tend to appear larger and more spacious. Cool colors are especially pleasing in smaller rooms.

A color wheel is a handy tool to use in developing a color scheme for a store. The color wheel consists of 12

"Changing the color scheme can change people's attitudes and perceptions of a store, and can increase (or decrease) business."

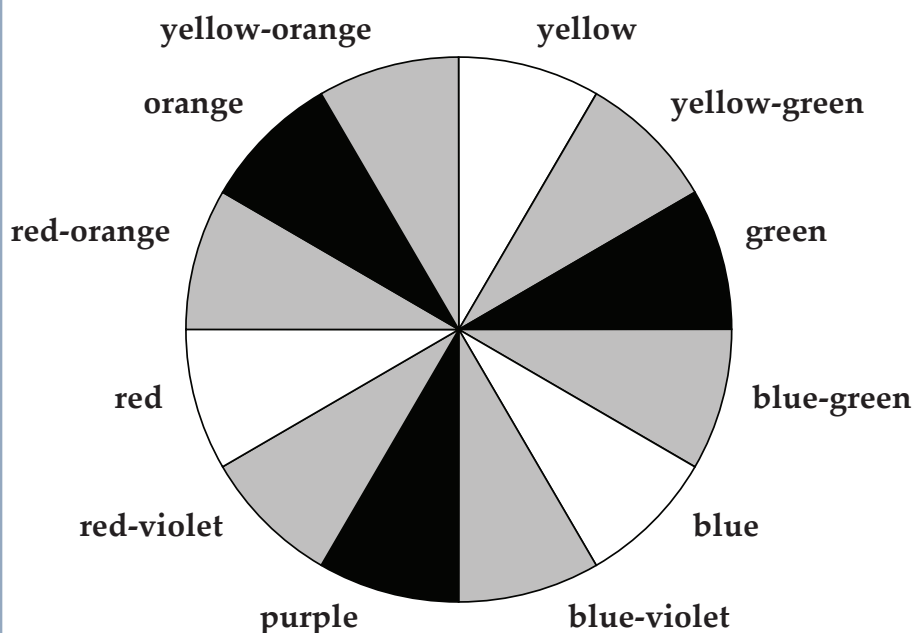
colors, as shown on the following page. Several color schemes are possible by choosing different combinations. Some common color schemes that can be used to plan a display are listed below.

Figure 15. Emotional Response to Color

Color	Emotional Response
Blue	A cool color (makes room seem cooler). Calms and relaxes excited people. Makes time seem to pass quickly. Tends to stimulate thought processes and encourage conversation.
Green	Easy on the eyes. A cool color. Restful and tranquil. Stimulates conversations. Makes time seem to pass quickly.
Red	Excites and stimulates. Induces aggression. Makes time seem to pass more slowly.
Yellow	A cheerful color. Creates a feeling of warmth and happiness. Draws attention. Boosts morale.
Orange	Friendly, warm and vibrant. Exhilarating.
Violet and Purple	A cool color. Tends to lend elegance and sophistication. Royal.
Brown	Relaxing and warm.
Gray	Depressing. Cool.

Source: Quinn, Thomas R. *Atmosphere in the Restaurant*. Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University.

Figure 16. Color Wheel



There are no absolute rules for choosing and combining colors, only flexible guidelines. Imagination and experimentation will find color schemes that lend to the atmosphere and attract customers. The type of merchandise featured, such as hardware, jewelry, clothing, etc., will have an effect on the type of color schemes that can be used and the extent to which they can be used.

■ Monochromatic Scheme

A single color on the color wheel is used with three to five tints and shades of that single true color in this scheme. Several pieces of blue merchandise each consisting of a different value ranging from baby blue to navy blue, is an example of a monochromatic color scheme.

■ Analogous Scheme

Any three or four consecutive colors on a color wheel creates an analogous scheme. This can be used to create a soft and subtle decor and warm or cool effect. This color scheme needs to be used with caution so as not to end up with an overstimulating nor depressing atmosphere. Examples of analogous schemes could be yellow, yellow-green, green and blue-green, or blue, blue-green and green.

■ Triadic Scheme

Every fourth color on the color wheel for a total of three colors make a triadic color scheme. This is a good combination of colors that can create the muted, traditional look as well as more vibrant color characteristics of modern color schemes. An example could be red, blue and yellow.

■ Complementary Scheme

A complementary color scheme is represented by two colors that are exactly opposite one another on the color wheel, such as green and red or yellow and purple. It can result in a very pleasing combination of warm and cool colors. Avoid using opposite colors in equal amounts of light and dark combinations.

■ Split Complementary Scheme

Three colors forming a Y on the color wheel consists of a base color and one color on each side of the base color's

"Common color schemes include:

- *monochromatic*
- *analogous*
- *triadic*
- *complementary split*
- *double complementary*
- *tone on tone."*

"A major concern is choosing a background color used in display areas and store interiors that will work for a reasonable period of time."

complement (opposite color). It is a popular color scheme to create interest and richness. Examples are yellow, blue-violet and red-violet, or blue, yellow-orange and red-orange.

■ Double Complementary Scheme

Four colors, consisting of any two sets of complementary colors create a double complementary scheme. Be careful not to create a display that is too busy when using this color scheme. An example of this color scheme would be yellow and purple, as well as red-orange and blue-green.

■ Tone on Tone Scheme

Two colors that are next to one another on the color wheel with very little space between them, make up a tone on tone scheme. Generally no change in either intensity, such as degree of brightness, or in tints or shades is used in a tone on tone scheme. A display of blue and blue-violet silk flowers is an example of this scheme.

A dominant color must be selected in developing a color scheme. A single color can be monotonous. However, a pleasing effect can be obtained by adding the right colors using an uneven balance between warm and cool colors.

Knowing about color and its effect on the viewer can be helpful in designing displays. Certain colors create intense vibrations when used together. Bright red and yellow create a hot, festive atmosphere that suggests a celebration or circus. Too much of any vibrating color scheme will detract from the merchandise and irritate the customer after prolonged exposure. Using different tints or shades of the color (such as a lighter yellow with a pinker red) will set up a warm, friendly color scheme and will be less intense and offensive over the long run. Bright colors can also be broken up by an eye-relieving area of solid neutral or light tone.

Some of the most effective displays utilize monochromatic schemes because a large area of any one color can be seen from a great distance and will create an impression of strength in that color. The color may also be popular in fashion, clothing, housewares, makeup or other merchandise that shows merchandise in the store is current.

Combining color choice with traffic patterns can sell more items. The color a retailer wants featured should be positioned on the wall where it can be easily seen, drawing customers into a department or store. Other colors can fan out on either side and complement the feature color. Background colors should be selected which will show off the merchandise at its best. Generally, neutral colors selected are white, blue, gray, beige and black.

Colors must be considered in view of their surroundings, as color can change dramatically when viewed under different circumstances. A red chair will appear yellower when put next to a blue wall. Next to a green wall a red chair will appear purer and brighter. Near a white wall it will appear lighter and brighter, and beside gray it will appear brighter. A dark color placed near a lighter color will appear deeper while the light color will appear lighter yet. Colors are also radically altered by differences in pattern and texture. (See Figure 17.)

Figure 17. Influence of Background Color on Merchandise

Color of Merchandise	Black Background	White Background	Beige Background	Dark Gray Background
Yellow	Enhanced in richness	Lightly duller	Warmer	Brighter
Red	Far more brilliant	Darker, purer	Bright, but less intense	Brighter, but loses saturation
Blue	More luminous	Richer and darker	A little more luminous	Brighter
Green	Paler, sharpened	Deepens in value	Lighter and yellowish	Increases brilliancy
Orange	More luminous	Darker and redder	Lighter and yellowish	Increases brilliancy
Purple	Loses strength and brilliancy	Darker	Brighter, gray becomes greenish	Gray becomes green

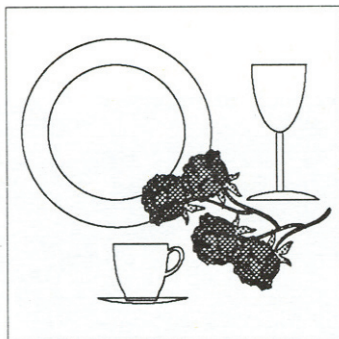
Courtesy of Fairchild Books, Division of Fairchild Publications, New York.

A major concern is choosing a background color used in display areas and store interiors that will work for a reasonable period of time. There are companies that do color forecasts and track expected color preferences for five years. Color forecasts can also be received as they pertain to a season. Use these to follow color trends to give store design longevity.

Some background colors that have been used successfully follow. A comfortable background color choice for leather goods is the mid-value range, such as a beige or gray. This selection also works well for intimate apparel and ready-to-wear. A painted background color will not reflect as much light as fabric, so even if the merchandise is the same color as the background it will still stand out.

Do not use background colors that will affect/change the color of merchandise and the customers' skin tone. Green, with the exception of deep hunter and earthly greens, is an example of a color that should be avoided for this reason.

Light colors such as pinks, yellows, blues and whites should not be used as background colors in the infant and toddler areas, since they are the colors used in much of the merchandise sold. The small size of the garments and the generally light tones make the merchandise invisible. Brighter, sharper colors help these pastels stand out. Background colors in girls' departments should be kept neutral because of the extensive range of colors sold there, and boys' departments go with bright because the clothes tend to be in bright or deep tones.



Junior departments utilize various color backgrounds depending on current fashion vogue. When neon colors are popular, white is a very suitable background. However, when more subtle colors are in fashion, the whites are too cold and overpowering.

Dark green or dark blue colors, with neutrals used for accent, have been effectively used in menswear areas. Primary, secondary, peach, light blue and green colors should be avoided.

Stores that carry china and glass can effectively use grays, browns and blues as background colors. Browns work especially well with bone china and blues are attractive with porcelain; grays can be utilized with either type of china. Silver should not be shown on a brown background because the reflection will make the silver appear tarnished. However, browns and burgundies are great for displaying brass goods. Gift areas can use black and white with bright accents.

Bright orange, bright red and blue are appropriate colors to select for hardware stores, as they provide the best contrast with the wood handles and metals of hard-

ware items. Sky blue and tennis court green enhance sporting goods and equipment because of their outdoor associations.

White is a widely used color in packaging and on printed surfaces because it is a basic paper color and less expensive than solid printed colors. About 50 percent of book and record jackets are predominantly white. White can be used as an alternating color the way grocers use red, orange and yellow vegetables to separate green vegetables.

Color Rules That Can Improve Displays

1. Consider intensity, value and contrast when developing color schemes.
 - a. Be careful when using strong contrast and loud colors.
 - b. The more intense the color, the smaller the area it should cover.
 - c. The more intense the color, the softer the second color should be. Do not combine two or more strong colors without changing the value or intensity.
 - d. Do not paint large areas in strong colors.
2. Match the color scheme to the merchandise on display.
 - a. Use a neutral color, or one of the main colors of the merchandise for the floor, walls and background.
 - b. Use soft tints rather than saturated hues.
3. Associate the value of the merchandise displayed to the selection of colors in the display.
 - a. Lower-priced merchandise is generally displayed in a color scheme of vivid hue.
 - b. Use a more refined color scheme with the more exclusive merchandise. Color schemes seen in current fashion are acceptable.
 - c. Do not mix high-priced and low-priced merchandise in a display. Items should be grouped by price and design.
4. Light tints are pleasing to the eye.
 - a. Light tints seem to deepen the window space, increasing the window size.
5. Dark shades appear to bring the background to the fore, shortening the perceived window space.

"Do not use background colors that will affect/change the color of merchandise and the customers' skin tone."

"There are three types of lighting used in store illumination: primary, accent and atmosphere lighting."

6. Colors are labeled as either warm or cool.
 - a. Warm colors are yellow, orange, red and their combinations with black and white. All these hues please the eye, enhance the appearance of the merchandise, and optically push it to the front of the display.
 - b. Cool colors are blue and green. These colors are calming, soothing and balanced. They create the illusion of enlarging the window.
7. Color contrasts are welcome, but dangerous.
 - a. Watch for color clashes.
 - b. Be careful about confining strong contrasts to small accessories.
 - c. Bold combinations can be very effective if done in good taste.
8. More than two principal colors can be grouped proportionately in one display. Greater effort must be made, however, to achieve harmony. Pastels go well together.

Certain color combinations work because they have been traditionally accepted. New color combinations have to be carefully thought out to avoid shock or offense through an inappropriate use of a familiar color. One way to learn about color is to observe some of the newer stores and see what color combinations have been used in the different departments.

■ Lighting

Lighting is essential in calling attention to merchandise in a display. A shopper's eye is drawn automatically to the brightest item or area. Lighting treatment may be used to draw attention to part of the display area, a specific item in the display, or to coordinate parts of the total display area. Lighting can also be used to direct shoppers through the store, attracting them to various displays along the way. Because of this tendency to follow a *lighted path*, display lights should be two to five times stronger than lighting in other parts of the store.

There are three types of lighting used in store illumination: primary, accent and atmosphere lighting.

■ Primary Lighting

Primary lighting is the overall level of illumination of the store using fluorescent or incandescent light sources.

Outside, it includes 150-watt bulbs used as basic window lighting, marquee lights illuminating the sidewalks, and lighting for the general lobby area. Inside the store, primary lighting is that which fills the selling floor from overhead lighting fixtures and provides the bare essentials of store illumination.

■ Accent or Secondary Lighting

Accent or secondary lighting provides illumination for designated display areas. Flat, shadowless, overall lighting can create a tiresome selling floor. Accent lighting provides change from light to dark or highlights to shadows, to prevent this boredom. This can be accomplished with downlighting from the ceiling, showcase lighting and valance (drapery or canopy) lighting. Incandescent bulbs are most often used for secondary lighting. They range in size from tiny Christmas tree lights to small candle-like or complexion bulbs, on up to full-size globe or reflector-type bulbs.

■ Atmosphere Lighting

Atmosphere lighting is used to play light against shadow to create a distinctive effect on specific displays. Generally this category includes the use of color filters, pinpoint spotlights and black lighting to create dramatic effects.

Fluorescent lights are used for primary lighting, as they cannot be focused or directed toward a specific object. They *wash* an area with light in which no shadows or accents are made. A wide range of shades are available for enhancing the colors of the merchandise and the store.

For example, an ultralume or prime color fluorescent is available and strengthens the colors in skin tone and merchandise so both look good. Color fluorescent lamps, available in blue, green, cool green, gold, pink and red produce dramatic effects and colored backgrounds. A cool white bulb gives a *bluer* feeling, the color of snow, which can enhance a fur department display. A warm sunny bulb will create the opposite effect.

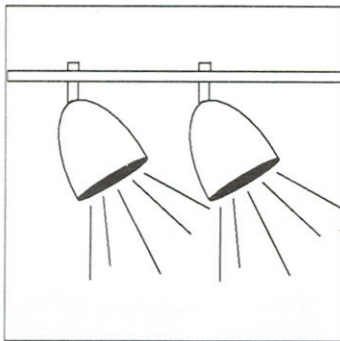
Be careful when using fluorescent lighting, as the overall store atmosphere may appear dull and boring. Avoid this by using a combination of lighting effects.

Incandescent lamps have sharply defined beams that are easily directed to highlight the merchandise on dis-

play. These are available in numerous sizes, shapes, wattages and colors. They do throw off a great deal of heat, however, which can be a fire hazard as well as increase the cost of air conditioning.

Spotlights are great for merchandise displays. An incandescent floor light can be used to illuminate lettering that identifies a store or a department within a store. A light and dark pattern can be created by highlighting the important parts of the display and letting the shadows create depth and pattern. Spotlights can be used on a larger scale to add excitement to merchandise racks. Turning off the lights in the aisles on either side will allow the spotlighted areas to stand out even more.

Spotlights used in a display are either installed in the ceiling or on a track. These lights are surrounded by a cylinder which affects the way light is emitted. When the spotlight is placed toward the back of the cylinder, the light is restricted to a smaller circle and therefore more concentrated. When the spotlight is placed toward the opening of the cylinder, there is less restriction and therefore a larger circle of light is emitted.



The angle at which a spotlight is directed is very important. Readjust the lights every time a new display is done, pointing spotlights at preselected items in the display and adjusting so passersby do not catch the spotlight in the eye. Any angle sharper than 45° is likely to momentarily blind a shopper.

Colored filters that change the color of light are available for spotlights. Filters most often used are pink for mannequin faces, amber for dramatic effects, straw to intensify warm colors, and daylight blue for icy feelings. Make sure the filters do not change the color of the merchandise. Filters should be used to highlight backgrounds, props, faces and walls.

Gels are colored acetate that can be placed over light bulbs. They are similar to filters, but are less expensive. Gels are available in rolls and can be cut by hand to fit a spotlight or to cover fluorescent tubes. Gels need to be replaced weekly.

High-Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps are the most efficient bulbs available because they provide more light per watt than either fluorescents or incandescents. The HIDs are relatively small in size and can also provide shadows and highlights as do the incandescents. All the

major lighting companies have produced HID bulbs that emit a light that enhances the merchandise and is flattering to the customer. The reduction in energy costs overrides the expense of the light bulb itself.

The *reflective factor* of colors varies considerably, and is also effected by the type of lighting used, possibly altering the color of merchandise. Figure 18 indicates the reflective factor of 11 colors and their relationship to types of lighting.

Suggestions for using light effectively include:

1. Increase display light when visual detail is important.
2. Create a buying mood by using various amounts of light or manipulating light and shadow.
3. Save the brightest lights for the merchandise and avoid anything that will detract from the merchandise. For example, avoid bright, white lights directly on a mannequin's face, elbows or shoes.
4. Bring out the tempting colors of meats, fruits and vegetables by using fluorescent lamps rich in red energy, including the deluxe cool white type. Cool reflector incandescent lamps may also be used for direct-type lighting.
5. On sunny days, provide contrast to the natural light by using more light in window displays. Check lighting at night, however. Imperfections such as wrinkles and dust in clothing are more apparent under the artificial light, when the softening influence of daylight does not enter the window. Colored lights also have a different effect when there is no other source of light. What seemed perfect during the daylight hours may appear harsh or loud at night. Make sure lights are not *flooding over* into the street; into the eyes of passersby and the road traffic.
6. Highlight womenswear, especially bright, cheerful colors and patterns, by using natural fluorescents blended with tungsten-halogen.
7. Heighten the appeal of menswear by using a cool blend of fluorescent and incandescent lighting, with fluorescent predominating.
8. Avoid heavy shadows when displaying major appliances and furniture by using large-area lighting fixtures plus incandescent downlighting.

Figure 18. Reflective factor of colors and relationship to types of lighting used.

Paint Color	Approximate Reflectance Factor	Incandescent Filament	Warm White Florescent	White Fluorescent
Cherry Red	.13	Brilliant Orange-Red	Pale Orange-Red	Pale Orange-Red
Orchid	.44	Light Pink	Pale Purplish Pink	Gray-Pink
Plum	.04	Deep Orange-Red	Dull Reddish Brown	Dark Brown
Chestnut Brown	.19	Medium Yellowish Brown	Light Yellow-Brown	Gray-Brown
Peach	.58	Pinkish Yellow	Light Yellowish Pink	Light Yellowish Pink
Orange	.44	Bright Orange	Light Orange-Yellow	Pale Yellow
Canary Yellow	.44	Orange-Yellow	Fair Match (Sharper)	Greenish Yellow
Light Yellow	.58	Vivid Orange-Yellow	Medium Yellow	Medium Yellow
Light Blue	.46	Light Yellowish Green	Pale Grayish Blue	Weak Greenish Blue
Medium Blue	.23	Blue-Green	Light Gray-Blue	Purplish Blue
Silver Gray	.97	Light Yellow Gray	Light Brownish Gray	Light Brownish Gray

9. Direct lighting across a display to avoid creating unpleasant and unattractive shadows. Aim the upper left light on the lower right side of the display; aim the upper right light on the lower left side of the display. This creates a cross-over of light; a more even, diffused light.
10. Add brilliant highlights to jewelry, gold, silver and cut glass by using concentrated beams of high-brightness, incandescent sources.
11. Hide or disguise electrical wires.
12. Bring out the sparkle and luster of hardware, toys, auto accessories, highly polished silver and other metalware by using a blend of general light and spotlights.

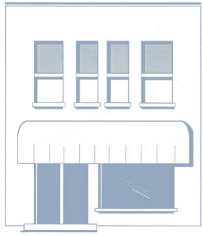
Standard Cool White Fluorescent	Daylight Fluorescent	Warm White Deluxe Fluorescent	Cool White Deluxe Fluorescent
Yellowish Red	Light Red	Orange Red	Good Match
Light Pink	Good Match (Grayer)	Pale Pink	Light Pink
Light Reddish Brown	Deep Bluish Purple	Reddish Purple	Darker Brown
Light Brownish Gray	Light Gray	Dark Brown	Good Match
Very Light Pink	Fair Match (Lighter)	Light Orange	Good Match (Yellower)
Light Yellow	Gray-Yellow	Yellowish Orange	Good Match
Light Yellow	Fair Match	Good Match	Good Match (Brighter)
Light Bright Yellow	Light Greenish Yellow	Deep Yellow	Bright Yellow
Blue-Gray	Fair Match (Lighter)	Grayish Blue	Grayish Blue
Light Gray-Blue	Fair Match (Lighter)	Purple-Blue	Reddish Blue
Very light Gray	Bluish Gray	Yellowish Gray	Light Gray

Courtesy of Fairchild Books, Division of Fairchild Publications, New York.

13. Create the right setting for merchandise by using colored light on props and backgrounds. If colored light is used on a garment to intensify the color, stay with the pastel filters; pale pinks for the reds and red-violets, pale straw for the yellows and oranges, daylight blue for the cool colors and Nile green for the greens.
14. Set a timer device to automatically turn off all lights during the night, after the street traffic has diminished. Interior lights may be used for security purposes at night.

15. Emphasize the beauty of china, glass, home accessories and giftware by using general diffuse or overall lighting, accented with point-type spotlights.
16. Highlight the color, pattern and texture of rugs, carpets, upholstery, heavy drapes and bedspreads by using oblique directional lighting plus general, low-intensity overhead lighting.

Additional definitions related to lighting can be found in the Appendix



Props, Fixtures and Signage

Props

A prop is something used with a product in a display that clarifies the function of the merchandise being sold or the story being told. Props are an integral part of a display. They are used in visual merchandising to tell a story about the product, the merchandise concept or the store itself.

A display prop may be something that is not for sale, such as floor coverings, wall treatments, backgrounds, mannequins, shelves and steps. Props may also be merchandise that is for sale, but is not the theme merchandise, such as golf clubs used in conjunction with golf wear. Merchandise from other departments used to highlight salable items can lead to multiple sales. Visibility is provided for the original theme merchandise, in addition to the prop merchandise.

When using salable merchandise as a prop, be sure it is appropriate for the theme of the display and in sufficient quantity to meet an increase in demand arising from the display. Prominently display theme and prop merchandise in their respective departments for easy access by the customer.

If a store does not have merchandise available that can be used in a display, use display props from nonmerchandise categories. Nonmerchandise props used for their

"Use props to complement or highlight the salable merchandise and add visual excitement to the surrounding area."

original purpose can assist in telling a story. Examples include tissue paper, pens, pencils, shopping bags, hangers, chairs, desks and tables.

Props may also be natural or ordinary objects such as items carried in from the woods or prairie, or rustic antiques found in someone's attic. Examples include a branch from a lilac bush for a spring or summer theme; shocks of wheat, dried leaves and wood crates of assorted sizes used to enhance a fall theme; large boulders used to give the idea of strength and power to a tractor; and gray rocks to provide contrast to jewelry. These object props are generally not beautiful by themselves, but highlight the merchandise for sale.

Commercially made props are readily available. Scan a *Visual Merchandising* magazine, published by Signs of the Time Publishing Co. (407 Gilbert Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45202), to see the great variety of merchandising props. When selecting props to purchase, be certain of their quality. Inspect the props prior to accepting the shipment to be sure the props are not broken.

The merchandise in a display should always be the dominant element. The prop is there to complement or highlight the salable merchandise and add visual excitement to the surrounding area. A prop is not there to distract the customer from their original purpose of shopping for and purchasing goods.

Merchandise and Fixture Display Recommendations

Goods can be effectively displayed on a variety of fixtures such as gondolas, tables, cubes, mannequins, waterfalls and other racks, display cases, and manufacturer point-of-purchase displays. A fixture should not only complement the merchandise, but also the atmosphere created in the store. Each fixture should present the merchandise to the public and thereby act as a silent salesperson.

One of the most common fixtures in stores are gondolas; movable shelving approachable from all sides used in self-service retail stores to display merchandise. They can be lined up in rows as in grocery, hardware and drug stores, or used singly to create an island. End-caps are units at the end of aisles. End-caps are important selling locations and should be used for high-profit impulse or seasonal merchandise.

Related merchandise should be grouped together on the end-cap and gondola sides. The end-cap should indicate the type of related merchandise on the gondola sides. For example, golf balls displayed on an end-cap should indicate that related golf accessories are located on gondola sides.

Customers generally look to the center of gondola sides first, and then to either the right or left. Additional high profit impulse items should be placed in the center of gondola sides and other related merchandise to either the right or left. Larger more expensive merchandise should be placed to the right.

The high turnover, high-profit items should also be placed at eye level. If possible, remove a sample from the container to allow the customer to handle and feel the item. Old merchandise should be cleaned and pulled forward as new merchandise is added to the back. Use a starter gap in which at least one item is missing, so the customer will not feel like they are messing up a neat display. Restock the display before it gets down to the last item so customers will not get the impression that something is wrong with the item. As merchandise begins to have broken sizes or assortments, the remaining items should be moved to the bottom shelves of the gondola.

An acceptable means of arranging merchandise on a gondola is by color. People think of colors in a rainbow pattern and are comfortable with that presentation. The usual order to arrange and present colors is as follows:

1. Start with neutral colors: off-white, cream, ivory, beige, tan and brown.
2. Proceed with warm colors: yellow, gold, orange, peach, rust, pink, red, cerise, lavender and violet.
3. Finish with cool colors: blue, green, gray and black. Group merchandise by color as previously mentioned, as well as from smallest to largest and from left to right. When a variety of styles are shown, each style (small to large sizes) should be grouped separately by color. Some merchants may use variations of this concept to provide greater contrast in the display.

"Each fixture should present the merchandise to the public and thereby act as a silent sales-person."

Basic Rules for Fixture Placement

Outlined below are some basic rules for fixture placement. These are not absolutes, but rather guidelines that fit in well with store set-up and customer traffic patterns.

- Allow 3 feet between racks.
- State law requirements for aisle width varies from 4 to 8 feet. The most common aisle width is 6 feet. Check state and local codes for the requirements in your state.
- The aisle leading directly to the fire exit is considered a major aisle. Do not block the fire exit with fixtures or extraneous materials.
- A well-planned, geometric aisle pattern works best to maximize sales.
- Place aisle displays on an island rather than wing fixtures.
- When placing racks, progress from small (sized or capacity) fixtures at aisles to large fixtures near the back walls. When working with hard goods, place cubes in the front with gondolas to the rear of the department or store.
- Higher-priced stores require fewer fixtures because there is less stock. Use primarily T-stands and four-ways to create an illusion of space and selective goods. This feeling is necessary to sell higher-priced goods.
- Create exciting displays of mass merchandise by using quantity and color. Display merchandise in quantity on quads, Bloomingdales, rounders and T-stands; use cubes for folded goods.
- Fixtures that work well for sale items include tub tables, round racks and rectangular racks.

■ Interior Signage

Signage is a critical part of interior display and point-of-purchase promotion. Store signage that communicates a sales message to the customer can make up for lack of sales personnel. A good point-of-purchase sign, properly placed, acts as a salesperson without wages.

Signs were originally used to identify a store, name various departments and announce sales and sale merchandise. Although this is their primary purpose, signs also commonly advertise vendors, colors, styles, quality and prices. They can be used to explain customer benefits and describe merchandise features. Benefit signs or a combination of benefit and price, are one of the most effective merchandising tools.

A good sign provides the most information in the fewest possible words. Point-of-purchase signs or shelf-talkers should:

"Benefit signs or a combination of benefit and price, are one of the most effective merchandising tools."

- Draw the customer's attention to the product.
- Identify the merchandise item being sold.
- State a customer benefit.
- Tell something about the product that they do not know or understand.
- State the price of the item.

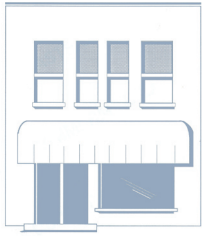
Point-of-purchase signs can be obtained from suppliers or wholesalers, manufacturers and trade associations. Many retailers make their own signs; when done properly, hand-lettered signs can be very effective. Other retailers may use a sign-making machine.

Common principles in designing and using signs effectively include:

- Special attention should be given to sign and show card margins. The left and right margins should be exactly equal and usually not exceed 2 to 3 inches. The top margin should be approximately one and one-half times the size of the side margins. The bottom margin should be the largest; twice the size of the side margins and one and one-half times the top margin. The smaller the sign or show card, the less flexibility with margins. A border drawn or printed around the edge of a show card can help the customer focus attention on the information.
- The focal point of a sign should appear near the optical center of the sign which is exactly halfway between the left and right margins and slightly above (one-tenth the distance) the top-to-bottom midpoint. The eye will make contact with this portion of the card first.
- Try to maintain as much white space as possible around the copy.
- Use action adjectives or adverbs only to describe a hidden feature that will benefit the customer.
- Use key words that attract shoppers: you, money, save, new, easy, love, discover, results, health, proven, free and guarantee. However, these words should not be overused.
- Avoid overkill or clutter. Keep it simple. Do not use signs when the merchandise can tell the story.
- Use exact price information rather than percentage discounts; it is easier for the customer to compute.
- Check daily to be sure they are current and not left over from a previous sale or promotional event.

"A good point-of-purchase sign, properly placed, acts as a salesperson without wages."

- Print information on both sides for signs in holders, so customers approaching from different directions can read the signs.
- Use the same style print and color for interior signs to add a cohesive appearance to the store.
- Appeal to as many customers as possible. Do not limit the audience.
- Feature national name brand items that have wide customer acceptance.
- Stimulate buying by asking for the sale.



Errors Commonly Occurring in Display

Many errors made in display can be easily avoided. Some of the most common errors include the following:

■ Too Much Merchandise

There is no rule that specifically states how much merchandise should appear in a display area. One consideration is the price of the merchandise. The more expensive the item, the fewer displayed. Caution must be exercised so that a display area does not: (a) appear crammed with many similar items, (b) have so many different items that any selling message is lost and (c) appear aesthetically offensive to the viewer.

■ Too Little Merchandise

A window or display area with too little merchandise makes a store appear to be going out of business, or indicates to the customer that the establishment is less than prosperous. Generally, the reason for lack of merchandise in a display is that the merchandise has been sold out of the display and has not been replaced.

If the items needed for the display are unavailable, the dimensions of the display area need to be reduced to make it appear in proportion with the available merchandise. Poor planning of what merchandise is to be placed in a display may also cause a display to appear empty.

■ Lack of Underlying Theme

Merchandise is often placed in a space with no selling message, theme or motif. Regardless of the type of merchandise used, the location or the store type, a display needs to have a strong message or underlying theme. The consumer should be able to understand the concept presented by the display in a few seconds.

The reverse problem is using too many *mini* themes in a display, making each one completely ineffective. It is possible to effectively combine several types of merchandise in one area using one theme. An example would be various gift items, such as toiletries, glassware, smoking equipment and accessories, shown together with a sign reading *Imports* or *Gifts from Overseas*. The signage brings all the goods into the gift classification and it makes sense to the viewer.

■ Too Many Props

There is no specific rule that stipulates the number of props appearing in a display. However, the error of overpropping a display can be more serious than using too few props. The type and number of props are dependent on the merchandise. The display of a living room suite will need fewer props to complete its message. Other goods, especially smaller items, will need more props to elevate it to eye level or provide a central theme to the grouping.

■ Poorly Selected Props

Evaluate props as to whether they are seasonal, rustic, contemporary, feminine or masculine, and whether or not they will appeal to the store's target market. Props are important to effectively present a display with a theme. Therefore, the props must be in harmony with the goods shown. For example, a green velvet backdrop will not be effective in a display promoting summer merchandise.

■ Displays Changed Too Seldom

Guidelines for developing displays have been discussed throughout this bulletin. Utilization of the visual merchandising techniques discussed can assist review and/or change of displays. As a standard, many interior displays are changed daily, because they are effective and merchandise sold directly from them needs to be replaced. Large window displays may be changed as often as two times a week or as infrequently as every other

week. This generally depends on the season and the length of time a current store theme has been planned. An example of a display that might stay longer would be an unusual Christmas display.

The expense, time and planning of a display is also used as a guideline for frequency of change. Special windows and internal store promotions have a longer display life. However, no display or set of props should remain until it collects dust and every person in the community has seen it a number of times. Frequently changing displays presents a positive message to the community, provides opportunity to show more merchandise and presents more messages to the shopper.

■ Length of Time Necessary to Change a Display is Too Long

An empty display area is a time of no sales. Plan display work so that all of the necessary equipment and merchandise is gathered prior to tearing down the old display. Change the display when there is the least amount of customer traffic.

■ Limited or No Display Budget

Money is a problem for everyone in and out of retailing. Display areas are often budgeted with *what's left over* after all other monetary needs have been planned. Frequently that boils down to no budget for displays. Avoid the "low-budget look" by using such things as crepe paper, tissue paper, construction paper or perishable, but generally free, items like grass, weeds, logs, branches and other things provided by nature. Do not use too many posterboard signs.

Creativity is needed to plan and execute a great display with no budget. Good theme development without expensive background materials is possible. An example of this for a bed and bath shop might be towels hung on a clothesline to serve as a backdrop for a towel display, rather than going to the expense of tiling a wall. Old packing crates or orange crates with scrap wood from a lumber yard can be used to design an interesting display that raises the merchandise to eye level. Attic treasures or various pieces of furniture are frequently used as display props. These items can often be inexpensive or borrowed for the duration of the display.

"Errors commonly made in display include:

- *Too much merchandise.*
- *Too little merchandise.*
- *Lack of underlying theme.*
- *Too many props.*
- *Poorly selected props.*
- *Displays changed too seldom.*
- *Length of time necessary to change a display is too long.*
- *Limited or no display budget.*
- *Lack of attention to detail.*
- *Mistakes in applying the principles of display."*

■ Lack of Attention to Detail

Making a good impression is very important. One of the best ways to do this in display work is to pay attention to the *small details*. This is generally the first thing the customer notices. Below is a list of things that should be taken care of prior to declaring the display finished:

- Remove pins or hide them so they do not show.
- Clean and dust all surfaces.
- Clean glass.
- Be sure signs provide all the necessary information.
- Be certain signs are free of ink stains and are not soiled.
- Use some form of border on all signs.
- Be certain any merchandise suspended from the walls or ceilings will stay fixed for the duration of the display.
- Appropriately accessorize merchandise.
- Remove all display tools from the display area.
- Clean and/or vacuum display area floor coverings.
- Hide lights used in the display area so they are not seen by the customers. Be very careful that nothing is near or touching display lights to prevent fire.
- Always check the display area from all angles to be sure all merchandise is easily visible and aesthetically pleasing.
- Check displays daily to be certain everything is still in its proper place.

■ Mistakes in Applying the Principles of Display

Carefully follow the principles of design used in display work when planning and executing a display. The four principles most frequently mishandled include emphasis, balance, rhythm and proportion. Review these principles each time a display is completed to be sure none have been misused.

"The four principles most frequently mis-handled include emphasis, balance, rhythm and proportion."

- Every display needs a point at which the viewer's eye can easily start. All too frequently a display either has no definite point of *emphasis* or the point of emphasis is in the wrong place, such as in the upper right-hand corner.
- *Balance* needs careful consideration. A display that utilizes neither formal nor informal balance by merely being too full or too empty on one or both sides, will decrease the effectiveness of the display.

- The principle of *rhythm* is frequently violated when many small items are displayed in a single area with no attempt made to keep the eye following a planned pattern. This creates a scattered and spotty display. Try to plan a display in which all items are visually tied together.
- When props and merchandise are not tied together by size or weight, the principle of *proportion* is absent. Do not show small items with large items unless a continuous graduation of size from small to large is used.

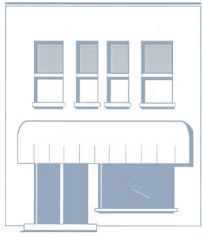
The amount of merchandise on fixtures psychologically affects the shopper. A few fully stocked fixtures are better than many partially filled fixtures. When a fixture is sparsely stocked, it looks as if what remains are *leftovers* and, therefore, less desirable or salable.

When considering presentation of merchandise from the front to the back of the store, use consumer psychology. A stair step effect is necessary for the customer to see from the front to the back of the store. Use the lowest fixtures in the front of the store, with the back wall being the highest merchandise area. The basic idea is to make the back wall visible from the aisle or front of the store. Stocking the back wall is as important as stocking done in the front of the store. The back wall will often be flooded with light to add even more emphasis to the area. This has the effect of drawing the customer through the whole store.

The back wall is best used to create an impact for the classification of merchandise contained within that area of the store. The walls, whether they are used for hanging, shelving, binning or a combination of these, are also treated in the light to dark, small to large, left to right manner of merchandising.

Ideally, the back wall should be broken into organized groups or color patterns to stimulate the customer, please the viewer's eye and alleviate the uniformity which tends to be boring to the viewers. This can be accomplished by raising or lowering hang-rods, using display shelves, and/or adding bins to the wall area to create more interest.

"Many errors made in display can be easily avoided."



Appendix

Ballast: Electrical device that supplies the proper voltage and which is currently necessary to start and operate a discharge lamp. The most common is the electromagnetic type, which is typically the *little black box* mounted inside the luminaire. Certain lamps are equipped with *solid-state* ballasts.

Barn Door: Accessory used with spotlights to control the spread of a beam of light. Usually attaches in front of the spotlight in the color frame guide and has four adjustable flaps or *doors* (one to either side, one on top, and one on the bottom) that can be maneuvered to control the direction of the light or completely block off the light in any direction. Sheets of colored frosted gelatin or plastic and spun-glass diffusers can be used with this device.

Bee Lights: Miniature screw-base-type electric bulbs of every low wattage, used for example in strings of 20 or 36 for Christmas decorating; tiny tubular or globe-shaped replaceable bulbs.

Black Light: Special ultraviolet light bulb, incandescent or fluorescent, that will cause surfaces treated with ultraviolet paint or the like to glow in the dark. The black light is directed onto the treated surfaces, and the darker the area, the more intense and more brilliant the treated objects or surfaces appear. A theatrical device.

Border Light: A striplight hanging from an overhead batten, pipe, or ceiling grid and used to produce general overall lighting in a window or on a stage.

Canopy: Enclosure or cap, placed between the stem of the fixture and the outlet box in the ceiling, that conceals the wire connections in this gap.

Chase Lights: Series of lamps that flash on and off in a set pattern, reminiscent of the lights that seem to *run* around theatre marquees. It usually comes with its own timing device that sets and controls the flashing or *chase* pattern.

Cove Lighting: Form of indirect lighting. Lighting source in the area is concealed from below by a recess, cove, cornice, or baffle, and sometimes by a partially dropped ceiling. The light is reflected by the ceiling or wall. A soft, subtle way of lighting an area or wall.

Dimmer: Mechanism for changing the intensity of light in a given area by means of cutting down on the amount of electric current passing through the electrical wires to the lamps. The resistance dimmer is the only one that will work on direct current (D.C.) whereas autotransformer, electronic resistance, electronic, and magnetic amplifier dimmers will work on alternating currents (A.C.).

Downlight: Light fixture with a reflecting surface, shade or shield that directs the beam or spread of light downward toward the floor area rather than toward the ceiling.

Flasher: Device that screws into a light-bulb socket before the lamp is inserted and causes the light bulb to flash on and off by interfering with the flow of electric current. Sometimes a set of miniature light bulbs will come with a flasher bulb that causes the current breaks.

Flicker Bulb: Candle-shaped bulb with a filament that flickers and spurts, mechanically simulating a candle flame.

Floodlight: Electric lamp or bulb that throws a broad spread or wash of light over a wide area. Floodlights are available in varying wattages, from 75 watts on up.

Indirect Lighting: Lighting arrangement in which the light is directed to the ceiling or any other reflective surface, from which it is bounced back to illuminate the general area, rather than being directed straight down to the area below.

Insulator: Nonconductor of electricity, like rubber, porcelain, asbestos and some plastics, used around electrical conductors as a protective coating.

Lamp: Complete light-source unit, that usually consists of a filament or arc tube, the accessory hardware, the glass enclosure or envelope for the assorted parts, and the base that fits into the socket; and electric light bulb.

Luminaire: Complete lighting unit that includes the lamp socket, housing, frame, holder, reflector, shield and so on.

Primary Lighting: The basic, most elementary lighting of a store or selling area. This usually does not include special lighting effects such as spots, floods, filters, washes and so on, and is almost devoid of any sort of atmosphere or mood.

Projectors: The projection process consists of a light source, objects or slides to be projected, and the surface or screen upon which the image is projected. A projector is the light source and the image may be projected by lens for a sharper effect, or by shadow, which is less complicated. Front projection places the projector in front of an opaque screen; rear projection places the projector behind a translucent screen. In either case, a certain amount of space is required between the projector and the screen.

Reflector: A polished or mirrored surface that is used to redirect light in a desired direction or onto a specific area. A baffle or screen used to reflect heated air.

Secondary Lighting: Spots, floods, filters, washes and so on that add depth, dimension and atmosphere to a lighting plan. Lighting beyond the basic or primary lighting plan.

Showcase Lamps: Long, thin, sausage-shaped incandescent lamps that are available in 25-, 40- and 60-watt strengths.

Specific Illumination: Form-revealing, highlighting and attention-getting lighting that focuses the viewer's attention on a specific object or area. This form of lighting is usually accomplished with spotlights and/or concentrated beams of light, sometimes through a color filter.

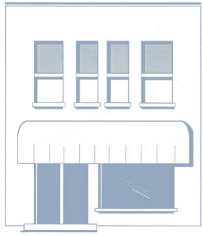
Strip Lighting: Long lines of exposed fluorescent fixtures on a ceiling.

Striplights: General term that includes border lights, footlights, cyclorama, and border and backing striplights. Usually consists of rows of individual reflectors, each containing one lamp and one round glass color medium that covers the entire mouth of the reflector. Striplights are often wired in three or four circuits for the primary colors (red, blue, green) and possibly one for white.

Switchboard: Portable or fixed panel with switches, dimmers and so on, that controls all the lamps and outlets in a window or group of windows, or for a stage. By using a switchboard, it is possible to turn specific lights on or off without having to climb or reach for them.

Swivel Socket: Socket with 360-degree swivel joint between the screw-in socket end and the receptacle that received the lamp or bulb. When the lamp is screwed into the socket, it is possible to rotate and direct that lamp or bulb in any direction—up or down and to all sides. This socket sometimes comes with an extension pipe before the swivel device.

Track Lighting: A channel or track, usually attached to a ceiling or ledge, that is electrically wired and plugged into a source of electric current. The 4-, 6- or 8-foot lengths of channel will receive assorted spotlights and floodlights, in decorative holders or housing. This is selective lighting since it is possible to move these lamps about on the length of channel, turn the individual lamps on and off as needed, and direct the light where it is needed, thus making changes in light emphasis.



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