VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Retail Store Display:
In-store Visual Merchandising

Displays & Graphics

“As luxury retailers, it is paramount that we position like-minded and style-sharing vendors within the same space. Price points and brand cachet are essential considerations.” John Gerhardt, Creative Services Director, Holt Renfrew
Introduction

• In-store displays can be straightforward, nevertheless, there are a few guidelines that will help the presentation be more effective.
• Hot shops are an invention from the 1980s that is still popular today.
• Both are designed to attract customers and sales and work in a similar fashion.
In-Store Displays

• The idea of either continuing the window scheme in-store or presenting a selection of products with their own theme has been used by the large department stores since they first opened.

• In-store displays are created to continue the theatre and drama inside the shop.

• Usually they consist of products supported by props arranged so that they can be admired but not touched or dismantled.
In-Store Displays

- The main intention of all product displays is to sell.
- In-store displays should be used to pull customers into the store and get them to browse.
- If designed well, they should act as an inspirational guide.
- The most common use of an in-store display is to demonstrate to the customer which current trends and key looks are on offer in their host department.
- Positioning the product fixtures adjacent to the display will encourage customers to buy them.
Point of sale and add-on sales

• Nice Marks and Spencer Simply Food image of store front.

• Many retailers maximise their sales potential by using point of sale and add-on sales.

• Both are aimed at customers who have already purchased and are now being encouraged to buy other items.
Point of sale

• Anyone paying for a magazine at a shop or paying for their fuel at a petrol station would have been targeted – on most occasions unwittingly – by point-of-sale (POS) merchandise.
• The fixture that holds low-price items such as chewing gum, batteries, and chocolates are all point of sale fixtures, usually supplied by the vendor (supplier).
• The power of POS should not be underestimated.
• This is the last chance the retailer has of making money from the customer.
• Volume sales at low prices can be instrumental in elevating the store’s sales turnover.
Point of sale

• Destination stores such as corner café’s, will usually use POS fixtures supplied by brands that are designed to carry only their products.
• The brands area often familiar to the customer and are a useful commodity.
• Point of sale offers in department stores may not be as obvious.
• There the most common POS item might be a gift voucher.
• For a major retailer, the most profitable POS item would be the credit account card that the customer signs up to at the purchase desk.
Add-on Sales

• An add-on sale differs from a POS offer because it is generally driven by the sales staff.
• Retailers will often encourage their staff to try and persuade the customer to buy extra products that compliment their main purchase.
• Examples: Shoe polish for shows, batteries with electrical products, etc.
• Not every customer is comfortable with this hard-sell technique, and it is sometimes wise to incorporate both add-on and POS to gain maximum transactions.
• Positioning add-on sales close to the main product categories allows customers to discover them by themselves.
“Do you want fries with that?”
Clearance Merchandise

• Clearance merchandise should not be overlooked.
• Sale times are extremely profitable for retailers.
• Most major stores will proudly present their discounted products twice a year and benefit from the rest of the high street following suit and thus attracting customers to the area.
• Many stores continue selling items at a reduction all year round.
WEAR-NOW STOREWIDE CLEARANCE

60%–80% OFF

New markdowns! New arrivals!

WHEN YOU TAKE AN EXTRA 20% OFF
with your sale & clearance in-store pass or online promo code: TAKE2 Details

SHOP NOW  PRINT IN-STORE PASS

CLEARANCE OFFERS

EXTRA 50% OFF
Shoes for her

EXTRA 50% OFF
Sportswear for her

EXTRA 50% OFF
Dresses

EXTRA 40% OFF
Trend cashmere for her

EXTRA 50% OFF
Men’s sportswear

EXTRA 40% OFF
Kidswear

PRINT IN-STORE PASS

SHOP ALL OFFERS

ESTÉE LAUDER

7-PIECE FREE GIFT

SHOP NOW

THE WEDDING SHOP

SHOP NOW

THE RESORT SHOP

SHOP NOW
Clearance Merchandise

• It is important to understand the store’s philosophy and requirements when approaching mark-downs.
• Many retailers hide their mark-down offers towards the rear of the store, as if they are ashamed of them.
• Others will proudly display them in the platinum and gold areas, hoping to generate on-the-spot sales, which can be more effective.
• Sometimes individual departments may have sale items when the rest of the store does not.
• In this case, a department can also adopt this process by placing the sale items at the front or back of the department.
Clearance Merchandise

• Clearance lines can be presented in numerous ways:
• Reduced goods can be pulled together and placed in front of the store, enabling the customers to browse through them and then walk further into the non-sale items in-store.
• Sales goods can be used as a magnet to draw customers to the back of the store, leading them past the non-sale items.
• Individual departments can use selected fixtures to hold sale lines.
USE YOUR MACY'S CARD AND TAKE AN 
EXTRA 15% OFF 
SALE 
25% 
Off Original Price 
Reduction Taken At Register 
Actual Savings May Vary
Clearance Merchandise

• Clearance lines can be presented in numerous ways:
• Larger stores, like department stores, have been known to dedicate whole floors to sales goods.
• Usually on the least profitable floor, (often the one furthest away from the entrance).
• Especially when the sale has finished and there is remaining discounted merchandise that has to be sold.
• Large chain stores often rely on completely separate discount stores branded under their name to move sale lines or overstocked products. (factory stores)
Sales Signage

• It is worth considering how you wish to promote the reductions at sales times.
• Many retailers like to show the original price and the corresponding reduction next to it.
• Many also like to show the percentage saved in the sale for the customer.
• It is unwise to use all of these methods on one ticket, however, as it may become confusing.
• Once your sale signage strategy is decided it is always best to apply the same approach throughout the whole store, so that the customer receives just one overall message.
Save $-9

STAR THEATER
2/3D SPC PROJ

39.98

Original.........29.99
Signage and Ticketing

• Nowadays, signage is not just limited to handwritten or printed information.
• Neon, plasma and LED displays are some of the more modern innovative ways of communicating with the customer.
• Whichever style or signage a retailer chooses, it is important to understand that, whether the store is large or small, customers need to have explanations, directions and information made clear to them.
Store Guides and navigational signs

• Before customers have begun a shopping experience they often wish to orient themselves.
• A large store with many floors needs to have detailed store guides and product locations.
• Often, this information is posted just inside the main entrance or at an information desk so that the customer has time to study the store’s layout before entering.
• Complicated store guides will only confuse consumers.
• It is advisable to keep directions simple but informative.
Store Guides and navigational signs

• A scaled down plan of each of the floors with key destination points such as lifts and escalators will best aid the customer.
• Highlighting entrances, fire exits, restaurants and toilets can also orient and reassure the shopper.
• A printed leaflet of the store guide can also be either handed to customers on entering or placed close to each entrance for shoppers to pick up themselves.
• Once inside, the customer may need extra help to navigate the store.
Store Guides and navigational signs

• Often, signs – commonly referred to as banners – are hung above walkways.
• Banners are usually screen-printed or have vinyl text applied to them.
• They can either be cut from foam board or wood or made from coated fabric.
• Free-standing signposts placed at the beginning of walkways, escalators and lifts are also an effective way of telling customers where they are and what else is available.
Store Guides and navigational signs

- Departmental signage will help the customer plot a course around and through the merchandise.
- A strong supplier brand can act as an anchor to reinforce the department’s product category.
- Used correctly and as a focal point, a strong brand on a wall will pull the customer into the heart of the department.
- Wall signage is an integral part of store design and visual merchandising.
- When used correctly it can not only direct but also attract the customer.
- Plasma screens and neon are a quirky way of creating theatre, yet confirming a message.
- They both can be used to add movement to bland walls.
Store Guides and navigational signs

• Free-standing signs that are used to inform the customer of promotions, events or costs should always be printed on card and ideally be displayed in a Perspex holder.
• Sign-holders can be made to any size, but one universal size is usually more effective.
• Where the sign may be viewed from both sides, two can be placed back to back, or the sign may be printed on both sides.
• Signs in Perspex holders should sit with the product and be an integral part of the presentation, not an afterthought.
• Customers often move free-standing signs, and an easy to fit the sign-holder to flat surfaces with double-sided tape.
Text and Colour

• Directional in-store sign should have an identity of their own so that they do not blend in or clash with other graphics.
• A unique colour or style will help them stand out.
• Text should be clear and simple to read and in a contrasting colour to the background.
• It is worth noting that lower-case letters are easier to read than capitals.
• As much as written information is critical to inform the customer, too much can confuse.
• A customer will not often have the time or patience to stop and read numerous lines of text.
• Short, punchy statements can be more effective.
Pricing Tickets

• Pricing individual products can be executed in two ways.
• Some retailers may wish for the price to dominate the product.
• Discount stores and sales items will definitely benefit from this technique.
• Large stickers or “swing tags” are placed on the items and stacked high to encourage high-turnover sales.
• Price stickers, although in a prominent location on the packaging, should be in the same place on each item, ideally to the left at either the top of the bottom.
• A table of multiples of just one product may require only one freestanding sign showing the price.
Goose Fat
THE BEST FOR ROAST POTATOES
£3 OR 2 FOR £5
Berries Strawberries
400 gr PNP
74.98 per kg
R29.99
0% VAT

No Name Strawberries
500 gr No Name
43.98 per kg
R21.99
0% VAT
Pricing Tickets

• Retailers who may wish their products to appear more exclusive will benefit from placing price stickers either on the back or bottom of the merchandise.

• A small, boxed item can easily be picked up and examined for the price.

• Placing the sticker out of sight means the customer has to engage with the product.

• However, larger or fragile items such as vases are best priced at the back towards the bottom.

• It is unwise and risky to suggest that the customer handles expensive items.
Printed Graphics

• The use or printed images will free a lot of time for a visual merchandiser.
• Hanging a printed banner with a picture or design on it where a product display is usually housed to form a backdrop will create an instant focal point.
• A major benefit of a printed graphic is that text can easily be added to it, so that not only will customers be aware of the image, they may also be informed by the message.
Printed Graphics

• A graphic refers to a printed image that can be either a photograph, drawing or piece of artwork incorporating an image and text.

• Many graphics that appear either in store windows or in-store are connected to a brand’s advertising campaign and are often supplied in a large format that can be incorporated with the brand’s shop fit.

• Seasonally they are removed and updated.

• Modern graphics are usually digitally printed at high resolution by photographic technicians.

• Printed graphics, when used correctly, can change the appearance of a department or shop dramatically.

• They are easy to use and easy to store.

• Adding text to graphics will also send a message as well as look appealing.
Printed Graphics

• There are many reasons why retailers rely so heavily on graphics in-store and in windows.
• The major rationale is cost.
• During the 1980’s, the cost of producing in-store displays to the same standard and quality as the windows escalated, sometimes way over the set budgets.
• A simple solution was to use printed backdrops to create the same drama as a display.
• Often they never matched the more traditional methods.
• Today, however, they are a much-appreciated tool that is often used with the more conventional techniques of visual merchandising.
Backlit Transparencies

- Most perfumery counters around the world prove how effective backlit transparencies can be.
- Simply put, the box that houses the transparency consists of a light-box with four sides and a row of fluorescent lamps at the back.
- A Perspex or glass sheet at the front supports the transparency.
- More often than not, the frame supporting the Perspex or glass will unclip, making it easy for the image to be replaced.
- The image is produced as a transparency by a photographer and, like the digital graphic, can come in various sizes.
- Often brands will supply their own transparencies.
- Back-lit transparencies are cost-effective and very low maintenance.
- Once the unit is fixed to a wall, fitting or fixture, it needs little attention.
- They are a great tool to brighten up a dull corner of a store as well as send as important message to the consumer.
Lighting

• Lighting plays an integral part in any retail environment, whether it is used for highlighting an in-store focal point or simply to flood the fixtures with enough light so that the customers can easily find what they are looking for.

• On no account will lighting be the most economical item on the visual merchandiser’s budget.

• Good quality, effective lighting fixtures can be expensive.
Lighting

• Unfortunately, retailers do not always utilize lighting rigs to their full extent.
• Many still place all their efforts into dressing the display, yet fail to make it stand out with the use of good lighting.
• Often the most exciting visual areas in store are hidden in the shadows.
• A track system with adjustable lamps offers the most flexibility for in-store displays and gives the visual merchandiser the opportunity to use several different lamp fittings, each of which will perform a different role within the display.
• Spot fittings will highlight an individual piece of merchandise, while flood fittings will give an ambient light to the whole.
Lighting

• The wattage and beam width of a lamp can be baffling to a novice.
• The actual lamp fitting is useless without the correct lamp.
• Many lighting fixtures can house a variety of lamps, but not all of them will be universally effective.
• The size of the beam width you require usually depends on the size of the grouping it is expected to highlight.
• A small product item such as jewellery, for example will only require a three-degree beam width; anything wider will illuminate the surrounding area.
• Show floors are often lit with fluorescent strip lighting which, when used properly, gives an overall ambient light that is both effective and efficient.
Ambience

• Conventional visual merchandising may not always be enough to get the overall ambience of the store right.

• Retailers worldwide strive to offer their customers experiences that are not just merchandise-led.

• Interaction from a DJ or the tasting of food are just two of the experiences that today’s customer now expect.
Music

• The visual merchandiser’s role often might not stop at laying out the shop floor and ensuring that the store is presentable and promoting the brand image.

• Today, it is likely that visual merchandisers will also be called upon to look at the overall level of the store’s ambience and atmosphere.

• They may be asked to decide if music should be played while the customers shop, and if so, what they should be listening to.
Music

• Music undoubtedly will add ambience.

• However, it is wise to consider which music suits the style of the merchandise and the customer.

• A load din of contemporary (modern) music may be off-putting to an older lady shopping for curtains while it might inspire a younger audience browsing a denim shop.

• It may also be sensible to check that the lyrics are not offensive.
Aromas and Scents

• Aromas and scents will stimulate the senses of shoppers – provided that the customer likes the smell.
• Atmospheric aromas can also be introduced to an area that warrants them and can help to promote a product.
• Scented candles displayed in an aromatic environment will boost sales.
• Some aromas are linked to their product category, particularly if that is an item of food, but it is always best to ensure that items are fresh.
• Nasty smells will, of course, be off-putting.
• Disguising them will only act as a short term solution.
Aromas and Scents

• The aroma of freshly baked bread in a bakery will entice the customer to spend, yet the smell of stale fish in a fishmonger will not have the same effect.

• For years, department stores have toyed with the idea of pumping aromas through air-conditioning systems to please shoppers.

• This idea, however, has never been proven to work.

• Everyone’s senses are different – what one may like another may loathe.

• In an extreme case a customer may be allergic to an alien smell, with genuinely distressing consequences.

• Plants are also a great way of creating ambience, colour and even scent.
Retail Standards, maintenance, and budget

• The importance of maintaining the visual standards of a store or a shop floor should never be underestimated.

• Enlisting the help of the sales team can dramatically affect the workload of a visual merchandiser.

• Training the sales staff to implement a basic level of visual merchandising that can be easily utilized will be a long-term benefit.

• A visual merchandiser, for example, may not require the sales associates to create displays or dress mannequins, but they can assist with the everyday merchandising of the fixtures.
The Creative Team

Director: Nora Linhart
Set / Prop Design: Vladimir Bezruc
Puppet / Costume Design: Svetlana Bardos
Standards and maintenance

• Most retailers will expect their shop floors to be neat and tidy, ready for the morning trade.
• Producing a booklet to explain how to maintain the visual merchandising standards is an effective way of communicating the requirements to the sales associates.
• A generic layout can be used and then updates easily each season.
• Weekly training sessions conducted on the shop floor by a visual merchandiser with the sales staff will also help clarify the roles and responsibilities of the staff.
• Giving individual ownership for specific product categories or brands will also help build a VM structure within the sales team.
Stock Replenishment

• Stock replenishment is best done while the store is closed, either in the evening or first thing in the morning.
• Managers and owners of prestigious stores do not generally allow trolleys and running rails on the shop floor during opening hours.
• This discipline should be practiced in any retail environment.
• Customers should not be distracted by anything but the merchandise on offer.
Housekeeping

• Housekeeping should also be completed while the store is shut.
• Walkways and aisles should be cleaned and cleared of any obstructions.
• Fixtures must be dusted and cleaned.
• Garments should be refolded or hung, remembering to ensure all the price tickets are still attached.
• Dirty or soiled products should either be cleaned or replaced.
Cash Desks

• Cash desks must appear professional at all times and be uncluttered and user-friendly.

• Customers, especially when parting with large amounts of money, do not expect to see scribbled notes and family pictures taped to the till.

• Clean and tidy flat surfaces should also be allocated to folding garments before they are placed into a carrier bag.
Planning the Budget
Budget

• The budget for in-store visual merchandising also requires some thought.
• When ordering fixtures and fittings, the choice can be between bespoke items or those bought directly from manufacturers.
• The latter will often be the most economical but possibly not the most inspirational.
• Fixtures should however, be seen as an investment.
• Unlike a window scheme they will have a longer retail life.
• When planning an in-store floor layout, budget money should also be set aside for additional lighting, graphics and signage, which are often overlooked.
• A hard-wearing floor may also add additional costs to the overall project but, in the long term, will be cost-effective.