



# MASTERING STORE MERCHANDISING

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR RETAILERS

FIRST EDITION

**ASD**  
MARKETWEEK

+

 **ZENGENIUS**

OPEN

## Goods

### Dinner ware

- Plates
- Cutlery
- Serve ware
- Glassware

### Cook ware

- Pots & Pans
- Bake ware
- Utensils
- Sheet pans

### Bar ware

- Wine glasses
- Cocktail glasses
- Bar accessories
- Bar mixers

## Kitchen Goods

Retail Kitchen Store

Gifts

- Stone Ware
- Bar Ware
- Dinner Ware
- Cook Ware

plus

Kitchen Design Showroom  
Ultimate Designs! \*



## MERCHANDISING IS AT THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL RETAIL

Merchandising is critical in retail. Beautiful displays that catch peoples' attention are what draw them into a store, make them want to experience that store's environment and ultimately decide to purchase something. Customers buy more than goods, they are buying things that allow them to show who they are and showcase their lifestyle. In brick and mortar stores products need to be strategically and thoughtfully placed to attract attention, drive in traffic and maximize sales.

As retailers, one of your visual goals is to draw customers in with compelling visual displays and engagements, such as a celebrity appearance, social media opportunities, free samples and something else that's creative. Your stores needs to laid out in away that maximizes converting visitors to customers at every point possible.

ASD Market Week knows how much our customers love to learn about merchandising, because of this, we partnered with ZenGenius, a retail merchandising firm, to create a merchandising guide which provides visual merchandising tips and techniques that can be applied to your store design to attract, engage and WOW existing and prospective new buyers.

We hope you enjoy it and put it to good use!

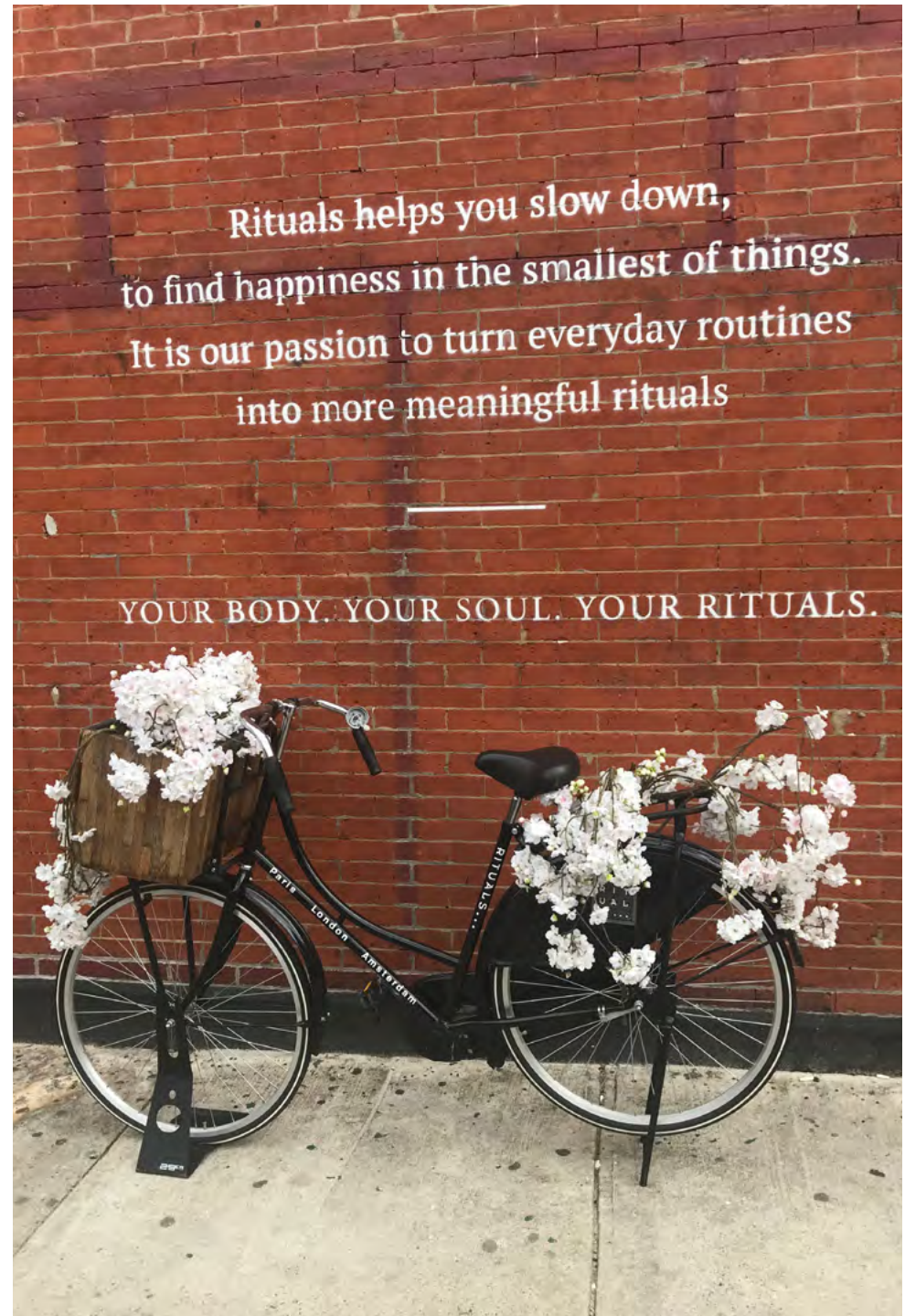
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# VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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## VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Visual Merchandising is the key to ensuring that the products in our stores are set up so that it's easy to shop and understand the assortment of merchandise that we are selling. It also aims to highlight and feature special products, seasonal items & categories. Retailers and wholesale distributors can take advantage of different merchandising techniques that can be used to maximize product sales.

A Visual Merchandising Strategy is created to establish goals and the actions needed to create and maintain a store experience that reinforces your brand and image.

### THE GOAL OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING IS:

- 1 Understand brand positioning
- 2 Determine goals
- 3 Create an action plan

# VISUAL MERCHANDISING STRATEGY // SETTING GOALS

Visual Merchandising is an important retail function that involves organizing, displaying, featuring, signing and stocking the products in order to elicit a positive image of the store, elevate the perceived value and maximize the sales of products.



## VISUAL LANGUAGE:

Create a space that immediately evokes a feeling in the customer that reinforces your image.

## MAINTAIN STORE:

Ensure the experience is consistent throughout day and make associates accountable for store presentation.



## WELCOME GUESTS:

Entrance zones, windows and a friendly team give customers a sense of ease and comfort with the process.

## WIN GUESTS:

Win loyal customers by surprising them with the shopping experience and ambiance created by the selected elements.



## ORGANIZE:

Display and stock items so that it is easy to understand the assortment and easy to shop.

## VISUAL SIGHT LINES:

Create focal points and hot spots throughout the shopping process to feature, guide, educate and inform.



## STIMULATE SENSES:

Engage all five senses and create a memorable and positive experience that beckons guests back.

## SEASONAL IMPACT:

Add visual excitement and seasonal impact that keep the store fresh and relevant among market.

# VISUAL MERCHANDISING STRATEGY // ACHEIVING GOALS



1. Create a Visual Merchandising Program and Maintenance Manual.
2. Organize product assortment by category, classification, season or other.
3. Establish your best merchandising techniques and create standards for each category and classification.
4. Create focal displays to tell stories throughout the shopping process.
5. Cross Merchandise products with your top 10 key items to encourage add on sales.
6. Create a maintenance schedule that communicates daily store presentation and maintenance responsibilities.
7. Incorporate clear, consistent signage. Create a system to present key information while reinforcing your brand personality and voice.
8. Establish signage guidelines and monitor the store signage often to ensure standards are being followed.
9. Create a system to quickly and cost effectively layer in seasonal impact avoiding store bought decorations.
10. Engage sense of sight with eye catching signage, displays, information and decor. Use color where possible.
11. Incorporate textures to stimulate the sense of touch. Choose materials and fabrics that feel good to the touch.
12. Introduce music or sounds that add to your experience. Train associates to use their voices and communicate key phrases.

# VISUAL MERCHANDISING STRATEGY // ACHEIVING GOALS



- 13.** Offer fresh water and free mints to quench customers thirst, freshen their breath and stimulate the sense of taste.
- 14.** Pay attention to the smell and add your own seasonal scent.
- 15.** Create product planograms to communicate product placement and aid in maintaining a well merchandised store.
- 16.** Develop a VM planning calendar to identify key floorsets and establish a schedule for planning and implementing concepts.
- 17.** Determine your best merchandising tools. Create a collection of versatile risers, blocks, fixtures, sign holders and display tools.
- 18.** Photograph set ups to create an easy system for all associates to assist in maintaining your store.
- 19.** Create a Store Experience Manual to establish and articulate your specific standards and guidelines.
- 20.** Conduct a training program focused specifically on enforcing your Visual Merchandising standards, practices and techniques.
- 21.** Make fun and easy training videos that make learning the standards fun and reinforce associate expectations.
- 22.** Implement incentive programs to gain the support of your entire team in maintaining the entire store experience.



Shopping should be a unique and memorable experience that excites all five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.



## **SIGHT:**

Think about what you want your customers to see when they walk into your store and look at your products. Is your store lighting bright enough for showcasing your products? Do you have signage that is easy for your customers to read and understand?



## **TOUCH:**

It's a natural instinct for customers to touch, pick up and observe products before purchasing. Create a retail environment that encourages customers to touch and engage with your products. When possible, display products at eye level to welcome customers to touch and observe.



## **SOUND:**

Incorporating music into your retail space is a great way to encourage customers to take their time browsing. It's important to note that music can have a positive and negative effect on your store, depending on your music choices. Select songs that are respectful and generally appealing to all ears and contribute to the mood you are working to create.



## **SMELL:**

The smell of your store can both attract and deter people from entering and shopping. Imagine walking into a bakery and smelling chocolate chip cookies, fresh out of the oven. Now imagine walking into a bakery and smelling burnt chocolate chip cookies. An enticing smell can provide a welcome first impression.

If your business doesn't contain consumables, consider lighting a candle or plugging in a scent system to ensure your store smells pleasant and fresh.



## **TASTE:**

Who doesn't love free samples? Allowing customers to taste and sample a product before buying is the equivalent of allowing people to try on apparel. Providing free samples helps customers engage with and learn more about your products.

If your business doesn't offer consumables, consider having refreshments or snacks readily available for your existing and new customers.



# ZONES TO CONSIDER

# WINDOW ZONE

Often windows are described as the soul of the store giving you a glimpse of what to expect. Your store windows are often the first impression a customer receives about your store and brand. Store windows are an effective way to attract attention and potentially driving traffic into your store based on the response to your store windows.

Consider today's busy customers and give them something special to draw their attention to you. A great store window can make a difference in whether a customer will enter. Create windows with visual impact, cleverness and incorporate motion and lighting as often as possible.

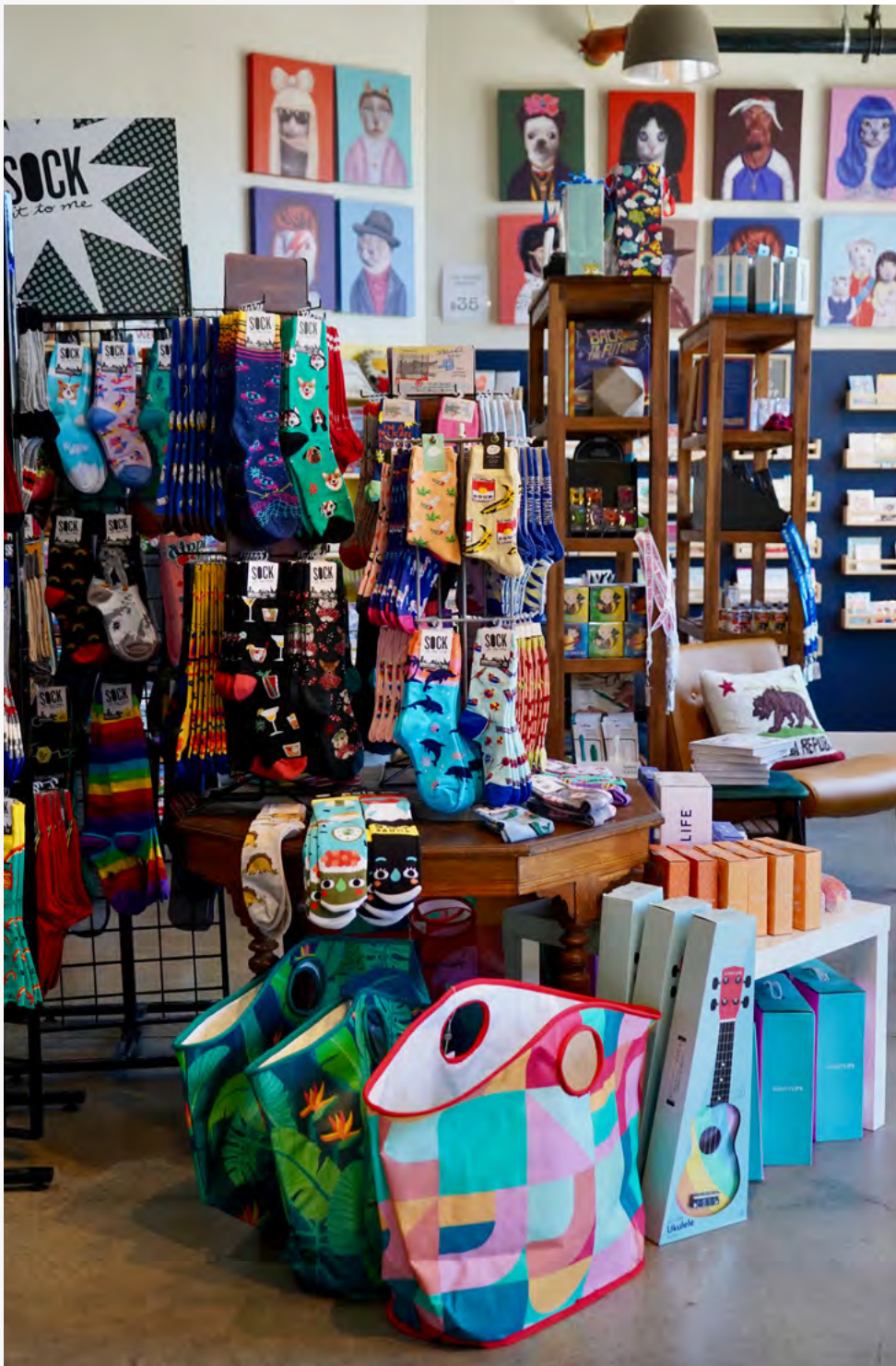
## KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL WINDOW DISPLAY:

- 1 Your windows are often the first impression of your store.
- 2 Create windows that command attention from today's busy customers.
- 3 Organize a window schedule that helps you to plan ahead of time.



# WINDOW ZONE // INSPIRATION





## FRONT ENTRANCE ZONE

Your front entrance, including your front door, and the first ten to twenty feet of your store experience are incredibly important. It is in this zone where three of the customer's senses are engaged: sight, sound and smell. The reaction to these three important factors can determine much about the customer's experience. From a sight standpoint ensure that the front entrance is visually pleasing. Allow the customer some initial decompression space to acclimate into the space. Once they focus their intention make sure it focuses on something pleasing to see. The sound of a space is also experienced in this entry zone. Choose music, sounds or welcoming language to add to the experience. The sense of smell is often overlooked and certainly affects first impression of every customer. Choose a scent that pleases your customers while reinforcing your image for the season.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ENTRANCE DISPLAY:

- 1 Ensure strong visuals are in the entry zone.
- 2 Choose music that reinforces your image for the season.
- 3 Don't forget the sense of smell!

# FRONT ENTRANCE ZONE // INSPIRATION



# IMPULSE ZONE

Driving impulse purchases is a key business strategy to drive volume and store sales. Create an area adjacent to the check out area or in a key location to tempt customers with something they weren't expecting but suddenly need to have. Often these items are at a lower price point and can make a great add on item for a gift or special treat for your self. Consider your core assortment and brand and brainstorm a list of impulse items. Identify the area in the store to merchandise these items and create a strategy that is unique to your brand. Containers are often a great tool to help organize and merchandise key items.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL IMPULSE DISPLAY:

- 1 Merchandise impulse items in a collection of fun containers.
- 2 Position impulse items near the check out area or featured in an area of it's own.
- 3 Add signage that encourages a last minute gift or treat for yourself.



# IMPULSE ZONE // INSPIRATION







## CHECKOUT ZONE

The Check Out Zone is often the customer's final impression of your store. Ensure that the Check Out Zone is free of clutter and reinforces a positive image of your brand. Proudly sport your logo, your values, an inspirational quote, or image behind the check out. Ensure that the customer can easily identify the Check Out Zone with clear signage or placement within the store. Stores often merchandise key impulse items at the check out experience.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL CHECKOUT DISPLAY:

- 1 Make sure the Check Out Zone is easy to find.
- 2 Keep the Check Out Zone clutter free.
- 3 Celebrate your brand and values in the Check Out Zone.

# SIGHT VIEWS, FOCAL POINTS & HOT SPOTS

All stores should plan sight lines, focal points or hot spots into the space. Sight lines will draw a customer's attention and help lead them through the shopping experience. A great focal point display can add to the pure enjoyment of shopping in a store, entice a customer to desire something or educate and inform them about a product. Hot spots can be combined into a focal display or sight line and are often where you are displaying and merchandising a hot key item or trend. These spots are key to creating an enjoyable shopping experience.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL SIGHT VIEW DISPLAY:

- 1 Sight lines draw a customer through your space.
- 2 A focal display can add pure enjoyment to your store.
- 3 Hot spots can drive sales of important key items.



# SIGHT VIEWS, FOCAL POINTS & HOT SPOTS // INSPIRATION



# MERCHANDISING TECHNIQUES



# FIXTURES

Choosing the right collection of fixtures for your store can elevate the shopping experience. Fixtures provide both function and style. First, your fixtures should provide the basic necessities to house your inventory. Be sure the fixtures can accommodate your capacity requirements and assortment. Second, they can also reinforce and set the foundation for the image and feel of your store. The right fixture can elevate the perceived value and quality of the product. Choose materials that add to your image. Create a collection of fixtures that all work together to feature your assortment.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF A FIXTURE PACKAGE:

- 1 Fixtures can elevate your experience.
- 2 Ensure fixtures provide function first.
- 3 Choose materials that reinforce your image.



# FIXTURES // INSPIRATION





## MANNEQUINS & FORMS

One of the goals of visual merchandising is to display and feature the product. There is a complete range of mannequins and forms that help to feature all types of products. Of course many fashion stores feature mannequins or bust forms to feature fashions. Today mannequins are offered in every size, shape and color allowing you to choose a look that reinforces your strategy and image. Forms also come in all sizes and shapes and can be used to feature and display all types of products.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF A FORM PACKAGE:

- 1** The goal is to feature and display your products.
- 2** Mannequins come in all shapes, sizes and colors.
- 3** Forms help to display all types of products.





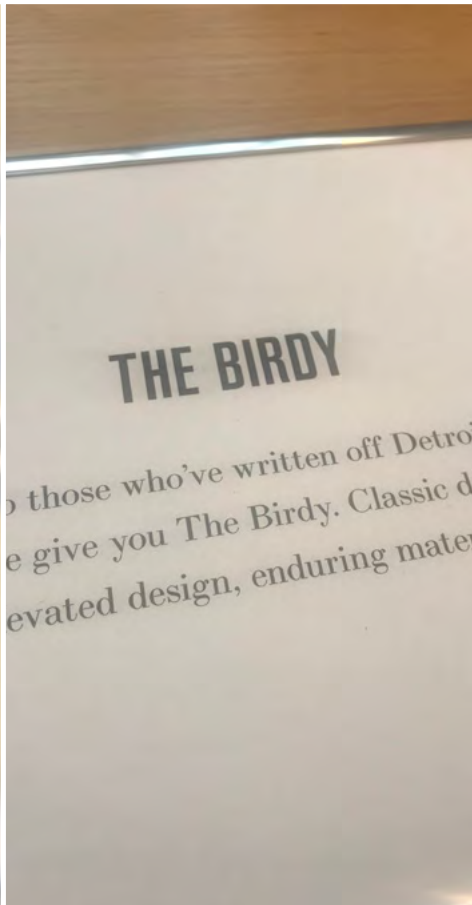
# SIGNAGE

The voice and personality of your brand can come out through communication in your signage program. Signage can include graphics, art, promotional materials, product signage and pricing information. Signs are often referred to as the silent salespeople because they quietly inform and inspire customers. On the other hand many consumers are too busy to read so make sure your signage has impact and is clear and simple to read. Create a collection of signs that work together and add to your image and experience. Graphics and signs should reinforce a quality image and communicate clearly.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF A SIGNAGE PACKAGE:

- 1 Communicate clearly to customers.
- 2 Allow your voice and personality to come through.
- 3 Choose a sign package that reinforces your image.







## REPETITION

Repetition creates visual continuity by displaying the same item more than once. This technique provides structure and can simplify a retail displays composition. If you're looking for consistency amongst your product displays and throughout your store, then repetition technique is the perfect start. Repeating visual display or vignettes creates consistent moments for eyes to focus on. Creating consistency through repetition helps to create a rhythm to the shopping experience.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF REPETITION:

- 1 Create visual impact by repeating displays.
- 2 Adds focal moments for the eye to enjoy.
- 3 Brings rhythm to the shopping experience.



# POWER OF THREE

The rule of three is one of the most prominent visual merchandising techniques. Similar, complementary or identical products are often grouped together and displayed in sets of three, allowing the customers' eyes to look around your store and take in more details. The repetition of three feels good and comfortable for the viewer. Feature three mannequins, or three of the same product and you can complete a sightline or focal point.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE POWER OF THREE:

- 1 An easy technique to create impact.
- 2 A great tool for sightline and focal points.
- 3 Feels good for the viewer.







## COLOR BLOCKING

Explore with color by pairing two to three different colors together to create a bold display is known as Color Blocking. For successful color blocking in your retail space, try and keep colors in the same family such as pairing all neon colors or pairing all pastel colors. Color blocking creates strong visual impact and helps to tell a trending color or fashion story. Color blocking applies to all types of retail goods including fresh fashion and fresh produce.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF COLOR BLOCKING:

- 1 Creates strong visual impact.
- 2 Tells a trend or fashion story.
- 3 Applies to all types of products.





# PYRAMIDING

The "Pyramid Principle" refers to building a triangular display. Typically, the largest item is placed in the center as a focal point and then the smallest products are placed on the outside. The pyramid technique can be created with a variety of products or identical products stacked on top of each other. Pyramids can be created by raising or lowering a collection of bust forms or by using risers, platforms or blocks to elevate items. Pyramiding is a universal technique and can be applied to all types of products. Pyramids work great to complete upper walls or as a technique for sight-lines or hot spots.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE POWER OF THREE:

- 1 Build a simple triangle display.
- 2 Creates a visual focal point.
- 3 Great technique for upper shelves.





# USE VERTICAL, FLAT AND HORIZONTAL SURFACES IN MERCHANDISING

**VERTICAL MERCHANDISING** is the practice of organizing a display in vertical rows from top to bottom. This is an effective merchandising strategy that creates visual impact and naturally allows customers to view more of the product assortment at once. The vertical arrangement makes the products in your store easy to see and reach at eye-level and hand-level. Vertical merchandising is a great technique to consider when you do not want to make your customer crouch down to select or view a product. Vertical merchandising can offer the full assortment within easy reach.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF VERTICAL MERCHANDISING:

- 1 Creates powerful visual impact.
- 2 Places key items at eye and hand level.
- 3 Makes shopping easier.



**HORIZONTAL MERCHANDISING** is the practice of organizing merchandise from left to right. While this merchandising technique presents the product at or near the customer's line of sight, it also forces the customer to move from side to side in order to follow the display. Horizontal merchandising is a great technique to use when you have multiple colors. It is also a great technique if there is a key item that you want to place at eye level.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF HORIZONTAL MERCHANDISING:

- 1 Helps organize the assortment.
- 2 Places key items at eye level.
- 3 Creates visual impact.

**FLAT MERCHANDISING** Laying and displaying products flat on a table or in a counter is known as a flat merchandising technique. Create an interesting composition that the customer will look down to view and browse the assortment. Use blocks risers and interesting textures to make your flat merchandising display visually interesting. Choose risers or materials that celebrate and reinforce your product or season. Many flat displays start with a layer of rices, beans, sand or other texture first. All techniques like pyramids, repetition, vertical merchandising and color blocking can be incorporated into flat merchandising.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF FLAT MERCHANDISING:

- 1 An interesting composition to view from above.
- 2 Incorporate interesting textures to tell your story.
- 3 Use other basic techniques into your display.



# NEGATIVE SPACE

Negative space in a display or product presentation refers to the unoccupied areas or empty space surrounding the products being merchandised. Negative space is an effective tool in your retail space as it allows the eye to rest in between different products or categories. It is critical for making focal points stand out from their surroundings. It also makes shopping easier by helping customers understand the options in a category or collections. Negative space gives the eye an immediate indicator that there is a change or something different.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF USING NEGATIVE SPACE:

- 1 Makes it easier to understand the assortment.
- 2 Helps a focal point stand out.
- 3 Indicates options or a change.







## CROSS MERCHANDISING

Cross Merchandising is the practice of displaying complementary products from different categories together to create a cohesive statement and to promote additional revenue through add-on sales. This technique makes shopping convenient for customers by pairing up products that are indirectly related to each other. Cross merchandising tells a story and offers additional options. Cross merchandising can add a sale to a key item or help drive sales of a slow mover. Cross merchandising the right item in the right place at the right time is an easy way to drive store sales.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF CROSS MERCHANDISING:

- 1 Drives store sales.
- 2 Tells a story.
- 3 Right place, right time, right moment.





# LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle merchandising is a technique intended to embody the values, interests, attitudes and opinions of a specific group or target market. A lifestyle display might involve the entire environment and incorporates the furniture, fixtures, product stories, props and decor to create the experience. Lifestyle displays can be aspirational and inspirational depending on your target market.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF SPACES THAT EMBODY LIFESTYLE MERCHANDISING:

- 1 A display that embodies a complete style or image.
- 2 Create an experience that inspires your target market.
- 3 Have fun incorporating all the perfect details.







## PROPS

Visual merchandising props have become an integral part of the design and planning process. Our attention span is shrinking to about less than a millisecond with all the multitasking we do these days which makes it that much more necessary to be bold with colors, shapes and props to get customers to focus on what you want them to see and do. Incorporating props into your store such as mannequins or even a life size unicorn is a great way to create visual interest and communicate your style or point of view to buyers. The right prop can tell a store, evoke a feeling or conjure a memory. Props add visual excitement and energy.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL USE OF PROPS:

- 1 Capture attention with a great prop.
- 2 Add energy and excitement to your store.
- 3 Can conjure a memory or evoke emotion.

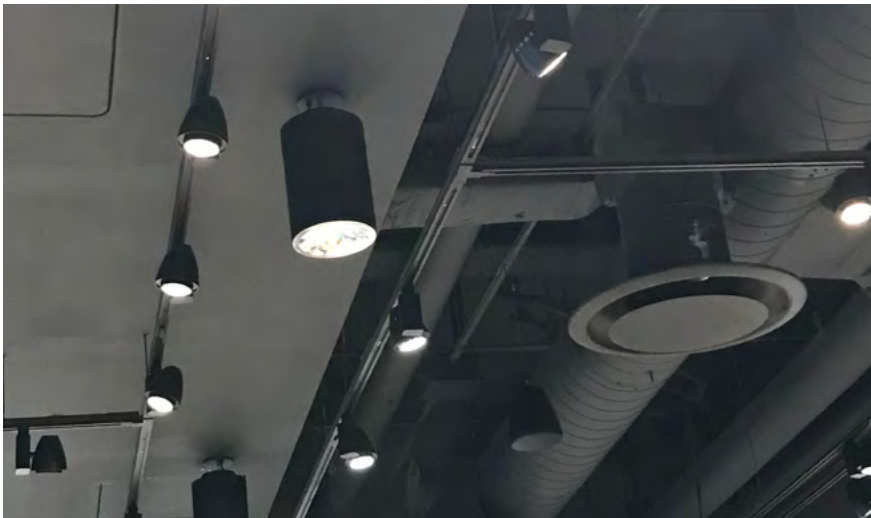


# LIGHTING & TECHNOLOGY

**LIGHTING** is a very important aspect of your visual strategy and store design is your lighting plan. Lighting levels highly influence the customer experience and can not only affect operating costs but store sales. Ensure your store has a comfortable level of lighting and that it features your products and focal points. Create layers of light that provide overall function, highlight areas and add personality. Lighting designs should offer flexibility throughout the day and incorporate today's energy efficient options.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL LIGHTING:

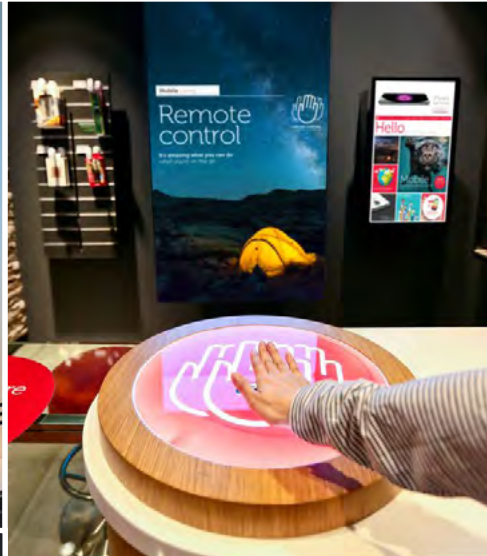
- 1 Great lighting influences store sales.
- 2 Decorative lighting can add personality.
- 3 Save energy with efficient lighting.



**TECHNOLOGY** Today's customers are more familiar with technology options and retail stores are incorporating more technology into the store experience. Digital and touch screens, LED lighting, motion, mapping and robotics are all technology items that have been featured into stores. Technology can be used in your store windows, layered onto the sales floor and featured in the check out experience. Technology can elevate the image of a brand or reinforce the quality of a particular product. Augmented reality and virtual reality are also technology features that retailers are using to engage and educate customers.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF TECHNOLOGY:

- 1 Incorporate technology into the store.
- 2 Technology can elevate the image of a brand.
- 3 Technology is more than a TV screen.



# TECHNOLOGY

Today's consumers are more familiar with technology and have come to expect it to make shopping and checking out easier. Technology also makes the shopping experience more enjoyable and entertaining.

Layering in the right technology components can elevate the perception of your brand and store. There are many options that include video, touch screens and lighting that can take your shopping experience to the next level.

Smaller retailers may not have technology in their stores. Don't worry, your POS that's connected to a digital customer loyalty program counts. Learn more about this on our blog at <http://www.asdonline.com/blog>

## KEY COMPONENTS OF FEATURE DISPLAY:

- 1 Technology makes shopping fun.
- 2 Technology elevates perceptions.
- 3 Technology is often expected.





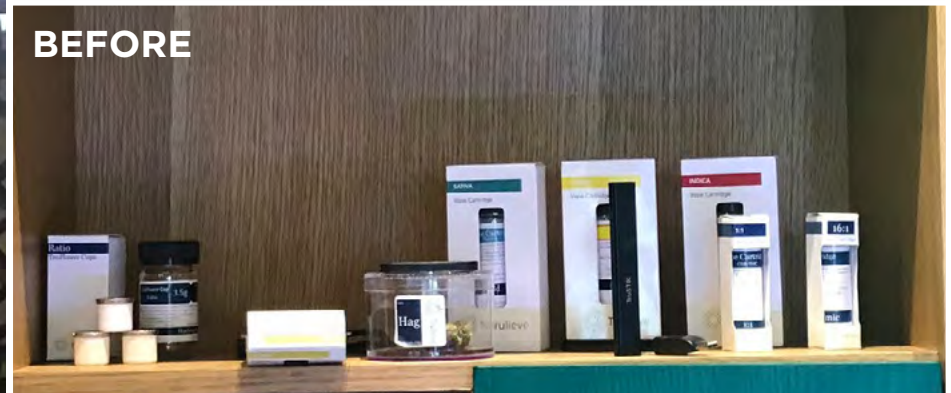
## GOOD & BAD

Here are a few examples of Good & Bad displays. Understanding the basics of visual merchandising can help you maintain great displays. Combine the merchandising techniques and principles to create a shopping experience that delights your customer.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF FEATURE DISPLAY:

- 1 Combine principles & techniques.
- 2 Set merchandising standards.
- 3 Elevate perception of your store.







## JOE BAER

---

Joe Baer is the Co-Founder, visionary and creative force behind [ZenGenius](#). He is a leader among the Visual Merchandising and retail industry and is committed to raising the awareness of Visual Merchandising as an important element of any great retail and event experience. He believes Visual Merchandising is an amazing career path for many creative individuals that are looking for a rewarding and fulfilling opportunity. In addition to his extensive knowledge of Visual Merchandising, Joe is an experienced public speaker and travels around the world inspiring and teaching others about the power of Visual Merchandising.

He leads training programs, conducts interactive Visual Merchandising workshops and is well known for creating and leading the IRON MERCHANT CHALLENGE, a signature interactive workshop held each year at the International Retail Design Conference. Joe has been a judge for VMSD Magazine's International Visual Merchandising Contest for over five years and has sponsored the Holiday Window Contest in the Short North Arts District of Columbus, Ohio for several years. His inspiration comes from absolutely everywhere and everything.

# ASD MARKETWEEK

## ABOUT ASD MARKET WEEK

ASD Market Week is the most comprehensive B2B trade show that brings the world's widest variety of retail merchandise together in one efficient shopping experience. 45,000 buyers from over 90 countries visit ASD Market Week each year. From department stores to convenience stores, general stores to gift shops, this is the trade show where any buyer can find unique merchandise that will set their store merchandise apart, attend the best in class retail workshops, network with other buyers and find new solutions for their business. Visit [www.asdonline.com](http://www.asdonline.com) to register and learn more.

## ABOUT SOURCEDIRECT AT ASD

SourceDirect is the fastest growing sourcing trade show in the United States. With more than 500 international vendors, SourceDirect is an international marketplace where importers, distributors, wholesalers, and mass merchant retailers can buy direct from manufacturers from around the world. Visit [www.sourcedirectshow.com](http://www.sourcedirectshow.com) for more details.

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[www.asdonline.com](http://www.asdonline.com) or call us at toll free: +1.800.421.4511 to learn how ASD Market Week can benefit your business!

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