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**VISUAL MERCHANDISING EXTERIOR PRESENTATION  
INFLUENCE ON RETAIL INDUSTRY**



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**Short Profile**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Visual merchandising is a major factor often overlooked in the success or failure of a retail store that projects a different image and branding definitely gains in the long term. With this competition in the retailing, only merchandise and the brand name of the retailer would not help eliminate the competitors. Instead, more attention and fine detailing needs to be done in terms of designing the store, visual merchandising in the store, competitive in pricing, availability of products, etc The sector, an important agribusiness option, is witnessing a paradigm shift

having long-term implications on the way food retailing will evolve in the emerging economies like India. This paper handled visual merchandising exterior presentation how influence on retail industry to increasing the sales volume through exterior presentation.

**KEYWORDS**

*visual merchandising, Exterior, Signs, Awnings, Walks and entries (Entrance), Landscaping, Window displays.*

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### INTRODUCTION :

Visual merchandising is the answer for raising the bar of what retailers and the store employee should know. Visual merchandising can take the retail experience to a different level. 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.. It is second only to effective customer relations. The share of private labels in the basket of key food retailers is also increasing, with in-house brands competing fiercely with well-established brands. Further, with the opening of supermarkets and international corporate groups are quickly grabbing investment opportunities in the Indian retail sector and the quantum of investments is likely to skyrocket. Amidst this competition where products and quality will be almost similar, the only point of differentiation will be the 'experience' that, the consumers will get while shopping. The biggest role of providing the shoppers with an unforgettable experience will be that of visual merchandising. In the present competition the retailers are leaving no stone unturned to gain the loyalty of the consumer. One bad experience, the loyal consumer is gone for good. This not only imply assuring good shopping experience every time a consumer enters a store, but also to retain them by ensuring an impressive visual treat. We get one chance to create the first everlasting impression. In this information laden consumer world, shoppers are increasingly asking for better and newer products. Most of the times, the consumer is more knowledgeable than the store employees. With the above facts a successful retailing business requires that a distinct and consistent image to be created in the customer's mind that permeates all products and service offerings.

### VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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 consumer. 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. Visual merchandising is the art of implementing effective design ideas to increase store traffic and sales volume. VM is an art and science of displaying merchandise to enable maximum sale. VM is a tool to achieve sales and targets, a tool to enhance merchandise on the floor, and a mechanism to communicate to a customer and influence his decision to buy. VM uses season based displays to introduce new arrivals to customers, and thus increase conversions through a planned and systematic approach by displaying stocks available

### EXTERIOR PRESENTATION

VM begins where the consumer connect first with the store- the exterior of the store. This part sets the tone for a shopper's experience. 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 announces 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, and lavish or discount image to the customer.

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## THE VISUAL MERCHANDISING TOOLS FOR EXTERIOR PRESENTATION:

1. Exterior Signs.
2. Awnings.
3. Walks and entries (Entrance).
4. Landscaping.
5. Window displays.

### 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 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. Signs with 8-inch letters can be read from a distance up to 250 feet. 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 consumer's 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. 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. Signage not only highlights the name of your business, but it also adds visual beauty to the street and streetscape. Signage is a direct indication to store image.

**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. It can be used to announce a change in seasons, a special event or a promotion.

**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. 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. 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

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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. 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 (ENTRANCE)

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.

The entrance to the store leads the customers to the store and merchandise. Stores with selling racks and tables outside the store should always ensure entrance is not blocked. Decorative tile work on the floor of the entrance could reflect the image of the store. At the entry we can put a tropical tree on either side which makes the entrance more attractive. At the counter it is better to keep products that are close substitute or complimentary to the main product. But the counter and the entrance should not be clogged with excessive products.

### 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. 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.

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The following guidelines are suggested for stores that have flexibility:

- Concentrate hardy native tree species in groups at ends of buildings. 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.
- 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.
- 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. A good window display enhances communication of the product, brand and image. 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. A retailer's window is the most controllable element in relation to image and must match their merchandise's target demographic. Display Window may communicate style, content, and price point. They can be seductive, exciting or based on emotional stimulus through stimulation, or evocation of all five senses. Another direction taken by retailers who rely on volume sold is price-based selling. These clearly emphasize value for money with easy and obvious ticketing.

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 bestselling books.

How to get maximum impact of Retail display window? To obtain maximum impact follow the simple ways mentioned below;

1. Keep it simple. Too many graphics, too many messages translate as clutter. Make sure that your window message can be understood quickly from afar and that it is memorable enough to be noticed.
2. Be relevant to your customer and season.
3. Have a window display strategy on visibility. Are they open windows to see through to the retail inside? Or shadow box windows with a promotional graphic backdrop? Interactive? Defining the type of window

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display can make future maintenance easier and help to lay the groundwork for display limitations.

4. Think in stories.

5. Have a third window. If you don't have room to envelope multiple areas with the window message, make sure to have a third window that is focal, as you walk into the store.

## CONCLUSION

Visual merchandising is the art and science of presenting the product , retailer sell in the most attractive way possible to approach sales. Now a days in retailing malls and stores visual merchandising function to more important part of sales volume especially the exterior presentation like Exterior Signs, Awnings, Walks and entries (Entrance), Landscaping, Window displays this all the tools more and more influencing the consumer in retailing sectors.

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