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Fremantle Markets Visual Merchandising Factsheet

Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising is a powerful tool in the world of retail but can also apply to any area that represents your brand to your customer. Those who fully understand it can use it to maximise sales as well as set their brand apart from the competition. Using the store environment to create an engaging customer experience is paramount in creating both brand loyalty and increasing sales. Visual merchandising is the ultimate tool to communicate why your offer is special and why customers should shop with you. But remember it is only one piece of the puzzle that goes into the customer experience as a whole.

Elements of Visual Merchandising

There are many elements that go into the visual merchandising of a retail location. Visual merchandising is really about displaying a product, service or concept to its best advantage and encompasses any visual (or non-visual) aspect that will help to make this irresistible to the customer. Although it can be creative, it is important to remember that it is a commercial endeavour that needs to fit in with all the other aspects of a business to be successful, i.e. product, marketing, customer service.

The key elements are:

- Store/ Stall design
- Merchandise layout
- Fixtures & fittings
- Window displays
- In-store visual merchandising techniques
- Lighting
- Signage & ticketing
- Standards & housekeeping
- The five senses
- Colour theory
- Design principles

Window Displays

This is a major marketing tool for your business. In most cases in a market setting, there is no window display as such. The whole stall, however, becomes the “window” and therefore should be visually appealing, interesting and organised.



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The first major display or behind your counter area can act as your focal display even if you do not have a window. This can be used to promote a current theme, product or promotion. This is an opportunity that is often missed by many retailers and can be a valuable branding exercise to both educate and inspire your customer as to what your business stands for.

Store/ Stall Layout

One of the most important aspects to get right in any store is the layout. This will affect how your customer engages with your product and staff.

- Watch how your customers shop in your store. Do they work methodically around the space, or do they concentrate on specific areas and brush over others?
- Analyse the traffic flow and use this information to develop key areas or 'hot spots' where you can place new season, impulse or high margin items to maximise sales.

Elements to focus on are:

- Traffic flow
- Walkways
- Sight-lines and focal points
- Group items logically. This may be in item type, range, colour or function.
- Be aware of adjacencies in your product layout. These can be of great benefit when done well.
- Using coordinating or complementary items near each other makes them easier for the shopper to understand and purchase.
- Lifestyle merchandising can create added value and also leads to more add on sales when done well.

In-store Displays

The first displays that a customer sees when entering your stall or cafe will usually be key hot spots.

- Use a variety of visual merchandising techniques.
- Remember to use grouping techniques such as repetition and pyramid groupings as they are easier on the eye.



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Counter Area

- This should be a professional space, clean and free of clutter.
- It is an invaluable location for impulse items. Choose them carefully; if they are too expensive then a customer may not want to make such a rushed decision.
- Bags are also part of the visual merchandising of your stall. They should be kept neat and preferably out of sight from customers as they can look messy and unattractive.
- Plastic bags on rolls for fruit and veg should not be a focus of your stall (i.e. at eye level).
- The look of your bags should also fit in with your brand, e.g. if you are organic or wholefood, brown paper bags would fit in better.

Staff Presentation

The presentation of traders and staff is also an essential element of your whole store's experience.

- A uniform of some kind is always preferable. This helps with your branding, e.g. a branded T-shirt or apron. It also promotes a professional look for your business.
- Hygiene and cleanliness are essential. Clean uniforms/ clothes and good personal grooming also reflect the quality of your brand and product.

Product Presentation

- The quality of stock should always be of a high standard.
- When there are damaged or low-grade items that can still be sold, these should be separated from full priced/ high quality stock (whether to be put on special or thrown out in the case of some food).

Ticketing & Signage

- The stall signage is important to portray the message of your brand e.g., an organic stall would not suit a plastic sign.
- The stall signage should also have a consistent look and quality within the 'umbrella' of the Fremantle Markets.
- Although in most cases printed signage is preferable, in a fruit and vegetable market hand written signs are acceptable. These should however be consistent, neat and legible. They can be written on clean card or similar.



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- Small chalkboards are ideal and can easily be changed. They also fit in with the look of a market setting.

Standards & Housekeeping

The best store fit-out and the most amazing displays can be ruined if a store's standards are not equally strong. Crumpled looking boxes for fruit and vegetables or damaged paintwork on the walls are all signs that a business does not value how their product is represented to their customer. This can easily put customers off a brand and therefore making a purchase.

- Housekeeping standards should be high. Remember that this includes the fixtures, signage and counter area.
- Displays should be maintained and kept clean and tidy.
- Products should be replaced as they sell. If too much has sold then condense the remaining stock so it still looks appealing.
- The space under the displays in a fruit and vegetable stall can also be seen by a customer and should be kept neat and tidy or covered with fabric or doors (so that it can still be accessed).

The Five Senses

Remember that we have five senses, so part of visual merchandising is about the entire impression your store gives to a customer.

- Customers will always want to touch items so make sure that products are easy to access.
- Stores should smell clean and fresh (steer clear of harsh disinfectant smells).
- Taste testings are a perfect way to create an experience for a customer and engage other senses.

Shop your shop

- Make sure that you regularly walk your store/ stall/ cafe as a customer.
- Comparative shop your competitors to see what they are doing and how you compare in your market and to other markets.
- This helps to prevent store blindness while focussing your attention on the strengths and weaknesses of the visual merchandising in your store.

