

A Study of Visual Merchandising as a Marketing Tool

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Abstract – Visual Merchandising is expended as an element of uniformity and point of difference in the retail industry. It works on initiating the customers to prepare prompt decision of acquisition. The initiative of this paper is to obtain awareness from the literature of Visual Merchandising and create a substance for future researches in the framework of organized retail. The study covers a meta-analysis of existing researches and tried to find the relationship between Visual Merchandising and customer buying behavior. Visual Merchandising is recognized as an instrument to attract the consumer towards the product and at the same time creating its image which helps in distinguishing distinctly it from competitor's products. Visual Merchandising is a broadly utilized custom of trade tailor-made as per the requirements of the structured retailers stipulating the involvement of the customer in the shopping experience and prompts purchase instantly Visual Merchandising includes store decorations by tastefully hanging pamphlets, outlook, lighting, etc.

Keywords: Visual Merchandising, Store layout, facade, retail, Visual Merchandising displays.

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INTRODUCTION

Visual Merchandising plays an important role in presenting the overall view of the offline retail store that depicts merchandise in an aesthetically appealing way. The Indian retail industry is expanding its canvas with rapid growth. When a customer is in the retail store, Visual Merchandising informs, guides, and influences him to make a purchase.

The modern retail has changed the way of offering products and services to the customers. On one hand, online retailers are conducting high sales by organizing big sales days while on other hand offline retailers are feeling a steep competition from e-commerce players to achieve their targeted level of sales. There is a huge potential for expansion in the Indian retail industry. Visual Merchandising also gives a message from retailers to its customer regarding the merchandise it offers. Besides the quality and taste, the Visual Merchandising makes the customer feel for the product.

The offline retailer uses many strategies and practices to attract customers at offline stores (physical retail store) including a Visual Merchandising strategy. It creates an environment within the retail store that appeals to the customers to try and purchase the products. The customer is informed about the product and is attracted to offline retail stores to make purchases in an organized retail environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Gormon (2006), stated that *Visual Merchandising* enhances products, facilitate brands, increase customer footfall, and sales of the products. It increases the visual appeal of products displayed for the sale.

Ravazzi (2000) explains the Visual Merchandising as an ingredient of modernized entry point attracting communication between purchasers and marketers. Visual Merchandising helps the customers to come across the product visually, physically, and intellectually before touching the product offered by the retailer. The role of Visual Merchandising is very crucial in sales of offline retail stores.

Greenwood (1998) resolved that Visual Merchandising influences the behavior of purchasers to a great extent. He stated that there was a weighty positive relationship found among promotional strategies, in-store displays, and consumer buying behavior.

Turley and Milliman (2000) investigated the retail outlet designing and its influential effect on the outlook of the purchaser. They found that the visually appealing store atmospherics has a direct effect on consumer behavior and he spends more time in the store.

Age (2004) researched to understand the effect of store atmospherics on consumer shopping behavior. He found that the store atmosphere is directly related to customer buying behavior and compels the customer to spend more time in the store.

Pillai, Iqbal, Umer, Maqbool, and Namrata (2011) researched Visual Merchandising and found that the brand image is enhanced by visually pleasing displays at retail stores. They also concluded regarding Visual Merchandising being considered as the main element which guides purchaser towards buying.

Bhalla and Anuraag (2010) quantified that VM shapes the décor in a way to make shopping a pleasure-filled experience. They considered efforts of Visual Merchandising as silent salespersons.

Visual Merchandising provides an environment for the customer to select the merchandise as experience shopping. In modern retail, the visual merchandiser gives the merchandise a look & feels that appeals to the customer to purchase even when the customer enters the retail outlet with no prior plan to purchase. Many of the displays of Visual Merchandising are seasonal, occasional, and creative. The purpose of the Visual Merchandising displays is to add visual advantage to the products which appeal to the customer to buy.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the function of visual merchandising towards attracting customers.
2. To know the significance of visual merchandising from the marketer's point of view.
3. To examine the challenges of visual merchandising to marketers.
4. To understand the opportunities arising from the acceptance of visual merchandising.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING TOOLS:

Outdoor Symbols:

The role of outdoor symbols is very significant it will reflect the type of business being promoted by the trader. Moreover, it attracts new onlookers to step into the retail outlet. These also prove beneficial for guiding the way to the store. Symbols need to be attractive, written in legible, and even visible from a distance. To draw attentiveness, scope, form, and structure play a very significant role.

Canopies:

Canopies safeguard the purchaser from adversities of weather and help to see the window display and things tastefully decorated in-store viewing the window display especially in the scorching heat of hot summer and also reduces dazzle and reflection.

It also protects from fading from extreme sunlight. These trendy canopies might comprise of electric canopies, well-lit canopy signboards.

The entrances should not have blockages of things kept in the way which discourage purchasers from entering the stores. Another way to add attraction is wooden flooring and trendy tiles.

Landscape gardening;

The spirit of landscape gardening is uncomplicatedness; modest landscape plans which are attractive and easy to maintain serve the purpose of attracting purchasers to the stores,

Flowerpots, floret containers, and herbs used to attract the onlookers towards the store than just plain and simple areas. It also gives a refreshing and neat look to the retail outlet.

Displays in the windows:

A righteous window display augments communication of the merchandise, variety, and concept. The objective of displays in windows is to attract those who are not regular customers but fall prey to the attractiveness of retail outlet such that not giving attention becomes impossible for onlookers. A window proves to be a manageable component relative to the vision and corresponds their stock's objectives comprising of an attractive value innate through displays.

Display Window connects panache, matter, theme, and rates. Displays in the windows prove to be thrilling or founded on emotive inducement through with stimulus, or elicitation. An additional course engaged by shops that depend on the number supplied is cost-grounded marketing.

Benefits of Visual Merchandising:

Enriching knowledge of the potential purchasers regarding the product's advantages, features, usage, color availability, price range availability in a powerful manner.

Initiation of innovative Practices that intermediate to contemporary produce approving extensive influence. It attracts new onlookers to step into the retail outlet. When a customer is in the retail store,

Visual Merchandising informs, guides, and influences him to make a purchase.

Stimulating linkage of products As the viewers are inquisitive to recognize the variety and assortment of items exhibited diverse stress wants to be agreed on a shop's presentations completed in windows as the material assembly to the purchaser is conceded.

Benefits of outline site. The role of outdoor symbols is very significant it will reflect the type of business being promoted by the trader. Moreover, it attracts new onlookers to step into the retail outlet. These also prove beneficial for guiding the way to the store.

Addresses customer traffic

Addresses customer traffic provides an environment for the customer to select the merchandise as experience shopping. In modern retail, the visual merchandiser gives the merchandise a look & feels that appeals to the customer to purchase even when the customer enters the retail outlet with no prior plan to purchase. Many of the displays of Visual Merchandising are seasonal, occasional, and creative. The purpose of the Visual Merchandising displays is to add visual advantage to the products which appeal to the customer to buy.

Familiarizing with new products

The newly introduced products in the market find an easy entry when promoted through Visual Merchandising as the drive of the Visual Merchandising displays is to enhance the visual benefit to the products which fascinates the customer to get hold of.

Encourages visiting stores

A righteous window display augments communication of the merchandise, variety, and concept. The objective of displays in windows is to attract those who are not regular customers but fall prey to the attractiveness of retail outlet such that not giving attention becomes impossible for onlookers. A window proves to be a manageable component relative to the vision and corresponds their stock's objective comprising of an attractive value innate through displays.

Amuse customers for improving shopping practices

Visual Merchandising reminds and compels a customer to make a purchase. The effectively implemented Visual Merchandising strategy triggers a customer and results in an impulse buying behavior of the customer and adds to overall sales of the product.

CONCLUSION:

Visual Merchandising plays an important part. In planned purchases, Visual Merchandising helps the customer to select desired products by Visual Merchandising displays. While in non-planned purchases, Visual Merchandising reminds and compels a customer to make a purchase. The effectively implemented Visual Merchandising strategy triggers a customer and results in an impulse buying behavior of the customer and adds to overall sales of the product. Visual Merchandising is expended as an element of uniformity and point of difference in the retail industry. It works on initiating the customers to prepare prompt decision of acquisition.

The study is confined to the consumer decision-making process in the offline retail store only. Generally, the customer feels a need to be fulfilled and goes to the retail store to satisfy the needs. But now the scenario for consumer decision making has been changed due to the growth of the middle class, increase in the disposable income of the customer, availability of choices, and increase in the standard of living. Generally, the customer makes purchases in a planned and non-planned way. Visual Merchandising also gives a message from retailers to its customer regarding the merchandise it offers. Besides the quality and taste, the Visual Merchandising makes the customer feel for the product.

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