

Role Of Visual Merchandising In Retail Marketing-With Special Reference To Indian Retailers

Ravish Verma¹, Dr. Manish Gupta², Megha Bakshi³

¹Assistant Professor Mittal School of Business
Lovely Professional University

²Additional Registrar Lovely Professional University

³Assistant Professor Mittal School of Business Lovely Professional University

Email :¹ravish.19813@lpu.co.in, ²manish.gupta@lpu.co.in
³Meghabakshi17@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

Visual merchandising in the retail market sector is about the display and also the promotion of products in such a way that it will boost the sales. To make people find their suitable product with ease you have to apply the best visual merchandising technique for your store and products. There is no if and but in this that visual merchandising can be called as 'silent salesman'. Best visual merchandising technique is that technique by applying which both the sales and profit will increase which is directly dependent on the customer footfall and their experiences. A vast and dynamic visual merchandising is having a massive impact on customer coming to your store like today the resources are limited and real estate prices are going real high so it is the need of the hour that there will be proper utilisation of all resources available for this the retail managers will try to ensure this thing that every possible space in the store will be utilised. Researcher had also found that there is direct relation between people's smell and what are they smelling and it further leads to 40% conditioning of their mood when the fragrance is very pleasant. That is why the perfume industry is \$8bn worth. Smell is not only restricted to tea or coffee shops but cloth retailers are also using the power this smell factor as many stores are using air perfumes to enhance the atmosphere of the store with a very pleasant smell.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Most of the times when people hear about visual merchandising, they got a feeling about nervousness and uncomfortableness. They are very well aware about this important key aspect of retail but they are not having surety as what exactly it is and how they can apply this thing effectively in their store so as to attract more customers to the store. It also creates a problem of from where to start. If the manager is not creative and is not having financial resources available with him to create best visual appearance it will be very difficult for him to manage the show [1-6].

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salesman'. Best visual merchandising technique is that technique by applying which both the sales and profit will increase which is directly dependent on the customer footfall and their experiences. A vast and dynamic visual merchandising is having a massive impact on customer coming to your store [7-12].

Boston consultancy group in Association with the retailers Association of India has published a report, where they depicted this fact that the Retail Industry of India is worth \$700 billion. They have also depicted that this figure will cross \$1 trillion by 2020 even the growth of eCommerce India will not hamper this figure. The big retail stores which are running in India are having a strong magnet in them which will attract the customers into their stores through their remarkable visual merchandising innovations. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) Of the Indian retail sector depicts that they are having a fasting growth of 10% every year. If this growth will be continued by 2025 and every unit made was sold and properly placed in the right hands India will surpass China in terms of total turnover of retail sector [13-16].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Vijay Rathee & Chand Prakash (2017) in their paper attempted to find out the areas which focuses to know about the customer insights on visual merchandising and knowing its resultant effect on buying behaviour of the customer while doing shopping. They further explored that in the fast-moving fashion market the retailer has to take care of this thing that he is having the right product with him at the right time. Shopping is now becoming an adventure rather than being a necessity only. Retailer has to ensure that he will construct a different and consistent image in the eyes of customer and shaping his mind towards its store [14-18].

Mehta, N., & Chugan, P. K. (2019) They explored from their analysis that different age groups, income, and gender are having a very weak association with an attractive window display in the retail stores. Investigated in the study that the retailer must focus on impressive visual displays for all the people coming in the store irrespective of their gender, education and monthly income. A retailer who tries to enhance the visual display of the store it will lead to greater time spending of the consumer and will influence their impulsive buying behaviour so as they can buy more from that store [18-20].

3. VISUAL MERCHANDISING ELEMENTS:

Marketing personnel who are implementing good visual merchandising techniques will find them very easy to embark and it will cost less to their bank account with boosted up sales. Important elements of visual merchandising are as follows:

1. *Coding with Colour:* Every person is having a different mood while buying a product or while doing shopping and the important consideration in this is the colour coordination. When bright colours are used it will directly improve the display despite of the fact that product is of substandard category. Contrast colour always having a characteristic that they attract the eyes of customer towards the display of that product. It is not a general thing that only bold colour will attract the eyes sometimes a very simple black and white display also catches the eye contact.

2. *Story Telling:* Retail managers who are highly creative will add a story to their product like a company is having tag lines for its product as when you are telling a story you are like proactive is telling your customers that how this product is going to help them. While doing the story telling you have to be extra cautious as the message should be short, precise and clear to the customer and it will generate a successful lead at the end of the story. If you choose long statements or wordings which will not be clear to the customer the whole exercise of storytelling will be ineffective. For this you have to take care of that your statements should be short and not cross 3 statements or you can use bullets with your words to communicate your visual merchandising story.
3. *Proper Space Utilisation:* As today the resources are limited and real estate prices are going real high so it is the need of the hour that there will be proper utilisation of all resources available for this the retail managers will try to ensure this thing that every possible space in the store will be used but this did not mean this thing that you can use space in such a manner that your store will look confined and less spacious and customer cannot roam around freely in the store [12-15]. You have to be extra cautious while allocating a space for visual merchandising of the product. Due diligence should be taken care off that it should not be like that to use every inch of the store you are confining the space between two products or narrow down the passage for customers. They can also use some graphics to showcase the present season products according to the environment for winters you can use dark graphics but for summer you cannot use these as it will spoil the mood of the customer. You can display someone surfing on the water alongside the picture of a beach in summer season to attract more customers as it will be with a light theme and the colour selection will be eye catching.
4. *Focal Length:* A study shows that focal points and hot spots in a store can increase sale by 229%, retailer has to pick that point in the store where customer eye is having an eye-catching view [11-14]. You will put your desired product which will fetch maximum profits to you over their as customer will notice that product and chances of being selected for shopping will increase but there is exception to this element if you create many hot spots like this in your store it will create a confusion to the customer that which way to look and which product to be focused upon. To curb this problem put your feet into the shoes of the customer and look where that customer will look first while entering or roaming in the store to assess your best visual merchandising area. Then you will cross check that whether your main product is visible from different areas of the store or not by this you can make your product the central point of attraction in the store and chances of its sales will increase.
5. *Smell:* Researcher had found that there is direct relation between people's smell and what are they smelling and it further leads to 40% conditioning of their mood when the fragrance is very pleasant. That is why the perfume industry is \$8bn worth. Smell is not only restricted to tea or coffee shops but cloth retailers are also using the power this smell factor as many stores are using air perfumes to enhance the atmosphere of the store with a very pleasant smell.
6. *Lighting Intensity:* The intensity of the lighting in the store also affects visual merchandising factor and it affects the mood of the person visiting the store. Too bright lights will make the modern feel and it is used in stores especially selling consumer durables, electronics & Car showrooms. Where soft lights give a very cool ambiance like it is used in restaurants, pubs and hotels. Your retail brand is also being reflected

with the colour you are using. Bright lights and bold colours can also be used to highlight the display of your product.

7. *Music:* To make a good atmosphere in your store one must use soft or light music as it impacts the mood of the customer, as when the customer is coming from outside he may be irritated or having a bad mood but listening to the soft music will change his mind and mood and chances of this stay in the store will increase and which ultimately boost the sales figure for your product. Only thing to keep in consideration is that you had to choose the right volume and equaliser setting according to the type of product you are selling, time during the day and product you are pitching.
8. *Other Factors like Material:* While doing visual merchandising you have to keep other factors in regard like material in the store, here material in the store is not only related to the product but also takes into consideration the following materials:
 - I. Signs
 - II. Window Displays
 - III. Lighting
 - IV. Tiles
 - V. Carpet
 - VI. Marbles
 - VII. Furniture in the store

4. STRATEGIES TO MAKE VISUAL MERCHANDISING A SUCCESS:

To make visual merchandising successful you have to take care of some points in addition to the elements of visual merchandising listed above to grab more attention from the customers visiting the store and also those who are going to visit so as maximum sales can be brought into picture. These additional points to maximise the retail sales are as under:

1. *Colour combination inside the store:* Colour is a very powerful tool to maximise the sales of a product but here the colour is for the colour combination used in the store decoration. There are chances that there will be erratic display by the retailer but if the colour combination goes well then display will be a success. You have to choose proper colour scheme to enhance the visual merchandising for example you may have a leather couch in brown colour but light colour cream colour pillows are very eye catching on that likewise your store colour combination will also make the products eye catching.
2. *Paint a picture:* Often customers are having a tendency that they buy that product easily when they see the depicting picture of that product in the store that how it looks like when they put this product at home or when they are going to use that product. For example in case of a clothing store they project the famous brand or highest selling cloth in trend on the wall with the help of picture of models wearing that cloth or attire this helps the customer in creating a projection in their mind that how that cloth is going to work on them when they are going to wear it. Another policy of the stores like Jack and Jones or Tommy Hilfiger are they are making their sales personnel wear the cloths in trend so as the customer will have a live look of the product they are going to purchase and make up their final mind to purchase the same. Furniture showrooms are projecting dummy living or master bed rooms so as customer will feel how this product is going to look at their home.

3. *Segmenting different areas of the store:* Customer will feel irritated when they don't know in the store where to go for their right product so to solve this problem retail owners can segment their store in such a manner that customer can easily get to know that here is men, womens, kids section , footwear or stationary section as it will create a ease for the customer and if the customer is coming in a group or with family then all of them can direct themselves to the right section according to their need which will save time and efforts of them and will enhance the sales of the store through proper visual merchandising for this glow signs, bold signs, wall hangings or sales assistant can be used.
4. *Use of Art:* While visiting a boutique, cafe and hotels you may find beautiful sculptures and paintings over the purpose of which is to make a memorable experience for the customer. In the era of social media people while visiting anyplace put the pictures of that place on social media. For example, while visiting a hotel primary thing has to be eating something but nowadays primary thing is going to that hotel where pictures were well taken so as they can post them on social media and gain likes or popularity so retailers also has to understand this thing and make their store eye catching with these art, sculptures or paintings.
5. *Grouping Products Together:* Like it was earlier shared about the story telling element of visual merchandising now it is the time to make it happen in creative manner today customers are happy in purchasing those products which came in combinations known as combos. Retailer's just have to focus on this thing that they have to group together the products which are related to each other for example in the winter season if a customer is coming to buy a blazer then along with blazers their will be a space for hanging tie/muffler/hat/cap etc as these are frequently bought products with the main product. These products are also known as complimentary products.
6. *Use of Flowers:* Most of the people love flowers as they give calmness and happiness to one when feeling the appearance and fragrance of the same. You may use flower pots or bouquets with natural or artificial flowers nicely placed in the stores so as customers will feel their presence and it will change the mood of that person towards a positive impact of store and finally resulting in maximising sales figure.
7. *Social Medial Language as an Effective Tool:* People nowadays are under the influence of social media and are using short and impactful brief language. This is happening because they spend most of the time on surfing internet and on social media which reduces their memory power in memorising long messages and numbers etc so retailers and companies are now using social media language like for printing t-shirts using the words how's d josh, M up! , hw's U etc. it is an smart idea for the store managers also that to gain the attention of the customers they can use these words in their store to depict the product or product category. This type of usage of language will give a sense of familiarity especially among the new generation people called as Gen Z. Using hashtags in the store will also increase your store name visibility on social media for example trending #fashion_Villa store name will trend its name on social media when somebody will search for fashion on internet. It is also called as search engine optimisation.

8. *Seasonal items to be kept upfront:* Seasonal items according to the prevailing season must be kept at front in the store for example at prime location of the store or at window display so as it will be visited to the commuters and customers visiting the store and create an urge to buy that product. For example in the days of valentine week a gift gallery will showcase teddy, chocolates, heart shape soft toys in front according the day of the valentine week so as prospective customer when enter the store will buy that product easily by looking them at the prime location of the store. Keeping season items at upfront will make the people visit your store around the year as they found their stuff visible.
9. *Utilise the cash counter of store properly:* while doing shopping in the stores or shopping malls people usually stand in lines near the point of sale or cash counter for some minutes so retailers will use this time to make the people do last minute purchases these products are of very less value like putting chocolates, candies, socks, chips, key chains etc near the cash counter so as when people are waiting they will purchase these things especially kids pressurise their parents to buy those stuff for them. This is an addon benefit to the retailer as these sales figures also counts in the final sales projection and margin in these products is also very high.
10. *Price Tagging & Scanners:* Installing good quality bar code scanners, prize tagging machines and virtual product look equipment in the store is a time saving option, many customers will not make up their mind when they do not know the prize of the product. Every product must have price indicated on it so as customer will make a quick decision when it feels like it is in the budget and then scanning that price tag with the help of bar code scanner will save the time and efforts of the sales personnel while making the final bill as scanning of various products is very easy with these scanner and if the budget of a customer exceeds for the products he choose he can skip some of the products again by making a request to sales personnel to delete that entry from the system and final bill is now in accordance with the budget planned.

5. CONCLUSION:

Visual merchandising is all about creating a novelty in your store through some creative steps which will change the behaviour of the person coming to store for shopping. Either you are having a small store or big retail store creating an ambiance and good atmosphere for the customer is must and that can be achieved with creative imagination of the people working in your store or you as yourself. By giving this personal touches and rather inexpensive creativities will add wonders to your sales figures and customer will love to shop in your store when they are having a comfortable experience of shopping.

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