



VISUAL MERCHANDISING –AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Indian retail industry is one of the largest growing industry in Indian economy. The retail industry in India has undergone a major transformation in recent years with a shift towards organized retailing. Retailing in India accounts to about 10% of GDP and 8% of employment. India is fifth largest retail destination in the world. In India organized retail contributes to about 8% of total retail trade. Since 2000 Indian retail industry is registering a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 7.45 %. In western countries visual merchandising is of prime focus in selling the product. In India as the concept of organized retailing increases visual merchandising has gained its importance. In current competitive market retailers are facing so much of competition and they find it difficult to differentiate their product offerings. In such case visual merchandising is a tool to differentiate the products in cut-throat competition. In today's

information world consumers are very much aware of global trends and they expect the same kind of environment in the retail outlets. Visual merchandising is the tool to enhance the aesthetics of the store and it promises good experience to the customers from store front to inside the store. Visual merchandising is used by retailers for engaging and inspiring customers. Visual merchandising is both art and science of displaying products in an attractive manner to increase sales. visual merchandising helps in upsurge of brand image and store image.

Keywords : visual merchandising, brand image, store image, Retailing.

Introduction

Visual merchandising is one of the major tool in retail industry. When retail industry is flooded with so much of identical merchandise, VM is the tool used to differentiate the product to enable sales. Visual merchandising is arrangement of merchandise in a neat, synchronized and attractive manner to encourage sales. Visual merchandising helps a brand to differentiate from its competitors. Visual merchandising helps to create brand loyalty. Visual merchandising not only helps to differentiate the product alone but also one store from another. Visual merchandising can also be described as presentation of store and its merchandise in a unique manner to attract sales. Visual merchandising helps to display the image of the store which the store wants to reflect. In toy store visual merchandising is used to create demand by its strategic displays. Visual merchandising helps in increasing sales per square feet.

Visual merchandising helps to increase the aesthetics of product and store with intent to increase sales. Retailer's greatest asset is stock. Stocks should be properly displayed to enable customers to buy the product. Designer's job is to design an attractive product to the customer as in case of apparel retail. Visual merchandising through its planogram and strategic display helps the products to be displayed in an appealing manner to attract sales. Due to emergence of malls, hypermarkets and changing trends visual merchandising is becoming popular nowadays. The retailers of malls change window displays every week due to gushing crowd in the weekend. The new generation retailers start to understand the necessary of visual merchandising and started incorporating in their stores. Visual merchandising helps the products to get neatly occupied in commercial space. Signage and graphics inside the store provides information to the customers

and motivates customers to buy the product. In-store graphics inside the store provides information to the customer about seasonal displays.

Importance of Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising, the growing technique is important in retail industry for the following reasons

- Visual merchandising is used to attract customers and engage customers inside the store to make potential purchase
- Visual merchandising helps to increase sales per square feet. If sales per square feet is increased profit margin of the store is also increased
- It creates a lasting first impression to the customers. Visual merchandising helps the passerby to enter the eat store through its neat exterior atmosphere. Neat and appealing entrance, parking lot and unique window display motivates passerby to enter the store and ultimately converting into customers.

Eg: In apparel and textile shops window display plays a major role for a passerby to decide which store to enter.

- Seasonal displays helps to showcase the new arrivals in the store which gives customers idea about items sold in the store.
- Visual merchandising elements like music, lighting and good aroma helps the customers to stay more time inside the store and ultimately leading to impulse purchase.
- Discount offers for certain products are highlighted through proper and informative display.
- Visual merchandising creates awareness about the product and increases brand loyalty.
- Visual merchandising gives customers a good brand experience.

Eg: A new cosmetic product can vitrine its product through colorful displays, beautiful signages and edgy models to attract youths. A good brand experience enables customers to purchase the product in future.

- Visual merchandising conveys customer value of the product displayed, its brand image and concept of the display.
- Visual merchandising eliminates the time wastage by helping the customers to locate the product easily.
- Good visual merchandising eliminates time wastage for customers by providing proper information, direction through signage and graphics. It also helps customer to stay more time inside the store through attractive display, pleasant environment and brings repeat customers to the store.

Need For Visual Merchandising

In the cut throat competition retailers are finding difficult to differentiate their product offering from one another. Retailers are finding difficult to inspire and engage the customers. Customer engagement process starts even before customer enter the store so it is imperative for the retailers to convert walkers into stoppers and ultimately into customers. Visual merchandising techniques are used by the retailers to set their store distinctive from competition. Repeat purchase by the customers happen only when the customer's first experience is a memorable one. It is always said that "First Impression is Best Impression". Visual merchandising creates a lasting first impression in the minds of the customer. Visual merchandising is used to display product in such a way that its unique selling proportion is clearly displayed.

Visual merchandising is helpful in attracting new customers to the store and makes old customers feel good about the place where they are doing shopping. Visual merchandising techniques result in impulse purchase by the customer. A well designed store with pleasant environment makes the customer stay more time inside the store. If customer stays more time inside the store more purchase will be made. Visual merchandising makes shopping easy and enjoyable to the customers. Visual merchandising is used to convert onlookers into buyers. Visual merchandising helps customers to easily locate the product eliminating the time wastage. Visual merchandising techniques help to increase the sale of unsought goods. Visual merchandising is used for space planning by the retailer. Introducing technology in visual merchandising is going to take shopping in India to next higher level.

Visual Merchandising in India

Visual merchandising is developed well in western countries. Visual merchandising in India is still at the nascent stage. Only big cities started using visual merchandising in India. Increasing number of organized retail outlets, change in consumption pattern, increased consumer expectation, more access to global brands by customers, emergence of malls and hypermarkets, developing infrastructure, more number of youth population, dual income in households increasing the consumption power are the reason for retailer's interest in visual merchandising. In small retail outlets visual merchandising is all about window display. Understanding of visual merchandising by small retailers is still low in India.

The entry of MNC in India has taken retail to higher levels. India is a country where people give more importance to food and clothing which leads to many number of shop keepers. Visual merchandising is an important element in merchandise planning, store planning, store display, in-store branding and promotions. Global trends of visual merchandising do impact the Indian retail market which can be understood by presentations and importance to visual merchandising in malls and hypermarkets. Due to FDI in India, India is now flooded with so much of identical international products and it becomes imperative for the Indian retailers to implement visual merchandising for differentiating the brands. Good retail design and visual merchandising brings customer loyalty to the store. In India apparels, textiles, food sector and fashion outlets are well developed in visual merchandising but other products are on their way. Consumers shopping behavior and lifestyle are changing, retailers should satisfy consumer expectations, Rather than simply implementing western ideas in Indian market. Food and beverage industry in India triggers customer emotions to buy the product through wonderful display and activate senses through good aroma. In most of the departmental and super stores in India food sector is placed at the entrance of the store which simulate shopper senses to buy the product. It triggers the hunger of the customers and creates need to buy the product. Visual merchandising provides customer a superior shopping experience. Many consumer behavior studies have proved that a well-designed store with show window, attractive colors and display do affect consumer buying behavior in a positive manner.

Visual Merchandising in Malls

In India big cities like Mumbai, pune, Bangalore, Chennai has malls with multiple outlets where visual merchandisers design the store. When youngsters enter the store they are attracted by the window displays which pull them inside the store and make them to do impulse purchase. In big cities like pune they have hypermarkets like big bazaar, star bazaar and D-Mart which provides one stop shopping experience for the customers. Visual merchandisers arrange the store in an attractive , informative and pleasant manner so that customer spends more time inside the store which facilitates them to make impulse purchase and build brand loyalty.

Home Town



Fig 1:The picture shows the window display of Home Town shop in Amanora Mall, pune. Window display clearly explains the product available in the store and name board of the store is written in native language to attract the customers.

Pantaloon India

Pantaloon fashion retail limited is one of the India's leading retail outlet headquartered in Mumbai. pantaloons fashion store is always a trendsetter for how fashion is followed internationally.



Fig 2: shows how neatly merchandise is arranged with good color combination in a pantaloons store.



Fig 3: shows window display of pantaloons store in season's mall, pune. Display clearly explains the new arrivals of summer outfits for women.

Reliance Trends



Fig 4: shows the display of new arrival in Reliance Trends



Fig 5: shows display of offers to attract customers

Lakme Salon



Fig 6 : shows information delivered to customers through posters at the billing kiosk



Fig 7 : shows visual display board providing information to the customers about the shops available in various floor inside the mall

Adidas

Adidas is a German multinational company operating in India in products like footwear, sports equipment and sportswear.



Fig 8: showing Adidas spring blade shoe display at retail outlet (fig derived from google)

Figure shows beautifully arranged point of purchase display at an adidas retail outlet. The table display beautifully highlights the blades of shoe and represents forward energy for running. Showcase displays complementary colored running shoes sat on the top of clear plastic stand.

Conclusion

Visual merchandising is required to portray the brand image and store image. It helps in organizing the store and makes the shopping experience convenient and pleasant. Visual merchandising educates the customer about products and services offered by the store in a better manner. Visual merchandising not only helps the customers alone, it also helps salesman to perform the sales activity efficiently and provide better service to the customers. Visual merchandising helps customers to get the product information and it also satisfies the recreational factors by providing enjoyable shopping experience.

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