

ABi's series of 'Fact Sheets for Retailers' provide concise information on the key topic areas that impact on business success within the retail environment. Each fact sheet highlights the key issues and provides practical advice on the given topic.

If you would like any further advice on any issues relating to this fact sheet then please contact us. We will be delighted to help.

ABi Associates Limited is recognised by clients, businesses and agencies as one of the country's leading business development companies. We have over ten years of experience and expertise in providing business support to small businesses to help them succeed and grow.

Today's fast paced, competitive and chaotic consumer world provides a multitude of challenges for retailers. ABi offers a diverse range of unique, innovative and tailored business services to meet these challenges. These services include business diagnostics, training, sign posting, market planning, specialist consultancy and networking events. Whatever your business challenge, we will show you a way of meeting it effectively.

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## Visual Merchandising: Dressing Your Business For Success

Is your business looking its best to attract customers? This Fact Sheet is designed to help retailers discover more about visual merchandising and get some fresh ideas on using great displays to increase business throughout the year.

### So what is 'Visual Merchandising'?

Visual Merchandising (VM) is one of the most important issues for small businesses. It is something that can actually make you money. It helps you to present your business, products and/or services at their best. It also helps attract new customers and retain existing ones.

### It includes:

- window dressing and
- in-store displays.

Also, as a retailer, you have to consider:

**Customer flow** around your premises - the way they move around your business changes how much they spend.

**Customer psychology** - think about how customers feel in your environment? Is it a comfortable one? Are staff polite?

**Your business identity** (logos and branding) - have your branding around at eye level. Also have it on your packaging so customers take it away with them.

**Customer loyalty** - this can be built up in different ways e.g. giving points/ stamps on a card for purchases, or other offers. Think how you are going to encourage customers to come back.

What are the benefits of good visual merchandising?

- Increasing footfall for the business.
- Creating customer loyalty.
- Improving the shopping environment.
- Raising the expectation of customers.
- Increasing turnover.



Get Noticed! - Effective VM can transform your Business Look.

## **Eight Top Tips For Using Visual Merchandising**

### **1. Put someone in charge of housekeeping**

Cleanliness starts when the customer is outside - you can't get away with dirty windows. Inside, keep display areas spotlessly clean. This includes products, mannequins, shelves, props, floors, walls and more.

### **2. Take another look at display areas**

Do you know where these are for your premises? Make the most of your window - it's like a poster for your business. Think about the area behind the till and, if people are sitting down, the area around them. When customers are queuing, it's a time when they may impulse buy.

### **3. Creating displays - think about composition**

There are different ways of creating your displays - always have a focal point.

Give products room to breathe - don't fill all the display space with them.

People browse a lot more quickly these days so make sure they can get information from your window display fast.

### **4. Use colour effectively**

Only have three main colours in your display (black, white and grey can be used with these). Consider what's popular.

### **5. Invest in decent mannequins**

Old mannequins don't do you any favours because they don't show off your products to best effect.

Make sure clothes are fitted well on them - use clips/pins if necessary at the back so the clothes look neat at the front. If you use pins, be careful and only pin through the stitching.

### **6. Bright ideas on lighting**

Use lighting to highlight the display area. Spotlights can be good for this.

Direct the light onto the front of the product/signage. Change broken bulbs immediately.

### **7. Be creative with themes**

Use a calendar to plan displays - and think ahead for maximum creativity. Ask family and friends to help you. You might choose themes around seasonal or sporting events or holidays.

Don't copy - merchandising is all about making your business stand out.

### **8. Be brief on signage**

You have to give people information really quickly - use a maximum of six words on a promotional sign or A board.

Use the same typeface and layout for all your signage.

Use your branding on signs so people can remember where they've been and can recommend you to others.

### **Some final do's and don't's**

- DON'T have dirty display areas.
- DON'T copy your neighbours' ideas.
- DO use your imagination.
- DO stick to the rules.
- DO change your displays regularly.

If your business looks good, your customers will notice and sales will increase. You need to refresh it all the time - there's no room for stale retailing. And if you're going to succeed, you have to be individual.

ABI produce a range of fact sheets for small businesses. If you would like further fact sheets from the series please contact **ABI** on **020 8438 4550**

*This Fact sheet is based on a talk given by Paula Reidy, Inpsyde Ltd*  
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