

WINDOW DISPLAY- AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Window display is one of the techniques of visual merchandising in which merchandise of the store is displayed in the store window. Visual merchandising is presenting the store and its products in a neat and attractive manner to increase sales. Window display is very important tool because it creates lasting first impression in the minds of the customers. People hardly give 2-2.5 seconds of their time to see the window display. Retailers or visual merchandisers should design the window in such a way that within those seconds they should convert the onlookers into customers. Window display clearly tells what the store is selling. Window display conveys what customer can expect from the store. Window display is the first contact between customer and store. Attractive and informative window display has the ability to convert onlookers into potential customers. Window display saves the time of the customers by providing information about the products sold in the store thus enabling decision making simple for the customers. Window display helps in generating interest and curiosity of the customers about the product and brand offered by the store. Store window is the important external atmospheric variable reason for impulse purchase of the customers. previous researches does not throw light on window display more which is often an less observed external atmospheric variable in purchase decision. Recently many researchers have understood the importance of window display in purchase decision. This paper discuss about overview of window display, its importance, types, window display effect on impulse purchase, its importance in visual merchandising and guidelines for designing an effective window display.

IndexTerms - window Display, Visual Merchandising, Impulse Purchase, External Atmosphere, Purchase Decision.

I. Introduction

Window display attracts potential customers inside the store thus reducing the workload of sales people by saving their time. Initial interest to enter the store is created by window display. In developed countries window display is designed by visual merchandisers or window display designers. In India it is still at the developing side. Only big cities with malls make use of visual merchandisers. In some stores window is designed by retailer itself. Window display creates interest to the passer by and initiate desire to enter the store and buy the product. Window display should be changed frequently according to seasons, new arrivals and occasions. Window display displayed for longer time creates boredom to the customers. Window display should be neat and attractive with proper lighting. Eye catching window display grabs people attention and helps in building brand recognition. The information consumers get from store windows are about product information, new arrivals, promotional messages and store image. Window display is an external environment factor which creates quick impression about the product, brand and helps in decision making process. Customer attracted by window display enters into store to acquire more information about the product displayed in the window and to make use of offers displayed in the window.

II. Importance of Window Display

- Window display is most important element of visual merchandising because it has potential to attract new customers for the store.
- Attractive window display creates desire of the products to the customers thus helps in making sales.

- Enabling technology in window display such as motion sensors engage onlookers and create interest to them to enter the store.
- Window display gives clear image of the brand.
- Sometimes an attractive window display is memorable for the customers and they feel happy for doing business in such a place.
- Window display helps in targeting correct shoppers for the store.
- Store window is capable of generating affective and cognitive response through attractive display and information.
- Retailers use window display as a sales promotion and advertising medium.

III. Types of Window Display

The different types of window display are

- Closed window – The window looks like a small room facing the audience from the street. It consist of glass in the front and covered at the back
- Semi closed window – It consist of large glass panel at the front and they are semi-covered at the back so that part of store is visible to the customers
- Open windows –In open windows there is no glass panel
- Open back windows – It consist of glass at the front and open at the back without wall
- Showcase windows- They are small windows placed only at the eye level
- Elevated windows – windows are placed at higher level which are either closed or open
- Corner windows – corner windows as the name suggest it is placed at the corner of the store which will be visible from two directions
- Island windows – windows are located at the lobby of the big store
- Shadow boxes – These windows looks like boxes used for displaying cosmetics and jewellery.

IV. Window Display and Consumer Shopping Decisions

Window display is one of the key instruments of retailer's communication strategy. Window display has the ability to draw customer inside the store. Consumers acquire store related information, product related information from window display and they decide store entry decision based on information acquired. Sometimes consumers look at store windows as leisure activity for having fun and for feeling good. Consumers get information like new arrivals, latest trends and discounts from store windows. Promotional information acquired from the store window helps them to make store entry decision which helps in impulse purchase. Customers acquire store related information like brand, quality, and price of the product in the store. It helps in creating store image in the minds of customers. When many stores sell same type of merchandise at the same place consumers shopping decision in a particular store will be based on information acquired from the window about the product and over all store image. Generally consumers who acquire product category related information are more likely to make purchase in the store than the customers who make entry decision based on store image.

Product related information

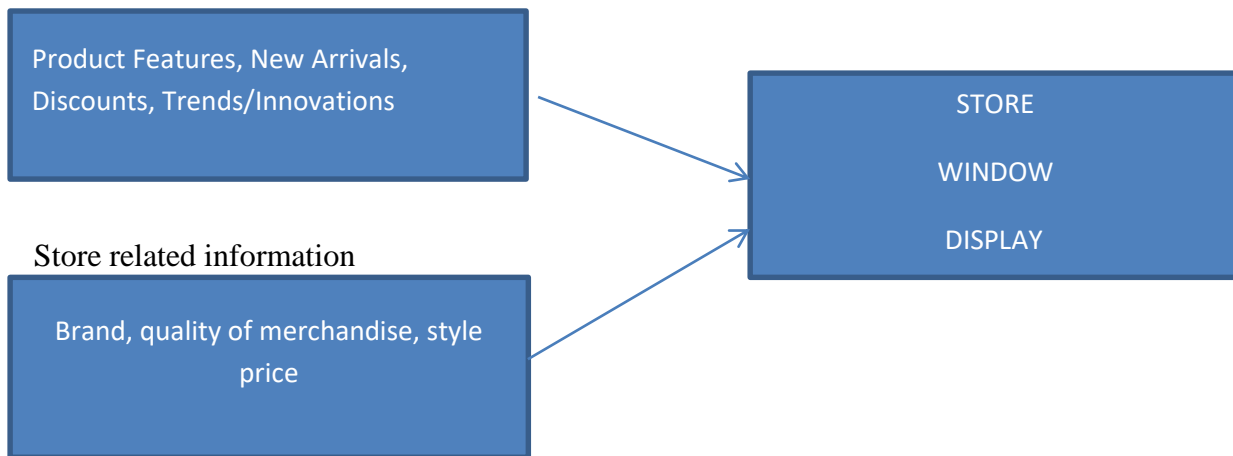


Fig showing information acquired from the store window

V. Window display and visual merchandising

Visual merchandising is arranging merchandise of the store and stores itself in a decorative way to increase sales. End purpose of visual merchandising is making the sale. Attractive and informative window display grabs the customer's attention and encourages customer to enter the store. Window display is the important external environment variable of visual merchandising which communicates store message to the customers at the entry itself. Window display is considered as eye of the store. Window display is the first visual merchandising element customer encounters. Window display helps in creating interest for the customers in merchandise and service. Visual merchandising has immediate effect on customer decision making process. Visual merchandising comprises store exterior and store interior. Physically attractive stores are mostly preferred by customers. In case of apparel stores, mannequins in the window display helps customers to choose the store. Customers assume and decide the type of apparel present inside the store looking at mannequins. Window display attracts customers to enter the store, in-store displays compel customers to look at more products and sales people close the sale.

VI. Creating an Effective Window Display

Window display is one of the important weapons to stand out from the competitor. Attractive and unique window display is effective in differentiating from other competitors and drive foot traffic. In small shops window display is designed by retailer itself.

Few tips can be followed for creating a compelling window display

- Purpose of the display should be planned. Whether the display is for message, announcing sale, new arrivals or promotion.
- Signage should be clear and easily available. Proper colours and lighting helps customers to look at signage easily from the street.
- Themes with storytelling attract customers. Background for display should be decided. Display with background looks attractive. Display without background helps customers to look at other products inside the store.
- Create a focal point in the windows where customer looks at. Important products should be displayed at the focal point. Central point of display should be big enough to catch shopper's attention even from other side of the street.
- Window display should have bold colours, props and shapes

- Window display should be simple. Complicated display does not attract customer's attention. While designing windows display, goal should be kept in the mind and the products should be designed according to the goal.
- Balance the window display. Suppose many items are to be placed in the window the heavier, darker items are placed at the bottom and colourful, lighter items are placed at the top.
- Lighting is important because it is the important technique getting people to stop and have a look at display. Lighting helps in creating moods and highlights important products.
- Window display should be clean and not cluttered.
- Build the brand with the help of window display. Eg: dark colour for teenage apparel store representing youthfulness, mild and appeasing colour for baby shops.
- Displays in the windows should be updated. Change the window display in few weeks because customer gets bored seeing the same window display for months. Frequent changing of window display helps in more customers looking at the store.

VII. Conclusion

The fierce competition put so much stress on retailers to ensure that their store is different among competitors and attractive to the customer. In such cases store itself is a market differentiation tool. Window display creates first impression in the minds of customer which reflects store image and provides store entry decision. Window display is an external environmental stimulus which helps in attracting customers at the first level. Window display helps in pulling the customers in the door and impulse purchase occurs with in-store stimulus. Window display helps customers to make store entry decisions at façade level. Properly set window displays attract customers at the store front, make them enter the store; generate traffic leading to purchase decision.

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