

**21st April 2020**

## **What is Visual Merchandising?** **Definition and Objectives**

### **Impulse Purchases**

Imagine that you are strolling along a boardwalk when a bakery captures your attention. As you get closer, you see in the window an array of mouthwatering pastries artfully stacked on rustic wooden trays. Beside them are baskets full of baguettes and handwritten signs that read, "Hand-made" and "Baked fresh daily". Although you're not hungry, you can't resist the temptation. On the spur of the moment, you purchase a box of pastries.

This is the power of visual merchandising. In this lesson, we'll review what visual merchandising is and why it's used. We'll also review some of the most common types of visual merchandising.

### **Visual Merchandising Defined**

**Visual merchandising** is presenting or displaying products in a way that makes them visually appealing and desirable. Things like themed window displays, dressed mannequins, the arrangement of running shoes on a wall, and fresh fruits organised by colour are all examples of visual merchandising. It can also be as simple as stacking toilet paper into a pyramid or as elaborate as recreating a scene from a fairytale. The point here is, visual merchandising is all about using artistic product displays to capture the attention and interest of shoppers.

***This eye-catching display uses colours, mannequins, props, and images to increase the visual appeal of the clothes being sold.***



It's often said that visual merchandising is both an art and a science. Do you know why? It's art because there are visual elements; it uses lines, colours, lighting, proportions, and spacing to create beautiful and balanced presentations. It's also a science because it has a specific purpose and uses concepts from psychology to influence a shopper's emotions and purchasing behaviour.

## **The Objectives of Visual Merchandising**

When it comes to visual merchandising, there's more than meets the eye. Product displays don't just look pretty for the sake of looking pretty. There is a specific purpose for why they look the way they do.

The primary goal of visual merchandising is to attract shoppers and increase sales. Yes, it's that simple, yet incredibly important. Thus, an effective visual merchandising

strategy should draw shoppers into the store and keep them in there long enough to buy something.

Research has shown that most shoppers actually make most of their purchasing decisions while they are inside the store. As you can see, this makes visual merchandising a powerful marketing tool, one that can influence both impressionable and impulsive shoppers. So how do retailers accomplish this? They use certain shapes, colors, lighting, imagery, and other design elements in their product displays to create positive emotional experiences that can motivate a shopper to spend more.

Some retailers, like IKEA, use immersive product displays throughout their store. This increases the chance of an impulse, or unplanned, buy. Your intention might have been to buy a lamp, but you end up leaving with a dining room set. Did you really need to buy it? Not really. But you were in a good mood, and the set will look just as fantastic in your apartment as it did in the showroom.

The secondary goal of visual merchandising is to create brand identity. When shoppers enter a store, they should know exactly where they are. For instance, a luxury clothing store might have elegant tables displaying a few shirts neatly folded, subtle colours, and soft lighting. Thus, an effective visual merchandising strategy should also harmonies all elements of a design within a store into a unified store image. So everything from the product displays to the store layout and atmosphere should complement one another.