

# MANAGEMENT OUTLOOK

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WINDOW DISPLAY - THE RETAIL MANTRA

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Window display is the fine art of displaying store merchandise in the store window. Window display is emerging as the new mantra in retail and is fast changing from a dull, uninteresting exhibition of wares in the store window to a dynamic form of advertising. Retailers are recognizing the importance of window display as the first point of contact between the store and the customer and a chance to create the most critical first impression on the customer. Developed countries look at window display as a critical tool of marketing; however, in India, it is still an emerging concept.

## Importance of window display

Window display is more than just a display of wares. It is a unique form of advertising. As stated earlier, it is the first contact point between the store and the customer. It defines the store and gives an idea of what the store is all about to the customer. It determines whether the customer will walk into the store or walk away from it. It is an effective tool to use when the image of the store needs to be changed. Window display can be used as a

means to portray seasonal merchandise. Window display can convey what age group or income group of customers the store caters to.

With the rising level of economic growth in the country, the level of disposable income of the customers is rising. This has, in turn, led to tough competition among the retailers. In this cut-throat competition, those retailers win who are able to attract and sustain the attention of the customers. Unique and effective window displays play an important role in this regard. It is essential for all kinds of stores in the modern

times, ranging from the smallest to the largest.

Done properly, window display can attract more customers than a hoarding or a television advertisement. Moreover, it can attract the right kind of customers. In other words, window display acts as a filter. Only those customers enter the store who have a fair idea of what products it stocks and are interested in buying them. A lot of time and energy of the salesmen is saved as they need not concentrate on customers who might not be potential buyers.

Window display makes the decision making



process of the customer rather simple. Based on the window display, the customer can easily decide whether he wants to enter the store or not. Hence, window display also helps the customer by preventing unnecessary consumption of energy and time. There is no substantive evidence to indicate that window display leads to an increase in sales. However, a number of cases have been noted wherein customers have undertaken impulse buying under the influence of attractive window display.

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Creativity plays a very important role in window dressing, but at the same time, business acumen is also required in order to make it effective. The window display should be designed in a way that attracts customers, rather than looking like a piece of art. The window display designer should design the window in the best way possible within the budget fixed for the same by the retailer. Retailers in developed countries spend large amounts on window displays, but Indian retailers lag behind in this respect.

### Emerging trends

Window designers are now experimenting with concepts to try to attract and hold the attention of the customers. One of these concepts is the use of smell. In biscuit and cake shops, the windows are linked to nearby bakeries through pipelines. Whenever a customer looks at the window display, the fragrance of fresh bakery products is released. Similarly, apparel retailers are also making use of the fragrance of freshly laundered clothes in designing window displays. Some retailers are making use of motion to attract customers.

As more and more retailers are realizing the importance of window display, a new class of professionals called window display designers have come into existence. These professionals work full-time with large business houses, while they work on a con-

tractual basis with small firms. The work of a window display designer requires a lot of creativity and a good aesthetic sense as well as patience, hard work and a fair idea of market trends and customer behavior. Moreover, they should also possess a good flair for communication as they are required to communicate extensively with store managers and owners regarding the image they wish to portray through the store. Knowledge of fields such as graphic design, fine arts, construction, carpentry, architecture and lighting is an added advantage for a window display designer.

### Conclusion

Window display is being largely accepted as a marketing tool for attracting potential customers, though it is still an emerging concept in India and other developing countries. An expert window display designer can make the window display more effective than any form of advertisement. The following suggestions

can be made to increase the effectiveness of window display:

Instead of a haphazard arrangement of products, a window display would be more effective if it is based on a certain theme.

A simple and uncluttered display would be much more effective and would be more aesthetically appealing as compared to a cluttered one.

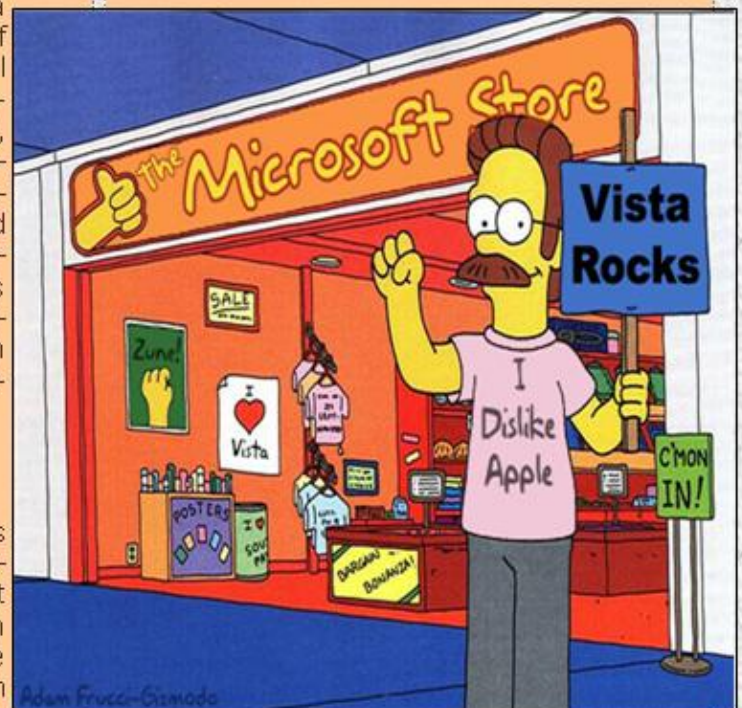
The display should be changed from time to time so as to avoid monotony.

Bright lights can be made use of to make the display effective. Individual items in the display can be highlighted using separate lights, which would help in making the display more forceful.

Proper color and shape co-ordination would go a long way towards increasing the attractiveness of the window display.

The window display should be properly matched with the other displays inside the store. Moreover, it should be representative of the wares in the store.

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