

Effective Visual Merchandising for Main Street Merchants

Tips for Better Storefront Displays



8 Seconds: A store has less than 8 Seconds to attract a potential customer as he or she is walking past a store, so a good display is needed. A good display gets *Attention*, creates *Interest* in a product, generating the *Desire* for the product, leading to the *Action* of walking into the store.

First Impressions: Attractive store displays attract customers so make sure windows are clean, have interesting and organized displays, places to sit.

Avoid: dirty windows, worn carpet, trash and debris, empty storefronts, highly reflective or darkly tinted windows, backs of window displays. People are wary of entering spaces where they cannot see into or where they feel uncomfortable.



Be a Good Neighbor: Main Street merchants should see themselves as part of a group and work together to promote each other, not as competition. How the neighbor's store looks affects your store and vice versa.

Keep it simple: Show some of the store's merchandise, enough to let the customer know what the store sells. Too many items make it hard to comprehend.



Keep it clean inside and out. Take a look at the store from across the street. How does it look? Are the windows sparkling? Is the entry floor and sidewalk free of debris? Does the planter need new plants? Is the bench in good condition? Be sure to dust and vacuum display areas regularly.

Quality signage: A sign says everything about the business: what it sells, what quality, what attitude. Is it too big/small? Is it readable? Does it obscure merchandise? A quality sign is one of the best investments a business can make. Does your Main Street program offer sign grants? Display business hours, phone numbers, address separately from the business sign.

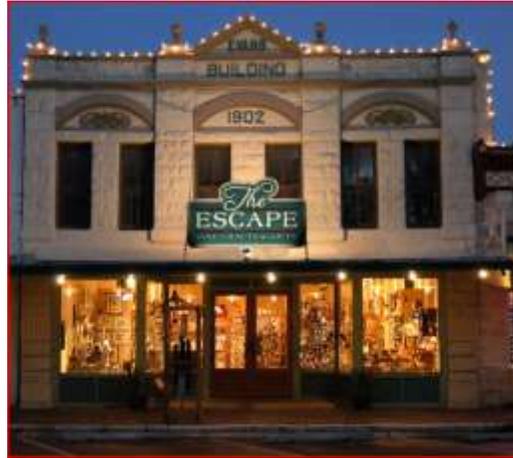


Displays: Change displays frequently as that raises interest by pedestrians and vehicles and prevents sun damage. Use the whole window, not just the bottom part, by using props. Incorporate local or holiday/seasonal themes.



Lighting: A mixture of lighting types is best for showcasing displays. Maximize the natural lighting coming in the front windows or skylights. If the store has fluorescent lighting, break up any continuous lines and use baffles. Use track lighting to highlight displays. Nighttime lighting adds life to downtown and

advertises the business even if it is not open and adds a feeling of activity and security to the streetscape (Part of the “be a good neighbor” aspect).



Groupings: Group like items together, makes it easier on the customers and decreases appearance of clutter.

Color: Understand how colors work together. Colors opposite on the color wheel make each other more intense (like green parsley next to red meat at the butcher counter) and colors next to each other create unity. Use color throughout the store as it attracts the eye and draws the customer through the store.

Props: Use props to vary heights of merchandise. Props don't have to be expensive; Repurposed items make great props.



Mannequins are useful to display clothing and accessories. Use mannequins that are in good repair or make them out of foamcore or plywood or even newspapers. Be sure to have a full outfit on the mannequin, not just a shirt or blouse, so the customer will be more inclined to buy more than just one item.

Backdrops can help tie the whole display together or draw attention with color. Using repetitive elements can create a backdrop. Backdrops can help decrease

size of display window to highlight specialty items. Use upper walls space for display space.

Create movement and interest: Odd numbers and asymmetry create their own energy. Clear fishing line can be used to 'float' items.



Creativity: Creative displays capture attention and get people into the store. It is perfectly fine to use humor, just keep it clean, non-religious, and non-political.

Understand how people perceive space: People enter spaces that are welcoming. Create a place to pause when the customer comes into the store, allowing the customer to assess the store before moving further into the store. Customers often instinctively move to the right so make sure they want to move throughout the entire store before they leave; the more store they see, the more likely they are to purchase something. Make sure there is room to move around between displays.

Furniture displays: Set up furniture in a room setting, not a row of the same items. People need help to visual how a piece of furniture would look in their own space so put the whole room together from rug to lamps.



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