

## **SECTION: 4: Investigating Design Principles and Art Elements to Communicate Store Image and Build Profitable Retail Sales**

### **Part 1: Examine the Six Basic Principles of Display**

#### **Part 1: 1-6 Evaluate Effectiveness of Presentations**

It has been stated that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”. One might compare that traditional expression to the effectiveness of a display. However, the visual merchandiser carefully plans the artistic expression and technical aspects of the display in order to attract the attention of a large variety of the store’s target consumers’ and ultimately to sell as much product as possible. In other words, no aspects of the display is left to chance!



Evaluation of a display is a continuous process and should take place throughout the building stages of the display presentation. From the previous lectures, it is evident that there are many components that must be manipulated to complete the unified whole or the end product. Thus, every component of the display must be meticulously planned and evaluated.

Although an experienced visual expert might not develop a detailed plan for smaller displays, regardless the scope and size of the display, careful planning always assures that the presentation is artistically pleasing and productive as a selling tool. For example, if the merchandiser understands and knows the consumer behavior of the target consumer, he/she selects the appropriate merchandise classifications at the right price in order to attract that target consumer. Then, the selection of props and attention-getting devices are very easily identified in order to produce the most effective presentation in order to attract the attention of that consumer.

Oh the other hand, if visual personnel begin the planning with the selection of a theme for the display, the color scheme, accessories, and props may be self-selected! Or, the location selection of the display may determine the composition of the creative endeavor. Therefore, during the building of the display, one component might dominate or restrain another component. An artistic merchandiser must adapt and adjust to circumstances that impact the effectiveness of the presentation.

After evaluating location and theme for the display, the next component to check is color. Remember, color is the number one component to which the consumer is attracted, even before merchandise classification, silhouette, or price. Selecting the color scheme or color story may not be difficult for the merchandiser; however, the important factors to evaluate in the color scheme are the value, intensity or the combination of those factors in the colors selected. Also, does the psychology and symbolism of the color complement the theme and merchandise being presented? The interpretations and acceptance of these factors may depend upon the culture, region, and environmental background of the target consumer.

The second most important component of the display is line. As with color, does the major line type of the display support the theme and type of merchandise in the display? Likewise, are there a variety of lines supporting the major line selection of the display? Are there curved lines that create rhythm and move the eye from item to item in the display?

Maintaining good composition in an artistic endeavor is critical to creating unity and harmony in the display. In order to communicate a well-planned message and direct the consumer's eye to all the elements of the display, the visual merchandiser must carefully plan the type of balance and the dominant item or focal point of the display, along with the mechanisms for creating rhythm. Does the type of balance support the theme and merchandise classifications in the display? Is the focal point evident? Are there items, such as props and attention-getting devices, which direct the viewer's eye from the dominant area to all other areas of the presentation? Are there odd numbers of items utilized to create interest and provide rhythm in the composition? Are all components in proportion to the whole as well as to each other component in the display? A creative endeavor can be planned and assembled perfectly; however, if the proportions of the components are not compatible, the viewer senses the instability of the composition.

Special attention to all details of the display, such as selection of props, attention-getting devices, and lighting and background, can elevate a good display to the status of an excellent display. In other words, all components of a display play a major role in a successful, productive display that compels the customer to say "I'll take (purchase) that product"!

For additional evaluation criteria for an effective display, please refer to *Part 2: Checklist for Effective Displays* found in this Section. Additionally, a summary of merchandise presentations and display for communicating store image is found in *Part 3* of this Section.