

Part 3: 3-2 Weather Patterns, Sales Promotional Calendars

Weather Patterns

Most retailers keep a daily log of weather conditions and how those conditions may have impacted the daily sales volume and possibly markdowns. Recently some retail analysts voiced opinions that they do not think weather has a major impact on multi-year sales volume averages or sales patterns of the retailer. However, the majority of buyers know that weather, at any given time, can be the one culprit that hinders the attainment of achieving planned sales goals or reaching margins and profit for a specific sales period. For long range weather forecasts, many retailers subscribe to *The Old Farmer's ALMANAC*. This service is a source of weather information for both business and agriculture constituents. Also, some of the larger store groups and organizations subscribe to weather services or weather consultants when planning sales for upcoming seasons.

As previously mentioned, weather patterns are analyzed when the buyer is determining the monthly distribution of sales for the six month period. For example, if the weather for the month of February is icy and snowy, the new spring arrivals do not sell well. Or, if the spring season is wet and cool, spring merchandise often does not sell. If the selling period for the heavier spring merchandise is missed, the merchandise must be reduced when the weather changes, since the consumer is ready for lighter-weight active or playwear instead of the early spring merchandise. Thus, one of the major reasons for examining the weather for each month is to assist the buyer in making an educated estimation of how to increase or decrease the planned sales volume for any particular month, based on weather patterns.

Sales Promotional Calendars

Managers in the Sales Promotion Division of the retailer develop sales promotional calendars and use those calendars as records of all happenings during the past retail year. The past records are very important tools for the buyer to use when planning monthly sales distributions. The records on these calendars provide valuable information about activities utilized by the buyer to promote merchandise classifications in order to build desired sales volume.

The types and quantities of advertisements are recorded. The special event log has information on the theme for the event, the date, place, and time of the event plus the activities that took place in order to stage the event; the visual merchandising calendar alerts the buyer to the scheduling of floor changes, new display exhibitions, and building of major shop concepts and merchandising techniques used in specific departments and stores.

The buyer will want to examine which advertisements, special events and promotions, and visual merchandising activities and techniques were the most profitable or brought in the most customer traffic, or new consumers, or built the most sales volume. On the other hand, the buyer will not want to repeat an advertisement, special event or promotion, or visual merchandising technique that was not effective or had little impact on the desired outcome.

Section Summary

In summary, in the *Collection of Numerical Data Information Stage*, the buyer must analyze the actual figures accumulated during the previous year, for the same season for which the new Six Month Merchandise Plan is being calculated. After careful examination of the figures, the buyer must then determine how previous weather patterns and the activities of the Sales Promotion Division of the retail store impacted those figures. Furthermore, the buyer will want to determine how the macro and micro

environmental scan information, characteristics of the target consumer, and happenings in the Buying-Selling Process impact those figures also.

Then the buyer is ready to move forward in order to calculate the planned Six Month Merchandise Budget for the upcoming season. The last segment of this Section will explain how to construct a realistic, attainable plan for the upcoming season.