

## Part 6: Plan the Merchandise Presentation

Planning an exciting merchandise presentation is one of the most important steps in establishing the store and fashion image. Arranging the merchandise in the store with relation to floor and wall space must be carefully planned in order to produce maximum sales dollars per square foot. Today's consumers demand convenient, easy-to-traverse traffic patterns in the store; merchandise that is positioned in easy-to-find locations and easy to shop; displays that excite and depict the lifestyle of the shopper; and an exciting "retailtainment" environment in the store.

A store may be arranged or merchandise may be presented using a variety of techniques. The store may be arranged by a) creating a 3 x 3 merchandise store layout presentation, b) building the merchandise presentation based on color dominance, c) coordinating product line groupings, d) creating shop concepts for various brands presentations, e) coordinating merchandise based on size, f) grouping merchandise by end use, and g) creating the merchandise presentation by price. Sometimes more than one of the presentation techniques are used simultaneously in the store.

Creating the 3 x 3 merchandise store layout presentation and building the merchandise presentation based on color dominance will be discussed in **Section 3: Planning the Retail Merchandise Presentation**. The other techniques will be discussed briefly in this part of Section 2.

*Merchandising by Coordinating Product Line Groupings* -- Many vendors build their seasonal product lines around groupings of product classifications that mix and match to create ensembles that can be worn for different occasions or various end uses. The products are usually produced in more than one colorway and have solid, pattern, and print colors that blend or match in specific colorways. Additionally, some related separates (i.e., product classifications with blending or matching fabrications, colorways, silhouettes, or occasion for wearing) are also merchandised together in order to create add-on or multiple sales.

Four-way or quad fixtures and/or wall sections which are divided into segments are excellent for this type of merchandise presentation. On each of the four arms of the fixture, a completely accessorized ensemble of coordinating pieces and colors can be combined to teach the consumer how to mix and match the product classifications. The presentation can visually show an item going from work to an evening out or to a sporting event.

Many times this type of presentation is found in sportswear departments, especially in the better to moderate priced areas of a store. Also, this type of presentation is frequently combined with the 3 x 3 presentation in order to create a "silent selling" environment for a department store or stores with customer service centers that have less sales associates to cover the selling floor.



*Merchandising by Creating Brand Name Shop Concepts* – One of the most popular concepts for merchandising designer to better merchandise is the current trend of building shop concepts within the retail store in order to house only the merchandise of one specific vendor's brand. For example, Ralph Lauren has done an excellent job of building shop concepts in the retail stores that sell his seasonal lines. A shop concept is a win-win situation for both the retailer and the vendor. More than likely, the shop is designed and created by the designer or vendor and frequently merchandised by a vendor representative (i.e., retail marketer or retail merchandiser who works in the retail store and is an employee of the vendor).

In the shop concept, the vendor can control the brand image and create a merchandise presentation in order to market and sell all product classifications simultaneously. The materials used to build the shop, the fixtures to present and display the merchandise, and the ambience or shop environment are more than likely established according to vendor policies. Even the merchandising layout and display guidelines are directed and supervised by the company. The image of both the merchandise presentation and product offering is constant, consistent, inviting and hopefully motivating in order to entice the target consumer to become a repeat customer.



*Merchandising by Size* – Stores that offer special sizes, such as women’s plus sizes, men’s big and tall, children’s apparel and sometimes youngmen’s wear, create merchandise presentations in order to introduce new trends and educate the consumer on “how to” coordinate product classifications for the most flattering apparel combinations. These stores arrange merchandise classifications on fixturing from left to right or front to back and by size from small to the large. Ideally, the first hanger on the front of the fixture or wall bar visually presents the total ensemble showing various product classifications with accessories that complete the coordinated outfit.

Within each product classification the colors are arranged from light to dark and from neutral to warm to cool tints and shades. Printed or patterned merchandise containing the solid colors are used as a break between colors in order for the consumer’s eye to rest and to allow time for the mind to interpret the visual presentation. In this type of presentation, different hem lengths and sleeve lengths are presented on separate fixtures or in separate areas of the wall or on other types of fixturing. In other words, different lengths of garments are not mixed together but are separated for a more balanced and pleasing presentation.





*Merchandising by End Use and/or Occasion of Wearing* – Many customers like to shop in one location or store for all items that are needed for a specific lifestyle activity. An excellent example of this type of merchandising is found in sporting goods stores. These stores carry apparel, equipment, accessories, and complementary items that are needed for a particular activity. Additionally, home furnishings stores merchandise using this technique. A bedroom vignette or room setting presents everything from bed and bath linens to floor coverings, to room accessories, to sleepwear. The vignette is color coordinated with solids and patterns containing those solids visually presented for a “total look”. Add-on and multiple sales are expected with this type of merchandising.

With regard to occasion of wearing, some consumers like similar product classifications, regardless of the brand name and price point, to be merchandised together in order to compare all products easily and to see the variety of selection. Also, these customers, who do not have the time nor the inclination to shop in many different areas in a store in order to mix and match product, indicate that they are overwhelmed by some of the current merchandising techniques utilized by their favorite retailers. If this technique is used, the merchandise is still presented by color, pattern, and size coordination. These areas should be merchandised with garments within identical product classification positioned on fixturing from left to right or front to back, small to large, light to dark and from neutral to warm to cool

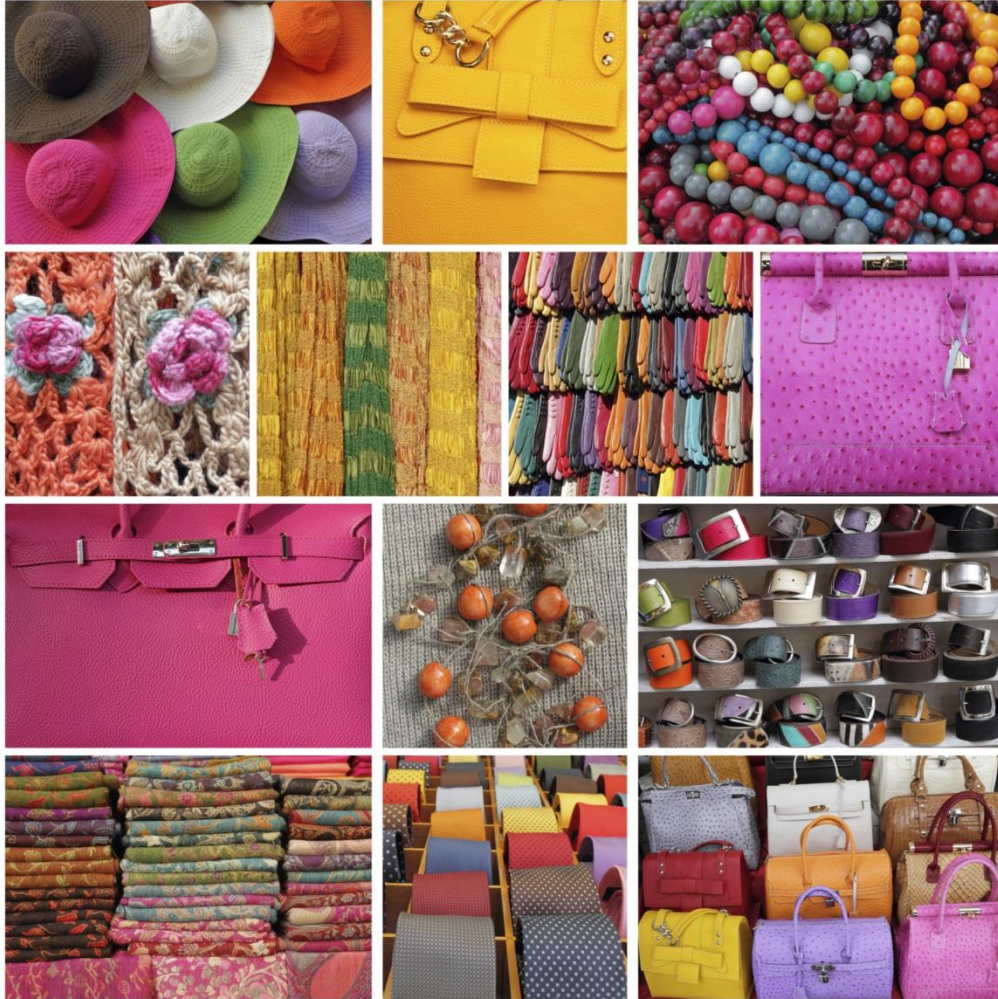
tints and shades. This arrangement makes it easy and convenient for the consumer who does not enjoy the shopping experience as a fun, exciting activity.



*Merchandising by Price* – Some stores, such as discount stores, are merchandised with emphasis on the price of the product. However, as previously stated, in today’s competitive marketplace, many of these stores now use trendy visual merchandising techniques to “romance” the inexpensive, reduced, or sale merchandise.

In other stores of this type, the retailer uses the philosophy of “stack it high and let it fly”, or stacking certain product classifications on aisle tables, skirted tables within the store, or “dump” tables designated as bargain tables with the lowest price available. Regardless of the merchandising policy of the discount retailer, the merchandise must be arranged and presented in a manner that is conducive to impulse buys as well as add-on sales. Frequently these retailers use signage, banners, and point-of-sale graphics to reinforce the concept presented in the merchandise presentation. Many customers love to rummage through piles of merchandise to find the “jewel” or bargain at the bottom of the pile!





Creating the 3 x 3 merchandise store layout presentation and building the merchandise presentation based on color dominance will be discussed in **Section 3**.