

## **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: 1-5 Plan Lighting Techniques**

Light is composed of waves of radiant energy that is either reflected or absorbed. When light is absorbed the color of an article or item is seen. In other words, there must be light for color to be seen. The *primary light colors* are red, green, and blue. (Note that the yellow pigment is not a primary light color!) As with mixing primary pigments to create other colors, the primary light colors can be mixed to form the *secondary light colors* of magenta (i.e., purplish-red), amber (i.e., brownish gold-like yellow), and cyan (i.e., blue-green). These colors can provide interesting effects on both positive elements and negative spaces.

Light is composed of two elements – light and shadow. *Light* provides depth and intensifies the color of the merchandise. It also draws attention to the display. Shadows make negative spaces appear as attention-getting devices and add contrast to the display. On the other hand, shadows may hide the merchandise itself and/or important details of the product. Therefore, for the best effects, shadows should be incorporated carefully into the display when planning display lighting.

The retailer must consider both the natural daylight and the man-made light sources available for the merchandise presentation and display. As previously discussed, lighting is a critical selling component of the display, since color is the number one selling factor for all merchandise! In fact, light acts as a guide as to what is important in the display. It enables all elements and components of the display to be seen and can actually make the display “pop” with color and movement, thus creating rhythm in a display.



For lighting the store, man-made light sources must be utilized. These sources include fluorescent and previously incandescent lights. However, due to the use of energy and the amount of heat given-off by incandescent lights, this type of lighting is becoming obsolete. *LED* or Light-Emitting Diode lights are a substitution for the incandescent light bulb.

The LED bulbs have a low energy consumption, a longer life expectancy and are smaller than the incandescent bulbs. They may be used as accent lighting in the merchandise presentation and are produced in the form of recessed and track lighting.

Fluorescent lights are used for the general lighting in a large area – lighting the ceiling, aisle, or wall sections. They wash an area with light but have no sharp shadows or accents. They have very little depth or textural interests and no mottling effect. Therefore, they are not the type of lighting needed in a window display or as an accent for a display.

Moreover, fluorescent lights have the property of giving off cool or warm lights. *Cool fluorescent* lights impart a feeling of “blue” or cold such as snow. These lights are excellent to use when merchandising diamonds, silver, furs, and men’s suits. However, it is not a color to use in customer areas. In dressing rooms, the light makes flesh tones look drained, haggard, and washed out. It also distorts the color of the merchandise.

On the other hand, *warm fluorescent lighting* is flattering to the complexion and the merchandise. It gives off a soft and gentle glow and is very flattering to skin tones. Fluorescent lights are one of the least expensive types of energy and the bulbs are long lasting. In some stores, HID or High-Intensity Discharge lighting is replacing fluorescent lighting for general, overall lighting. These lights create both shadows and highlights.

Accent lights such as track lights, floodlights, pin and chase lights, recessed ceiling lights and spotlights are types of lights utilized to highlight displays. Colored filters and gels can be used on these lights to highlight the backgrounds, walls, and props or create a symbolic environment. For example, a pink filter may focus on the mannequin, or a cool blue filter may be utilized to create an “icy” feeling for creating a wintery scene when displaying winter coats.

Consider the following “rules of thumb” for lighting displays.

- Avoid bright, white lights directly on mannequin faces, elbows, shoes, etc.
- Use colored filters and gels to create the mood or setting for the display and to reinforce the theme of the display by underscoring the props and background.
- Light across a display rather than directly on it.
  - Direct the upper left spotlight over the lower right side of the display.
  - Direct the upper right spotlight over the lower left side of the display.
- Use lighting to set the mood and highlight the merchandise details in the display.

Due to the technicality of the lighting topic and changing lighting trends in the industry, for more detailed and in-depth information on lighting, the student is encouraged to conduct research on the most current trends in lighting and/or contact a professional lighting expert.