

DRIVING RETAIL SUCCESS

MERCHANDISING: THE KEY TO SALES

PEARL IZUMI

This editorial feature is sponsored by Pearl Izumi with Mercedes Ross.

SUCCESS STORY

"Thanks to our Pearl rep Stacy Newton, we have a new display wall with improved visibility and 'shopability,' and it's already paying off in increased sales!"



Antonio Gonzalez from Idaho Mountain Touring, Boise, ID

FOCAL POINTS

WHAT THE EYE SEES FIRST.

Create focal points on the wall with mannequins and forms. A shelf with a bust or form does three things:

- 1 It breaks up the visual plane and gives the eye something to look at, hence the name focal point.
- 2 It attracts the consumer to the wall.
- 3 It lets the consumer know it is a women's or men's section

OK, so the product is ordered and on its way....are you ready to make it look and sell its best?

Let's take a serious look at your clothing department for now is the perfect time to invest in the tools of the trade. You'll be amazed at what a few extra fixtures can do to dramatically spruce up your section.

START WITH THE WALLS

Walls are key to your merchandising. Every store has them, and they are a big advantage over floor or free-standing displays: they draw people to the clothing department because they can be seen from a distance. So use them wisely.

Whatever display systems you are working with the principles are the same. Rule #1: do not display everything on waterfalls!

If you are splitting the wall between men's and women's product, make it very clear what's where. Add a shelf up high on either side that is holding either a male or a female form. Three-quarter mannequins make a clear statement that says, "Here's what you're looking for!"

TWO-FOOT SECTIONS

To create an interesting display on the wall and take advantage of color stories you need to create two-foot sections, which is what the eye can easily comprehend. Take each two-foot section and plan out what product goes in each section. As you can see in the photo, a waterfall up high with a key jacket or jersey sets the tone. Next, utilize straight-outs and hang rail bars to place bulk product, as well as more than one color way of a jersey or jacket.

No matter what or where the product, it needs a size ring on the hanger. This helps the customer help themselves, and makes it easier to take spot inventory checks. It takes a bit more attention, but it will quickly pay off in increased sales.

COLOR STORIES

Each wall section needs to tell a coordinated color story. As in the photo, each section has a color theme and the colors go well together across the whole wall. Color stories that do not match each other can be placed on a fixture in the front.



THE LOWDOWN ON SHORTS

Separating shorts by brand and price raises their perceived value. One rule of thumb, \$30-\$50 shorts on a hang rail or rounder, \$50-\$75 shorts on a hang rail, \$75-\$150 shorts on a straight-out on the wall.

If wall space is minimal, consider creating a "shorts" fixture out front that separates good-better-best bulk shorts. Then position the high-end and designer shorts on the wall on straight outs to raise their perceived value.

Be sure to hang all the shorts the same way. Which is better, upside down or right side up? Experts agree, right side up is best as it shows the silhouette of the short best.

Bib shorts need to say "I'm a bib" so hanging them from shirt hangers is best. It takes more room, but if hung on a short hanger you can't tell the difference between a regular short and a bib.

FLOOR FIXTURES

Although they are secondary to the wall they are critical because they lead the consumer to the wall. Stick to a 52" height. If you have a few taller fixtures spread them out in the clothing section so they don't block your wall.

Utilize floor fixtures to tell a category story or a technical story, like Mountain or rain gear. A floor fixture can even tell a gender story, but make sure the whole fixture is telling the same story.

"How do I know how to arrange the colors?"

Like a rainbow! It's familiar and pleasing to everyone. Remember the memory aid from grade school: ROY G BIV?

Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo & Violet.

Quick 'N' Easy

Make shopping easier for your customer by using size rings:

- 1 You buy two plastic bins one for receiving and one for under the register counter
- 2 When product gets received an appropriate size ring goes on the hanger with the garment.
- 3 As the garment gets sold the size ring comes off at the register and goes into the second plastic bin
- 4 The hanger goes back (size ring less) to its bin until another garment gets put on it

Websites & Books

A few recommendations to get you started:

- www.merchandisinghub.com
- www.retailindustry.about.com
- 1,001 Ideas to Create Retail Excitement by Edgar Falk
- Visual Merchandising: Windows and In-store Displays for Retail by Tony Morgan

**Ask a twelve year old to search the web for you!*

What You'll See Next

Selling apparel: training your staff to make the sale.