Presentation Techniques

Some presentation techniques are idea-oriented, item and size, color, price lining, vertical merchandising, tonnage merchandising, and frontage presentation.

Idea-Oriented Presentation Some retailers use an **idea-oriented presentation**—a method of presenting merchandise based on a specific idea or the image of the store. Individual items are grouped to show customers how the items could be used and combined. Women's blouses are often displayed with skirts and accessories to present an overall image or idea. Also, furniture stores display a combination of furniture in room settings to give customers an idea of how it would look in their homes. At Sony Style, mini-living rooms showcase what a particular flat-panel TV might look like over a fireplace or a dresser. This approach encourages the customer to make multiple complementary purchases.

> **REFACT**
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> Fifty percent of women get their ideas for clothes from store displays or window shopping.

Item and Size Presentation Probably the most common technique of organizing stock is by style or item. Discount stores, grocery stores, hardware stores, and drugstores employ this method for nearly every category of merchandise, as do many apparel retailers. When customers look for a particular type of merchandise, such as breakfast cereals, they expect to find all items in the same location.

Arranging items by size is a common method of organizing many types of merchandise, from nuts and bolts to apparel. Because the customer usually knows the desired size, it's easy to locate items organized in this manner.

Color Presentation A bold merchandising technique is organizing by color. For instance, in winter months, women's apparel stores may display all white cruise wear together to let customers know that the store is "the place" to purchase clothing for their winter vacations.

Price Lining Price lining occurs when retailers offer a limited number of predetermined price points and/or price categories within another classification. This approach helps customers easily find merchandise at the price they wish to pay. For instance, men's dress shirts may be organized into three groups selling for $49, $69, and $99. (Also see Chapter 14.)

Vertical Merchandising Another common way of organizing merchandise is **vertical merchandising.** In this approach, merchandise is presented vertically using walls and high gondolas. Customers shop much as they read a newspaper—from left to right, going down each column, top to bottom. Stores can effectively organize merchandise to follow the eye's natural movement. Retailers take advantage of this tendency in several ways. Many grocery stores put national

The display of shirts is an example of vertical merchandising.

brands at eye level and store brands on lower shelves because customers scan from eye level down. In addition, retailers often display merchandise in bold vertical bands of an item. For instance, you might see vertical columns of towels of the same color displayed in a department store or a vertical band of yellow and orange boxes of Tide detergent followed by a band of blue Cheer boxes in a supermarket.

Tonnage Merchandising   As the name implies, **tonnage merchandising** is a display technique in which large quantities of merchandise are displayed together. Customers have come to equate tonnage with low price, following the retail adage "Stock it high and let it fly." Tonnage merchandising is therefore used to enhance and reinforce a store's price image. Using this display concept, the merchandise itself is the display. The retailer hopes customers will notice the merchandise and be drawn to it. For instance, before many holidays, grocery stores use an entire end of a gondola (i.e., an end cap) to display six-packs of Pepsi.

Frontal Presentation   Often, it's not possible to create effective displays and efficiently store items at the same time. But it's important to show as much of the merchandise as possible. One solution to this dilemma is the **frontal presentation,** a method of displaying merchandise in which the retailer exposes as much of the product as possible to catch the customer's eye. Book manufacturers, for instance, make great efforts to create eye-catching covers. But bookstores usually display books exposing only the spine. To create an effective display and break the monotony, book retailers often face an occasional cover out like a billboard to catch the customer's attention. A similar frontal presentation can be achieved on a rack of apparel by simply turning one item out to show the merchandise.

CREATING AN APPEALING STORE ATMOSPHERE

To provide a rewarding shopping experience, retailers go beyond presenting appealing merchandise. For example, Disney plans to spend about $1 million a store to create a highly entertaining and rewarding experience for its customers using interactive technology. The chain's traditional approach of displaying row after row of toys and apparel geared to Disney franchises will be given a high-tech makeover. Children will be able to watch film clips of their own selections in a theater, participate in karaoke contests, or chat live with Disney Channel stars via satellite. Computer chips embedded in packaging will activate hidden features. When children walk by a "magic mirror" while holding a Princess tiara, Cinderella will appear and say something to them.

Disney will adopt Apple touches like mobile checkout (employees will carry miniature receipt printers in their aprons) and the emphasis on community (Disney's theater idea is an extension of Apple's lecture spaces). The focus will be on interactivity—parents will be able to book a Disney Cruise on touch-screen kiosks while their children play.[32]

Employees also play a major role in creating an appealing store environment. For example, atmosphere at Pike Place is unusual. Employees, known as fishmongers, throw fish over the counter to coworkers for wrapping. The fishmongers also invite customers to get in on the action and try to catch fish. What could be a dull store is transformed into a place where customers and employees are smiling, laughing, and connecting with one another, while keeping an eye out for flying fish.[33]

Great India Place, one of the biggest malls in India, provides the best mix of atmospherics to stimulate customer's perceptual and emotional responses leading to higher foot falls.

Amy's Ice Cream (a 13-store chain of premium ice-cream shops in Austin, San Antonio, and Houston, Texas) has similarly transformed what could be a boring transaction into a fun experience. Visit an Amy's store, and you'll see employees performing in a manner you won't forget. They juggle with their serving spades, toss scoops of ice cream to one another behind the counter, and break-dance on the freezer top. If there's a line out the door, they might pass out samples or offer free ice cream to any customer who'll sing or dance, recite a poem, mimic a barnyard animal, or win a 60-second cone-eating contest.[34]

In addition to these interactive technologies, retailers use lighting, colors, music, and scent to stimulate customers' perceptual and emotional responses and ultimately affect their purchase behavior. **Atmospherics** refers to the design of an environment by stimulation of the five senses.[35] Many retailers have discovered the subtle benefits of developing atmospherics that complement other aspects of the store design and the merchandise. Research has shown that it is important for the atmospheric elements to work together—for example, the right music with the right scent.[36]

Lighting

Good lighting in a store involves more than simply illuminating space. Lighting can highlight merchandise, sculpt space, and capture a mood or feeling that enhances the store's image. Retailers are exploring ways to save energy with technologically advanced lighting. Having the appropriate lighting has been shown to positively influence customer shopping behavior.[37]

Highlighting Merchandise   A good lighting system helps create a sense of excitement in the store. At the same time, lighting must provide an accurate color rendition of the merchandise. For instance, Walmart has been putting skylights into the roofs of its stores. This addition cuts energy costs and creates more natural light, which is excellent for hardware and home goods. However, it is best to use artificial light for apparel so that customers can clearly see details.

Another key use of lighting is called **popping the merchandise**—focusing spotlights on special feature areas and items. Using lighting to focus on strategic pockets of merchandise trains shoppers' eyes on the merchandise and draws customers strategically through the store. Nike, for

example, uses a lot of contrast and shadows, highlighting the merchandise but not necessarily the architecture.

Mood Creation   Traditionally, U.S. specialty and department stores have employed incandescent lighting sources to promote a warm and cozy ambience. Overall lighting sources were reduced, and accent lighting was pronounced to call attention to merchandise and displays. It was meant to feel like someone's home—dim lighting overall, with artwork and other areas of interest highlighted. Ralph Lauren stores and boutiques in department stores use low levels of light to coordinate with their overall ambience of resembling a townhouse. Department and mass-market retailers, in contrast, tend to be more brightly lit overall.

Energy-Efficient Lighting   As the price of energy soars and retailers and their customers become more energy-conscious, retailers are looking for ways to cut their energy costs and be more ecologically friendly. One obvious source of energy consumption is the lighting in a store. Stores are switching from incandescent lighting to more energy-efficient fluorescent lights.

Color

The creative use of color can enhance a retailer's image and help create a mood. Warm colors (red, gold, and yellow) produce emotional, vibrant, hot, and active responses, whereas cool colors (white, blue, and green) have a peaceful, gentle, calming effect. Colors may have a different impact depending on the culture of the customers. For instance, research suggests that French-Canadians respond more to warm-color decors, whereas Anglo-Canadians respond more positively to cool colors.[38]

Music

Like color and lighting, music can either add to or detract from a retailer's total atmospheric package.[39] Unlike other atmospheric elements, however, music can be easily changed. For example, one retailer has a system that allows certain music to be played at certain times of the day. It can play jazzy music in the morning and adult contemporary in the afternoon, although only in stores on the East Coast. These selections mirror the findings that most of its morning shoppers are older, whereas afternoon shoppers tend to be in the 35-to-40-year age range. For its West Coast stores, it wants modern rock in the morning and Caribbean beats in the afternoon. And in Texas, it's country music all day, every day. The retailer also can "zone" music by demographics, playing more Latin music in stores that attract a higher Hispanic population.

Retailers also can use music to affect customers' behavior. Music can control the pace of store traffic, create an image, and attract or direct consumers' attention. For instance, one U.K. toy store switched from children's songs like "Baa Baa Black Sheep" to relaxed classical music and watched sales jump by 10 percent.[40] Managers realized that although children are the consumers of their products, adults are the customers. In general, though, slow is good. A mix of classical or otherwise soothing music encourages shoppers to slow down, relax, and take a good look at the merchandise.

REFACT

The U.S. firm Muzak supplies 400,000 shops, restaurants, and hotels around the world—including The Gap, McDonald's, and Burger King—with songs tailored to reflect their identities.[41]

Scent

Smell has a large impact on customer's mood and emotions. Scent, in conjunction with music, has a positive impact on the customer's level of excitement and satisfaction with the shopping experience.[42] Scents that are neutral produce more positive feelings toward the store than no scent. Customers in scented stores think they spent less time in the store than do those in unscented stores. Stores using scents thus may improve customers' subjective shopping experience by making them feel that they are spending less time examining merchandise or waiting for sales help or to check out.

Retailers use different essences in different departments: baby powder in the baby store; suntan lotion in the bathing suit area; lilacs in lingerie; and cinnamon and pine scents during the holiday season.[43] Upscale shirt retailer Thomas Pink pipes the smell of clean, pressed shirts into its stores. The essence of lavender wafts out of L'Occitane skin care stores. The scents from frequent cooking demonstrations at Williams-Sonoma kitchen stores help get customers in the cooking and buying mood. Even Sony Style stores have adopted the scent of cinnamon sticks simmering

REFACT

It is estimated that the industry that supplies scents to retailers and other businesses will be worth $500 million to $1 billion in 2016, up from $40 million to $60 million today.[44]

on a wood-burning stove during the holiday season and a mandarin orange and vanilla fragrance year-round. KB Toys has experimented with scents of Creamsicle, cotton candy, and Play-Doh. Some customers, however, find the scents annoying, and for some, it even aggravates their allergies and asthma.