

Overview on Innovations in Marketing-Visual Merchandising

Shilpa.R¹, Jayalakshmi.B²

Asst. Prof. B.Sc-FAD, VET First Grade College

Abstract: Retailing pertains to the sale of goods or merchandise to final consumers or end users. Fashion involves market research, brand licensing, intellectual property rights, design materials, engineering products, manufacturing, marketing & finally distribution. Visual merchandising refers to art of showcasing or presenting the same goods or merchandise in the right perspective which includes 4 'Es' of experience Entertainment, Educational, Escapist, Esthetic experience, thus virtual innovations are the beginning of a whole new chapter in retail & visual merchandising promising enriched, engaging & meaningful retail experience of the foreseeable future.

Keywords: Digital merchandising, experience, marketing, product design, retailing, visual merchandising, virtual experience, window display.

1. INTRODUCTION

Retail is a very detailed business but seen as very simple by one & all. "Retailing pertains to the sale of goods or merchandise to final consumers or end user". The Indian retail market is the fifth largest retail destination globally evolving rapidly with growing consumers spending & increasing investment by global players.

Fashion on the other hand develops or has made its niche in economy market so strongly that it is the second largest economy builder of our country. Fashion does not only mean "well dressed" but includes business which is "well versed". It is a highly sophisticated industry involving market research, brand licensing, intellectual property rights, design, material, engineering products, manufacturing, marketing & finally distribution.

In the present times, consumers are not influenced anymore from the sellers but are influenced by displaying a product of the merchandiser, store image & shopping environment for fashion store to spend more money than planned, thus to introduce a new product, a fashion trend, or a new idea in addition to selling to ensure an attraction & finally a personal connection with the product is where visual merchandising steps in .

Visual merchandiser refers to the art of showcasing or presenting the same goods or merchandise in the right perspective. It educate the customers, creates desire & finally arguments the selling process.

Visual merchandiser is a tool to achieve sales & targets in retail commerce it means merchandise sales using product design, selection, packaging, pricing & display that stimulates consumers to spend more.

Visual merchandiser on the other hand creates a "miniature world" and communicates information such as price, promotion, style, newness, trend, stock, mood & lifestyle to the customers.

Display is the keyboard for visual merchandising it is showing the merchandise & an attempt to convince the viewer to impact future sales. The meaning significance of visual merchandising is **AIDCS** which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Convince& Sell.

Visual merchandiser is the idiom of smart retailers, similar to the use of language to communicate, retailers use visual merchandising techniques to communicate with customers. Just like a poet makes a creative use of language to connect with the readers, a visual merchandiser creates with the readers; a visual merchandiser creates visual effects inside & outside a store to communicate with the customers.

Visual merchandiser achieves the following

- Creatively & effectively educates customers about products offered
- Enables successful selling process from browsing to buying.
- Makes creative medium to present products in lifelike environment
- Attracts attention of the customers.
- Assists customers in matching their needs with the merchandise.

Windows display is the most significant aspect of a store or shop front. Windows can be exciting, price based or it is based on emotional stimulus, it can communicate about the products & services on offer, it promotes the image of the store & maximizes sale of merchandise. It is the merchandise story that is to be promoted. A fashion retailer will showcase latest items on offer which may lend with seasonal themes – autumn winter, spring & summer combined with Holi, Diwali, Id, Valentine's Day and many more.

At other times based on color schemes materials & cultural themes in simple words windows display is the “visiting card” of a store.

The four display suggestions for windows to look their best are

1. To choose a theme.
2. Pick appropriately signed items.
3. Using the space interestingly
4. Create good lighting.

Windows display fall into two main categories

1. Closed back windows – It has full back wall, sides & large glass plate.
2. Open back windows – has no back walls & offers a direct view into selling areas

Windows display can be

1. Single item display
2. Range of goods display
3. Associated merchandise display
4. A variety display

There are different types of setting

1. Real Setting
2. AtmosphericSetting
3. Semi realSetting
4. WhimsicalSetting
5. AbstractSetting

Now when we talk about innovations in visual merchandising, Social media, mobile commerce, e-commerce, globalization has changed the way consumers interact & spend adding new dimension to retail environment. The customers are empowered, informed & connected by sophisticated digital technologies.

Digital merchandising software's are available which allows product decisions which fill up to date picture of what's going on providing 360 views of latest collections, trends & customers demands by using 3D images of real products. This is what is referred as the design of experiences i.e. Experience design "beyond visual merchandising" a new discipline.

Experience design is still in its infancy. It is the practice of designing products services, events & environments with an attempt to draw from many sources including cognitive psychology, cognitive science, and product design interaction design, service design by a single design discipline, service or event in all possible dimensions.

Talking about the 4E's of experience design is

Entertainment experience which is absorbed by people via their senses.

Educational experience which involves active participation of individual who absorbs the events as they unfold.

Escapist & Esthetic experience are immersing the participants in event to participate actively absorb the experience & leave the environment untouched.

For example at one of the Adidas store when a person approaches a rack specific sports shoe, he/she is sprayed with smell of freshly cut grass, while audio, visual content shows soccer being played with players wearing that particular shoe, simultaneously addressing three senses which generates a high fidelity experience immersing the consumer into context surrounding the product.

Sixth sense for instance is a wearable device that relates between the real world & world of data a VM related products is a mirror that can present a garment or accessory by superimposing it on a person's reflection, thereby eliminating the process of wearing it to see how it looks ,yet another example of a leading flagship store New York is augmenting one such experience by using the door of the changing room with an interactive LCD glass which would change from being transparent to opaque with just the press of a button the changing room has an option with various quality of lighting sunlight, home light, dim light, party light which allow the customer to see the garment within the lighting scenario it also allows the customer to see their own back to check their fit.

2. FINDINGS

It is becoming almost inevitable to merge the two worlds we inhabit the real physical & the soft virtual. As virtual is linked to technology it develops at a faster pace than the real world.

Experiential retail is a capable means of offering enriching, meaningful customized experiential retail which will cut across age, gender & cultural divides, addressing global audience across generation C & the newly born generation 'Z'

3. CONCLUSION

In today's fast changing globally competitive technological era retailing which was a platform to sell a product/merchandise or service is no more evident .But is now influenced with virtual experience of product services. Hence,shoppers need to embrace the latest offerings to make retailing marketing services a pleasurable experience.

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