



WINDOW DISPLAYS

MAIN STREET IOWA TECHNOTES

A good window display makes a store more inviting and has the potential to draw anyone into the store. It also helps a customer to remember your store as well as creating a great conversation piece once in the door.

When creating a window display there are many things you should consider before you start. Who is your audience and what entices them? Think about your town and what kind of people will be passing by your store. Put yourself in their place when deciding what will be of most interest to them.

There are many ways to have a successful window display. The most important thing to remember is to not overwhelm your audience. Stick to one theme or message and say it with simplicity. Use this theme throughout the display as well in other windows if you have them.

Window displays can reflect the season, a new product, current events, art, or tell a story.

Once you have chosen a theme and know what items you are going to display, think about how you are going to arrange the entire composition. Think of your window as a frame using design principles to arrange your window in an aesthetically pleasing way. A balanced window display is desired with both vertical and horizontal elements. You also need to consider the exterior of your building and what will work

well with your facade and the colors of adjacent buildings.

Displays usually look best with three colors. One dominant, one contrasting, and one accent color. This helps avoid having too much or too little color that will either overwhelm the viewer or bore them.

If using a new product, bring it to life by using props, but let the product speak for itself.

A very important factor in your retail window is the lighting. Good lighting is key to attracting customers at all hours. Window lighting needs to be bright enough to detract from headlights and reflections in the environment. You also need to be aware of any shadows that your lighting creates.

Lighting can also be used to set a certain mood in your window. Whether you have lights that cast up

or dim recessed lighting, each will create a different mood.

Another important factor in making your window look professional is signs and type. With type you want it to look professional (not hand written) and be a quick read. You only have a matter of seconds to actually grab your audience's attention.

Unless you are advertising an item at a special discounted rate try to eliminate prices in your window displays. You don't want to answer all the customers questions before they walk in the store. You want them to be interested and curious about the item, in order to get them in the door.

Make sure that you change your displays frequently, especially in areas where a person will be passing by more often. It is also a good idea to change them on a regular schedule which gives people something to look forward to and also shows that your store is reliable.

A good window display can do many things for your overall business. It is free 24 hour advertising for you and sometimes a window display can entice a customer to come back during business hours. Window displays add to the character and success of your store, as well as your street and the business district as a whole. Refer to "Visual Merchandising Technote" for more window display tips.



WINDOW DISPLAYS



Store windows make the first impression of your brand to the customer. This first impression forms the customer's perception of your merchandise.

Window displays are outdoor advertising and should be consistent with your current marketing campaign. They should be given the same amount of time and effort as other forms of advertising media.

Customers buy from stores they perceive merchandise to be better quality. In reality, the customer shops where the merchandising is better.

Window Displays DO's

- LESS IS MORE – Allow for empty or white space
- Stick to one dominant color with one accent color and one contrasting color.
- Use tables, chairs, pedestals, etc. to bring merchandise up to eye-level with you customer

- Develop a single, clear and consistent message to your customer
- Make sure the display expresses the image or style of the business

“Customers buy from stores they perceive merchandise to be better quality. In reality, the customer shops where merchandising is better.”

- Ask your vendors! Suppliers want you to have effective visual merchandising. Ask for marketing, signage, and point of purchase (POP) displays.
- Pick up display props periodically through the year. Props help create interest, but too many can clutter the message.
- When you think you are finished, look at the window from the customer's point-of-view and even across the street!

Window Display DON'Ts

- Overwhelm the customer by showing “a little bit of everything.”
- Let light bulbs burn out
- Forget to clean them out before every set

Helpful Hints:

1. Repetition will attract attention and creates depth in the display.
2. Odd numbers are more pleasing to the eye because they create a center to focus on.



3. Vary the height and depth of props and merchandise to add interest.
4. Use bright lighting both day and night. Track lighting is best, but white Christmas lights or rope light borders work as well.
5. Make sure to clean the windows, floors, and walls before every set.



For More Information:

*Design Consultant, Main Street Iowa
Iowa Dept of Economic Development
200 East Grand, Des Moines, IA 50309
515-242-4762
515-242-4792*