

### Enter Right

Front entrance display windows are your last opportunity to attract attention and bring in shoppers. Shoppers generally turn to the right upon entry, but merchandising that table right in front of the door can be an attention-getting profit generator.

It's critical for customers to move out of a ritualistic traffic pattern to spend time browsing among the entire merchandise assortment. Provide motivation—something attracting their attention beyond the first third of the store—and drive them through the whole store by using your walls as merchandise destinations.

Display your best goods in prime locations. Find these by observing your customers' shopping habits and watching their traffic patterns.

Where is the first place they go? Where is the last place they go?

Narrow aisles also slow shoppers, encouraging more browsing time and more time to follow through on that impulse purchase. However, guard against letting your aisles get too full of merchandise and too crowded.

Large shopping baskets encourage greater purchases. Let one item suggest the need for another by coordinating merchandise and showing how the merchandise works better together.

Once a shopper decides to buy, the next item he or she buys usually comes more easily. Merchandising is both art and science. Every square foot, when visually calculated to sell, can provide substantial sales dollars and units sold per square foot.

This store has a genuinely authentic feel to it, a key component of niche marketing.



worldliness, an identity that tells your shoppers you are aware of and have in stock the most fashionable merchandise, that you take pride in your product knowledge and have everything they could possibly want and need in stock.

#### Self-Assessment

A visual merchandising strategy communicates beneath customer consciousness and calls for careful, critical analysis before allowing it to sell you, your store and your merchandise.

Here are questions you can ask yourself to determine your visual merchandising strengths and weaknesses.

What does your front door look like? Does it attract attention and physically welcome customers?

Do your windows inspire new cus-

tomers to come and look around? Do you have the goods to attract them to the windows, bringing them inside for more?

Does your entrance give a sense of affiliation? Both loyal and new customers want to be proud that they are associated with you and your merchandise.

Does your appearance have a personality, creating a unique, positive perception of you and what you have to offer? Do you look handsome, smart and with-it?

How persuasive are you visually? To generate revenue, increase sales and move profit margin into a wider space, your front door needs to stimulate demand, increase awareness of your presence, persuade to sample, convert one-time customers into regular users and attract shoppers so persuasively that they will leave that other gal or guy for you. 📷

### An Objective Eye

Would you like someone to look at your store with an eye toward helping you look better, sell more merchandise and be more profitable? You may send photographs, slides or high-resolution electronic images of the exterior and interior of your store to Christine Nerad. She will review your materials, provide input and make suggestions for improvements. Send materials to Christine at Tack 'n Togs, 12400 Whitewater Drive, Suite 160, Minnetonka, MN 55343 or E-mail [pwahl@tackntogs.com](mailto:pwahl@tackntogs.com).

*Christine M. Nerad had her first job in retail at a dime store soda fountain. She hasn't been far from the industry since then, having worked in retail apparel, food and hospitality service. Eventually, she earned her doctorate and began a career in teaching. She previously served as an assistant professor in the retail merchandizing program at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Today, she is assistant professor in the apparel, textiles, merchandising and design program at Bluffton College in Bluffton, Ohio. She teaches courses in retail merchandise planning, promotional strategies, visual merchandising and display and consumer behavior, among others.*