

This is the third in a four-part series of articles on visual merchandising
For more information visit www.naturalproductsonline.co.uk or www.viridian-nutrition.com



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Over four issues of *Natural Products*, Rachel Dawes, visual merchandising specialist of White Paper Display, is taking us through the 'hows' and 'whys' of visual merchandising and giving us some insights into the various visual techniques available. Find out more about Rachel's approach to visual merchandising at www.whitepaperdisplay.com

This month: Take them on a journey!

SO YOU have successfully implemented your new and exciting window display with a strong and clear message and with impeccable standards. Well done! You have succeeded in enticing a new customer through your door!

Creating a great window display is the key to successfully engaging a customer and turning them from the footpath into footfall. However, to successfully turn browsers into buyers, the internal merchandising needs to be handled with just as much due care and attention as the window.

Research shows that you now have just six-10 seconds to answer their questions about everything from standards and service to price and product and make them want to stay and take a look around. It sounds like a lot I know, but if you maximise your window display, internal merchandising and floor layouts this should be the natural result.

Your store window should reflect your store environment and the experience the customer will have. The store should flow from the outside in, not look like an entirely different shop. The internal layout and merchandising must be easy to navigate, well lit with logical adjacencies and any special offers should be clearly highlighted and in designated/ high flow areas.

Get to know your layout

Which shopping route do the majority of your customers shop? Map out some of their routes simply using a pen and paper and you will soon find a pattern. Once you have done this, review each area and zone, each stand location, wall footage and counter end. Are you using each to its best advantage? Do you have a low selling line on a high featured end? Would an awkward piece of footage lend itself well to a destination product?

Create a floor plan and number the best locations in your store, working with each department's sales to decide where best to locate them. Speak to your suppliers and if necessary make changes to your ranges, cut

Does your store have a winning window?

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OK, you've read the first three of our special Visual Merchandising articles (watch out for part 4 next month). The question is, do you think your store has a potential winning window? If the answer's yes, and you're up for the challenge of taking part in a live Winning Window competition at Natural & Organic Products Europe in April, here's what to do. Go to www.naturalproducts.co.uk or www.viridian-nutrition.com, download and complete the VM Challenge 2010 Entry Form. Then post the form back to us, enclosing two photographs of your current (or recent) window display.

It's as easy as that. If you are shortlisted you will be invited to take part in the Winning Window Challenge at Olympia (we'll pay your travel expenses and one night's single accommodation*). And remember, the winner at the show will be heading to New York for a fabulous weekend for two courtesy of Viridian Nutrition! * See details on the form

Visual Merchandising Challenge 2010

VM

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back on some and increase others. By reviewing, understanding and implementing the best layout for your individual store you can increase your sales considerably.

Visual merchandising — tried and tested techniques

There are many different techniques in visual merchandising. The following are just a few of these that tend to lend themselves well to the health industry retailers — ie. food, supplements and beauty.

Your store window should reflect your store environment and the experience the customer will have. The store should flow from the outside in, not look like an entirely different shop — if a range is repeated in another flavour or scent, merchandise each range exactly the same as each other. This will be easier to navigate and also easily show the customer there is another option available, increasing his or her choice.

Symmetry — as mentioned in January's issue this is our most instinctively appealing pattern, making it easier for the eye to focus on the product in surroundings that are orderly not chaotic.

Product blocking — bold merchandising for a bold product. Ideally used for promotions or as a seasonal event statement.

The magic triangle — is an important tool in most window displays and merchandising.

It allows the eye to find the centre point of the visual message and therefore absorb the message in its entirety. Its aim is to draw the eye from the highest and most narrow point through to the lowest, ie. the window bed or the bottom shelf.

The above techniques are suitable for both the window and internal merchandising but size and scale of product and space needs to be taken into consideration when making your decision.

Take them on a journey

Different sized windows will need different handling. In a large window it is important to take your customer on a journey therefore you need to 'break' the message visually to keep them engaged or else the mind will tire of the image and not register the complete message you are portraying. By having this visual break or change, it will allow the customer to re-engage with the other half, allowing them to view the message as a whole. This can be achieved in a number of ways including with signage, inserting a different product, a prop, or a change of colour. This will most often be used alongside the triangle technique.

Having implemented a sales floor that reflects the message displayed in your window, have you answered all the questions posed in those vital 6 – 10 seconds?

Window do's and don'ts

- **Do - think about the space available and utilise appropriately**
- Don't - try and cram a product into every corner!
- **Do - use visual techniques**
- Don't - use too many at a time OR use with the wrong product type or size
- **Do - create an impact**
- Don't - do this for the wrong reasons!
- **Do - ensure consistency**
- Don't - over complicate
- **Do - add products**
- Don't - forget to date rotate or account for perishables due to sun and heat
- **Do - utilise height**
- Don't - cut the message off and always allow room to breathe
- **Do - signpost key messages**
- Don't - hand write on fluorescent card or anything that isn't in keeping with your brand
- **Do - highlight or feature a secondary message**
- Don't - confuse the messages — remember which is secondary and ensure the window layout reflects this