

Creating Knockout Displays

By Sheryl Bindelglass

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Golf shops can no longer simply buy merchandise, put it on the floor and hope it will sell. Good merchandising takes careful planning and a creative vision. As a successful shop owner, you need to know what you are going to buy, and how you are going to create a demand for that merchandise. The best way to do that is with appealing displays. To create the displays that move more merchandise and boost your profits, try these sure-fire tips.

Location, location location...

Use the “first rule of real estate” to govern your choices for setting up display areas. If you have windows, use them. If not, find a high-traffic area with a number of viewing vantage points to draw customers in. Use tables, covered crates, boxes, etc. to create levels and surfaces to serve as focal points for displaying your merchandise. Keep things fresh by changing your main display area every three to four weeks for maximum impact.

Themes for all seasons

These days, there’s a holiday for everything. Use them for inspiration and create selling opportunities and special events for customers. Popular examples of successful themes

include: Back to School, Fall Festival, Winter Wonderland, Super Bowl, Valentine’s Day, March Madness, US Open, Mother’s Day, Dads & Grads, and many more. Pull in your staff and brainstorm ideas of your own.

Where can you get ideas for new displays? You and your staff can take a quick trip to the mall, attend a trade show or go out and look at other pro shops. Take the time to look at window displays, notice how other merchandisers set up their tables and displays. Take photos, if you can, of a display that you like, and work with a partner to try to recreate a similar display in your shop. A camera can be your best tool for keeping your display ideas handy. Consider putting those photos in a “tickler file,” along with other ideas you or your staff have gleaned from magazines or newspapers.

Gather the Right Stuff

You have your theme ideas, now you need to make them happen. Great displays start with the right stuff. Depending on the theme you are executing you may need: mannequins, tables, a slat wall, tissue paper, pins, clear fishing line, pipe cleaners, rubber bands, crates, and fabric can help you set the stage. Add interest with props like silk flowers, trophies, trunks, suitcases, coolers, vases or buckets from range balls. Then, layer on the merchandise to complete a creative display.

For example, maybe your town supports a local college team. Before the football season begins, order logo apparel featuring the logo of the University team. Build a fun display with color tees matching the college colors. Use golf bags that coordinate with the color, add match-

TIP: Store your props in a clear container and label the theme on the outside. You will be able to use these items over and over

ing head covers to the display. Stack golf balls with the school’s theme color. Fold and stack shirts under a fully dressed mannequin. Add a football, a cooler filled with shirts or sweaters, possibly a locker for an accent. Go to the local fabric store and purchase a few yards of fabric that features either footballs, or a football theme. Finish your display with caps and visors in coordinating colors.

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An overhead view of the pro shop at Fairview Golf Center in suburban New York City. Fairview is very innovative with displays and price-points as they compete with an off-course retailer right across the street.

When you think your display is complete take a few hours off, come back and look at the display from a few different angles, and see if you need to move a few things around to make your picture perfect.

Designing on a dime

Great displays don't need to cost a lot of money. Resale companies acquire fixtures and other equipment from major department stores that have just completed renovations. You can obtain great fixtures from them at great prices. Negotiate with vendors to supply fixtures and assistance with displays for their merchandise. Depending on the size of your shop and the amount of product you purchase from a vendor, you may be eligible to become a concept store. As a concept store, you may get several fixtures, tables, pictures, and the services of a regional merchandise manager to help transform your space into a showcase for their product. Even if you are a smaller shop, there still may be opportunities for you to get merchandising help from your vendors. When you buy into a new line, or increase purchases from an existing one, request merchandising support. Make sure that when you do work with their merchandiser, pay attention and learn all of the little tricks they use to display their products.

With a little elbow grease, some creativity and a few household items, you can be on your way to a knockout display. Get started today and watch your sales dollars grow. □

MERCHANDISING MUSTS

Even if you can't get started with displays, here is a checklist of things you can do right away to make your shop more customer-friendly and move your merchandise:

- Arrange all shirts in size order, from smallest to largest
- In your stock room or on the floor, stack shoes in size order
- Group colors together from light to darker
- Face all hangers in the same direction, and make sure all hangers match (same color, same texture). Space all hangers uniformly for easy access
- Tuck in the tags on all display clothing
- Use smaller sizes on mannequins
- Make sure all merchandise has price tags that are uniform and easy to read
- Keep changing rooms neat and clean; Make sure you have good mirrors, adequate lighting and ample space to hang clothes.
- Pull all shoe boxes to the front of the shelf and make sure that all display shoes are facing the same direction, with the laces neatly tied
- Dust, dust and dust again!
- Make sure all counters and all windows are sparkling clean
- Keep the store bright – check all light bulbs, add lighting to display areas to create emphasis