

Merchandising During the Slow Months and Post-Holiday Lull

by Amanda Wolfson



After the rush of the holiday shopping season, we can find ourselves moving at glacial speed through the first quarter of the New Year. It can be tough bringing new life into our stores and finding new ways to engage our customers... but not impossible. Below, here are some easy to implement ideas to help you melt your glaciers away and spice things up for you, your employees, and your customers in the months ahead.

Improve your store's lighting for a simple yet effective way to freshen up your store space. Regardless of the time of year, brightening things up can help your store look new and inviting. Instinctively, customers are drawn to light – so why not make things brighter? Adding accent lights can create visual interest and is a great way to draw attention to specific products. If adding new fixtures isn't appropriate for your space, consider simply changing your existing bulbs to LEDs for a fresh start to the New Year. Not only will you improve the overall look and feel of your space, but you will save on your energy bill and decrease maintenance costs with their long "shelve" life.

Change displays often... Despite lack of events, special promotions or seasonal holidays. Sure, this may seem like an obvious thing to do, but sometimes it's the oldest tips in merchandising that get the

most neglected. Give shoppers a chance to see items they may have missed in their previous store visits, and keep them on their toes by rotating displays on a weekly basis. A great way to allow for change is to de-clutter your current merchandising space if you tend to over-stuff your space, or layer any empty space with display fixtures that may include table top stands, mirrors, framed art, wreaths or other ornamental things to help create a warmer store environment. If you feel this is an overwhelming task to take on, consider seeking local students interested in retail display to do the work for you, which is a fantastic way to offer them real-life experience, resume building and time-saving hours for you.

Make merchandise look special with colorful blocks from inventory or additional accessories. One way to do this is to use materials, which can be found from your local fabric retailer or even your own drawers, such as tablecloths, clothing items or other material based items buried in your home or store. Wrap this fabric around foam or other items to create stronger, color blocking impacts, then incorporate these colorful additions into your displays. Go a step further by placing all like-minded items together that have similar color tones. This can be done any

time of year to add merchandising depth and impact to your store. Some colors that group well together include black and white; blues, purples and violets; pinks and reds; tans, brown and cream; yellows and oranges and finally, gray and white. Popping your inventory through color blocks in displays or product alone is a great, easy way to deliver a strong merchandising experience.

Use your windows to their fullest potential and maximize this space in every way you can. Your windows are an important spot to make first and often lasting impressions. Connect with your community through the art of visual display and really maximize this space, making it a priority to always have engaging, entertaining, useful windows that capture customer's attention. Use humor, highlight local heroes, or play up common New Year's resolutions through storytelling. Mannequins, dress forms

and other display fixtures can be purchased at a variety of costs and make a huge impact all year around - as well as you can find fun props

at your local resale shop.

**Merchandising Resources
Every Retailer Should
Know About**

LED Lighting
Albrightllc.com

Mannequins & Fixtures
StoreSupply.com

**Tabletop Displays
& More**
Tripair.com

Packaging Materials
RetailPackaging.com

In-Store Signage & More
BoutiqueVision.com

and small furniture pieces to create interesting groupings. Don't be scared to include items that aren't for sale here, either. Your goal is to get your customers to stop in their tracks and curious enough to walk into your store. That's where your inventory can start to do more talking.

Finally, don't neglect the spots in your store that may not be your favorite. Sure, a sale corner or a clearance rack may not be your favorite space to merchandise, however it's still an important category to sell-through. Even though you've been looking at many of these items for months, they could look brand new to someone else. Strive for this area to look special and well thought out versus picked over and dull. Challenge yourself to make this area a priority as you would any other area of your store, and let your

sales be your "thank you" for giving this space and all your spaces some much needed TLC.