

Designing a point of purchase display (POP) – that works for you

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Gone are the days of dropping your product out to the local five and dime where the manager knew your name and would gladly throw your goods up onto their shelves to give it a trial.

In today's fast paced and ever changing market you will have to prove your product's worth before the valuable real estate of the retail store shelves will ever be afforded to you and your merchandise. The saleability of your merchandise is generally proven during a trial period on the terms of the store. The store generally gives the vendor the opportunity to sell their merchandise on a pop display provided and paid for by the vendor and within the guidelines of the store. The merchandise sales would be measured, valued, and re-evaluated. The sell through results will determine whether the product would get permanent shelf space, remain on a pop display, or be removed from the store all together.

So how important is a good pop display design? When it may mean the difference between life and death of your merchandise I think the answer is obvious.

So where do we start?

When first considering product display, there are a number of aspects to consider and questions to answer when designing your custom pop unit. You may be able to answer some of these questions easily, others you may have to consult with others;

1. How much space will I have for my display? What is the footprint of display and the total height allowed by the store?
2. How many sku's will I require and how many facings per product type will I require?
3. How many parts/dollars of merchandise will I be able to hold in this amount of space?
4. What type of environment will the display be in? Will it be marketing indoors, outdoors, high traffic areas, against a wall, mid-aisle?
5. Should the display be single sided, double sided, stationary, or spinning?
6. Should there be provisions for graphics on the display?
7. Will I require price channels or upc tabs for individual pricing or product information?
8. How far will the displays be shipping? Should I consider knockdown versus solid construction?
9. What is my budget for such a display? What can I afford?
10. What are the capabilities of the manufacturer of the display? Can they handle my requirements?

Let's look at some of these questions a little closer and answer some of them together.

How much space will I have for my display? What is the footprint of display and the total height allowed by the store?

Most stores will only allow vendors into their store with a display that fits into their store specifications. If you already have those specifications from the store then you are well on your way. If you are not aware of any restrictions or specifications that the store may have you should talk to your contact to be sure. Most stores will limit the amount of space that they will



allow for a product type on a display – let's face it – without restrictions some vendors would arrive with a whole wing of products and product types that would make the store fixtures look small. You should be looking for some direction from the store that would state things like, not to exceed a 24" x 24" footprint (this indicates floor space), and a total height of display not to exceed 60" including signage, etc.... If you are entering into a chain of stores with your display these specifications become more strict and specific. Some chains may also require a prototype to be built and approved by the store prior to production of these displays being commenced.

How many sku's will I require and how many facings per product type will I require?

This question may or may not be an easy one to answer. Let's consider the number of sku's that you are offering to a store. Let's assume your product is scented soaps that you are selling and you have 24 different scents that you currently offer. The store may simply pick 12 different scents and say let's start with these. If that's the case or something similar then your decision has been made for you. You have 12 skus to display. Now how many facings? Well now we are beginning to design. Have you considered product shipping containers? If the soap comes packed 12 bars per box per scent and the display is capable of holding 12 scents, then the absolute minimum that I would want to display would be 12 scents x 12 bars per box = 144 bars of soap. Your ideal design should consider this denominator of 144 and work around that number. Let's now consider a shipment of 288 bars of scented soap shipped into a store with a pop display rack. 2 full boxes of 12 scents are placed onto the display. 6 bars per facing = 4 facings per scent. Try to consider future orders as well as changes to ordering patterns as the design evolves. If the sell through is good the store may say lets throw the other 12 scents on the rack also and test them out with the original 12 scents. We have facings built into the display that house multiples of our box size so that works well as the ordering patterns change. If we had 3 facings of 8 that would have worked for the original 12 scents with 2 boxes per order but when the change takes place we end up with part boxes in the storeroom or only partially full facings in the display rack.

How many parts/dollars of merchandise will I be able to hold in this amount of space?

Now that we have some initial design plans down we can consider the number of parts and the total dollars that we are able to display. Using the scented soap scenario again, we already know that our capacity of the display rack is going to be 288 bars of soap. If the product is priced at \$2.99 per bar then we can determine that the display will hold \$861.12 worth of product. If \$0.99 is profited from every bar sold then we can further determine that upon complete sell through of the display, the total profit would be \$285.12. Of course, our products won't always be priced the same or carry the same profit levels and this must be considered when extending out the value per rack and the profits upon sell through.

What type of environment will the display be in? Will it be selling indoors, outdoors, in a high traffic area, against a wall, or mid-aisle?

This question requires consideration for a vast number of reasons. Let's first look at indoors versus outdoors and what materials can be used for displaying indoors and outdoors. Some materials obviously will not weather very well outdoors and should not be considered if that is the environment where the display will be offered. For arguments sake, there are basically four



material options - steel, wood, plastic, and corrugate. Steel and plastic are going to give us the best weather resistance from the natural environment. If we have gardening gloves being offered in the outdoor gardening centre then the display had better be able to make it through getting wet a time or two. If it is going to be hauled inside and outside every day and night then it is going to need to be robust enough to handle that kind of transition. Possibly it will require wheels or casters for easy manoeuvring. If it is going to be positioned in a high traffic area where shopping carts may hit the display from time to time it will have to be able to handle that kind of impact without the display failing. If the display is positioned mid aisle it will be more prone to shopping cart abuse and thus much more important that it is structurally sound to stand up under non-optimal conditions. It will likely be moved every couple of days to wash the floors so it will require enough stability to withstand that transition or casters for easy movement.

Should the display be single sided, double sided, stationary, or spinning?

The answer to this question will have quite a lot to do with the store, the location, and set-up that the store has in mind for the pop display. First off, two sided is out of the question if the display will be positioned against a wall. If it is going to be positioned mid-aisle then it has quite a few advantages to being a 2 sided display as it can be approached from 2 directions and not missed by someone travelling towards the backside of the display rack or crossing aisles that can only see the back of the display rack.

The decision to design a stationary display versus a spinning display again will have some bearing on what the store has in mind for the location of the display and the type of décor and climate that the store offers. The spinner display can be dressed up to give a very high end look with the combination of different materials or it can take on a lower end convenience store look. If you have such a variety of product sku's that your quantity of facings just will not fit into the footprint allowed by the store you may have no choice but to create a display with 3 or 4 sides to it. For example – almost every pair of sunglasses on a display rack is different and each one needs to be displayed separately. Can you fit 100 facings onto a single sided display rack in a limited footprint? Maybe..... but not without some difficulty and a cluttered look. With a 4 sided unit the look is cleaned up and a very functional display is created. If this was a 4 sided stationary display, it would either require that much more space around the entire unit in the store for customers to completely circle your product display or the display needs to be able to spin.

Should there be provisions for graphics on the display?

Graphics on a display are always a good thing if they are done right. It's hard to sell a good quality product if the graphics are not of the same or better quality. If you turn this statement around you can increase the perception of your products quality with a very good quality display rack with good use of graphics. Graphics are not inexpensive and often will cost as much as a display rack itself. If the graphic design is not finalized then you will require the services of a professional designer to achieve what you are looking for. Some vendors don't want their display or their graphics to take the customers eye away from their product with too flashy of a display or graphics. On the other hand – within a store there is lots of competition for the eyes of the consumer and the job of the display rack and the graphics is to catch the eye of the potential buyer and get them to your product. Once they are in front of the display the product will have to work for itself to finalize the sale. Graphics come in many shapes and sizes. Most common is a sign at the top of a display so people passing by can see the sign even if other shoppers are between the product and themselves. Full side or back graphics are also



commonly used to attract the eyes of the potential customer. The use of graphics is also helpful in the use of seasonal products or ever changing product types. You can use the same display and change the graphics on it as the seasons change if you have multiple products that change with the seasons. Maybe your summer gardening gloves become fall clean-up gloves, then winter work gloves, and finally spring clean-up gloves all with the switch of a header card or side panel graphics without an additional display needing to be manufactured.

Will I require price channels or upc tabs for individual pricing or product information?

Ticket channels are a good idea if you want the ability to change the information of what is in the pocket, or facing that is directly behind it. If you plan to change products or locations of products then this would be essential. Let's consider a gardening glove rack first; If there are 12 different skus that all have different prices then ticket channels or upc tabs with individual prices are probably going to be necessary. If this display is going to be used seasonally then you could easily change signage and graphics in the price channels to accommodate the change in season and continue to use the same store display and location.

Let's now consider the soap display. If we have a soap display that has 12 sku's but they are all priced the same then one price location – possibly even within the sign - can suffice for the whole display rack. This eliminates some clutter and possible confusion and simplifies the design and manufacture of the display.

How far will the displays be shipping? Should I consider knockdown versus solid construction?

Something that you should always ask yourself when in the design stages of a display is: How far will the unit be shipping? This requires consideration for a couple of different reasons. 1) How sturdy and robust does it need to be to handle transit if it is solid construction? 2) How much is freight going to cost for solid displays versus knockdown displays? 3) Will there be someone on-site that will put the display together and is it simple enough to ensure that it gets put together correctly and safely at the store level? You can see from these very simple questions that there can be a little bit to consider.

Some displays are intended to be completely loaded with merchandise prior to shipment and therefore ready for the sales floor when they reach their shipping destinations. If this is the case then it isn't just the display that needs to withstand the transit, but the display along with the load of the merchandise being banged around the back of a truck to its final destination. More often than not these loads are consolidated along the way so they are unloaded and loaded onto another truck at least once on their trip.

Another consideration to make is to look at how many displays can comfortably and safely fit onto a skid if they are solid construction. Then how many skids will fit onto a truck. How much will freight per display work out to using this information? Recalculate with a knockdown unit and figure your savings to help you determine the best style if you have a choice. 1e) 4 displays per skid x 48 skids per truck = 192 displays per load at \$1580.00 per load. $\$1580.00/192$ displays = \$8.23 per display. It is a given that the freight of the knockdown unit versus a solid display will be less for the knockdown style. Depending on the display style and design – the solid will sometimes be a less expensive display and other times it will be a more expensive one. There are more components to handle and to finish (i.e. paint) so that can add to the finishing costs. Packing the job can be an added operation that would not take place if it was a



fully assembled solid display. Hardware, instructions, tools, and the assurance that all of the components of the display were packed properly and completely into the carton is a consideration of the knockdown display. As shipping gets to be more and more expensive then the knockdown versus the solid construction becomes an easier decision to make.

If we elect to design and manufacture a knockdown display then you will require the assurance of the capabilities of the on-site person to put the unit together at the store level. Some companies will have company representatives that can put there display together on-site. Other companies will have store personnel at the store putting the display together. Either way, the ease of assembly will be imperative. Time is money and if a representative spends a day assembling the display or only a half an hour – does it take one person or two? Do they need tools or is everything contained in the carton. If it is store personnel that are going to assemble the display they are not going to be very receptive to a time consuming assembly that is not the property of the store itself. If it is too difficult, chances are it will either not be used, or not be assembled properly. If isn't used, then all of your time, money, and hard work is for nothing. If it is assembled incorrectly then it is probable that it is unsafe.

So there are a few things to consider when deciding whether knockdown suits you better than solid. Whichever way you decide is best for your display – the qualifications of the designer and manufacturer will soon become an important consideration that must be made.

What is my budget for such a display? What can I afford?

Continuing from an earlier discussion we discussed how many dollars we are able to display. Using the scented soap scenario, we figured out that our capacity of the display rack is 288 bars of soap. The product is priced at \$2.99 per bar so we determined that the display will hold \$861.12 worth of product. With \$0.99 profited from every bar sold then we further determined that upon sell through of the display, the total profit will be \$285.12.

Given this information – many companies would budget anywhere from \$142.56 to the whole \$285.12 for the display. The display is then paid for after the first sell through of product. All restocking of the display after this point is increased profit for the vendor and the store.

The other questions to ask yourself is can you afford not to provide the display? If the display is going to enhance your company's exposure and your product then what is the price that you put on that. The display is going to be a reflection of your product and your company. Do you want to use the best materials or the least costly? Do you want a display that in a month looks like it needs to be replaced? How about a display that leaves your product unorganized looking with merchandise falling to the floor? Is that the look you are after? Can you afford to give this image or more important what is the cost of the image that you and your product want to portray?

If designed, manufactured, and marketed well – you and your product will have gone from the stage of asking for floor space within a local store to being in demand at the larger retailers across the country and around the world.



What are the capabilities of the manufacturer of the display? Can they handle my requirements?

Who is the best manufacturer and where do I find them? This is the question that a lot of people out in the purchasing world are asking and there are plenty of choices. There are strictly display design houses out there that do not manufacture anything themselves. There are marketing companies that will design displays and graphics and have them manufactured and printed for you. There are project management companies that will put together the whole job for you. Finally, there are the manufacturers of the displays of all materials that have in-house capabilities to design. You will want to be confident that who you deal with is the right one for the job. What you want to see is some of their previous work, possible client lists, testimonials of their work. If they are as good as they say they are they will have these things and should be proud to share them with you. Where can we see some of the displays that they have designed and manufactured? How many displays are you going to require and do they have the capacity to handle the volume of the work in question?

Remember, it is going to be your product on display. You want to be just as proud of the display that your product is on as you are of the merchandise that is being displayed.

Now go out and get that display you have been thinking about.

