

Visual Merchandising  
Christina Germino  
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Summary by Carly Ceja

Christina Germino explained the importance of visual merchandising in the fashion industry. She defined visual merchandising as “everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire, and action on the part of the customer.” Germino is a stylist at Bloomingdale's and is able to exercise her experience and knowledge at work. The layout and design of a store are very important to attract customers and good business. The better the store and merchandise look visually, the better for the business. Visual representation affects how customers feel and shop throughout the store. The effects of visual merchandising are subconscious but they affect consumer behavior. The design inspiration is related to visual culture such as art and fashion. There is always significance behind the decisions made when it comes to design. Inspiration is drawn from everywhere and can represent many different ideas and cultures. Visual merchandising is not just about what you can physically see, it communicates an unspoken message with lots of meaning and potential.

Visual merchandising can be communicated by creating a space. Within a store, common floor plan concepts include straight, diagonal, geometric, angular, and mixed setups. A floor plan is influential over the organization and the order in which customers will walk through the store. Switching up the floor plan is effective in making the store look new and fresh to customers. Fixtures are also factored into the layout design and are organized based on the floor plan. Lighting also affects the experience and varies with task, ambient, decorative, and accent lighting. Mannequins are thoughtfully styled and set up in the store. There are abstract, realistic, and form mannequins. Brands utilize different mannequins; luxury brands use realistic mannequins that resemble humans and include details like wigs and makeup. Merchandise is also displayed on the mannequins in the window displays. The captivating displays are showcasing their best merchandise. Inside the store, the merchandise is sorted by color and grouped with correlating items to help increase sales.

Visual merchandising is crucial when it comes to owning a store and selling products. It affects consumer behavior and contributes to the customer experience. As an associate, merchandise placement can “make or break a sale” when working with a customer. Working in sales, it is important to have background knowledge about the brands that you are selling. This includes information about the brand's fit, sizing, fabrics, colors, target customer, and more. Building a relationship with clients is necessary when understanding their style and recommending garments.