



## Unit 16: Visual Merchandising

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### Delivery guidance

#### Approaching the unit

Learners will study the practice and techniques used to visually promote the sale of products in retail outlets. They will bring with them their knowledge as consumers and customers, or perhaps their participation in enterprise activities, a part-time job or work experience.

Learners should be encouraged to visit and study a variety of businesses of different sizes as they will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of visual merchandising in two contrasting retail outlets, for example a 'budget' fashion outlet and a high-end fashion retailer.

As this unit contains a practical element, learners must have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills in creating successful displays for retail outlets, and practise their use of appropriate visual merchandising techniques. Building contacts with local retailers could give you the opportunity to arrange visits to retail businesses where learners might be able to find out more about planning and building window or in-store displays.

To complete this unit your learners will need access to a range of research materials, which could include the internet, journals or magazines, and books.

You can use a range of delivery methods in this unit, for example:

- discussions – class and small group discussions on visual merchandising
- individual or group presentations – examples of visual merchandising in local businesses
- case studies – illustrating visual merchandising in well-known stores
- appropriate video extracts.

Group work is an acceptable form of delivery but you must ensure that learners individually produce work for assessment that meets the assessment criteria.

You can involve local employers in the delivery of this unit by inviting them as:

- guest speakers and interview opportunities
- members of audience for learner presentations, and providing feedback on these
- providers of work experience for learners, and of business materials as basis for case studies and exemplars
- providing opportunities for visits for learners.

#### Delivering the learning aims

For learning aim A, learners should be given an overview of visual merchandising in the retail business sector, and look at the differences in layouts and displays

between different types and sizes of businesses, and how different products are safely displayed.

Guest speaker input would greatly benefit the delivery of this learning aim, and speakers from different businesses could enhance learners' understanding of visual merchandising. You may be able to arrange for a specialist visual merchandiser from a local department store to speak to learners, or you may want to organise a visit to a local shopping centre or high street where your learners could complete a pre-prepared template in which they record the features of visual merchandising. You could use the outcome of this activity to lead a classroom discussion on some of the common features your learners have identified, as well as some of the more unique features of visual merchandising they have seen.

For learning aim B, learners need to examine the psychological and technological merchandising techniques used to influence customers. Visits to local businesses would therefore give learners access to 'retail theatre' – buying environments that produce specific emotional reactions so that the probability of customers making a purchase is increased. This includes the use of layout, colour, scents, music and lighting to create an atmosphere, e.g. the technology of misting machines on the fresh produce in supermarkets to create an impression of freshness, and clothes stores that use machines that diffuse artificial scents such as vanilla into the air.

Learning aim C is a practical learning aim, and learners should focus on how to apply visual merchandising techniques. Planning and creating a visual merchandising display will involve research, and a number of drafts will need to be created. The learners will need to access suitable materials to create their display, and it may be possible to procure some display materials from local businesses once a special offer or a promotion has finished.

In some countries, local councils or local government offices are working to reduce the number of vacant properties on high streets with pop-up shop initiatives; it may be possible for the learners to create their final displays in a pop-up shop. This would give them access to the views of actual shoppers and allow them to assess the effectiveness of the display and make justified recommendations for improvements. Similarly learners may be able to work with family members who own their own independent retail outlets to produce a new visual display based around a specification provided by the owner.

### **Assessment guidance**

This unit is internally assessed through two assignments. The first covers learning aims A and B, and the second covers learning aim C.

All learners must independently generate evidence that can be authenticated. The main sources of evidence are likely to be individual written reports together with individual research. For the display, evidence of preparation and planning, photographic evidence of the assembly, and completion of a suitable display.

Observation records and witness statements could also be used as support.

BTEC assessors should complete observation records, while people such as work colleagues can complete witness statements. Observation records alone are not sufficient sources of learner evidence; the original learner-generated evidence must support them.



<b>Learning aim</b>	<b>Key content areas</b>	<b>Recommended assessment approach</b>
<b>A</b> Explore how retail outlets apply visual merchandising and display techniques in line with legislation and safety considerations	<b>A1</b> Visual merchandising <b>A2</b> Display techniques <b>A3</b> Legislation and safety considerations	A written report that examines the visual merchandising used by two contrasting retail businesses and that considers the effectiveness of the visual merchandising in each. This is to be supported by a presentation explaining the impact of legislation on visual merchandising.
<b>B</b> Examine the psychological and technological merchandising techniques used to influence customers	<b>B1</b> Psychology of visual merchandising <b>B2</b> Psychological techniques <b>B3</b> Technological techniques	
<b>C</b> Create a successful display for a retail outlet through the use of appropriate visual merchandising techniques	<b>C1</b> Retail outlets <b>C2</b> Success factors <b>C3</b> Legal and safety aspects	A practical demonstration of visual merchandising techniques to create a successful display suitable for an outlet of choice.

## Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the specification.

<b>Unit 16: Visual Merchandising</b>
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Begin by introducing the unit to learners through a group discussion exploring what they know about visual merchandising and what they consider to be some of the features of effective visual merchandising. Outlining the learning aims of the unit can follow this.</p>
<p><b>Learning aim A – Explore how retail outlets apply visual merchandising and display techniques in line with legislation and safety considerations</b></p>
<p><b>Learning aim B – Examine the psychological and technological merchandising techniques used to influence customers</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin with a discussion on visual merchandising in a variety of retail businesses of different types and sizes that learners would find locally, e.g. food and grocery, fashion, automotive products, jewellery, discount retailers, pharmacies.</li> <li>• Use the learners' examples to lead a discussion on the different approaches taken, and on how visual merchandising makes goods and services more attractive to shoppers and entices them to buy.</li> <li>• In small groups, set the learners a simple practical challenge to display goods to a level that would make customers understand what the product is, what the product can do and how the product can make their life easier or more interesting (for example, to sell picnic ware with a summery display).</li> <li>• Guest speakers could be invited to talk about visual merchandising. Learners could ask questions on the approach taken by the business and why this is successful. The speaker could explain how they decide on the type of display, giving examples of product placement and segmentation, techniques used, and the legislation and other considerations.</li> <li>• Give the learners a range of materials to examine to help them decide on what they understand to be successful visual merchandising. Images from websites, magazines and books of different stores and their layouts could be annotated by learners or used as the basis for display boards.</li> <li>• You could then look at clips from suitable TV programmes to examine the impact of the transformation of retail environments.</li> <li>• Suggest visits learners might make to a range of retail businesses in the local high street or nearest town. They should look at different display techniques and gather photographic evidence of different types of visual merchandising, the different tools, technology, props and techniques that visual merchandisers employ and how they differ from retailer to retailer, with a view to sharing these with the group.</li> <li>• Ask learners to collaborate in small groups to share their findings to prepare and give a PowerPoint presentation. One group could show display techniques to include props, fixtures and free-standing displays, another could focus on psychological and technological techniques, and another could give examples of legislation and safety considerations.</li> <li>• Lead a discussion on the findings from the presentations as to how different visual merchandising and display techniques, plus psychological and technological techniques, contribute to the success of businesses.</li> </ul>



**Learning aim C – Create a successful display for a retail outlet through the use of appropriate visual merchandising techniques**

- Introduce the concept of planning using store layouts and planograms.
- Ask learners to work in pairs to research and draw a basic plan of a local store identifying what is displayed where, and to identify the legal and safety aspects involved.
- Introduce the concept of a pop-up shop with a view to the learners planning to set up their display in a one-off retail environment.
- Lead a discussion on the common mistakes made in visual merchandising, e.g. too much or too little merchandise, lack of theme, too many or poorly selected props, lack of attention to detail etc.
- Ask learners to identify what they think makes a successful display, then write an individual checklist to help plan their own display, e.g. focus, theme, colours etc.
- Ask the learners to draft plans for their display and present their ideas to the class.

## Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

- Unit 2: Research and Plan a Marketing Campaign
- Unit 15: Investigating Retail Business.
- Unit 18: Creative Promotion
- Unit 24: Branding

## Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC International in Business. Check the Pearson website (<http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources>) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

## Visits

The Visual Merchandising and Display Show, which runs annually in London.

## Textbooks

- Bell J, and Ternus K – *Silent Selling* (Fairchild Publications, 2006) ISBN 9781563673962.
- Bentley P, Carysforth C, Chandler-Corris L, Glencross K and Nield M – *BTEC First Business Student Book* (Pearson, 2013) ISBN 9781446901366. A learner book for level 2 that includes content to support learning on this unit.
- Colborne R – *Visual Merchandising The Business of Merchandise Presentation* (Delmar Learning, 1996) ISBN 9780827357594.
- Diamond E and J – *Contemporary Visual Merchandising and Environmental Design*, 5th edition (Prentice Hall, 2010) ISBN 9780135007617.
- Hasty R, and Reardon J – *Retail Management* (McGraw Hill, 1996) ISBN 9780071143158.
- Morgan T – *Visual Merchandising: Window and In Store Display for Retail* (Laurence King Publishing, 2011) ISBN 9781856697637. A specialist text with numerous examples of the best visual merchandising from around the world, with some inspiring photographs to illustrate each point.
- Tucker J – *Retail Desire: Design and the Art of the Visual Merchandiser* (Rotovision, 2004) ISBN 9782880468064.
- Underhill P – *Why We Buy* (Simon & Schuster, 2008) ISBN 9781416595243.

## Journals

- *Convenience Store* (William Reed Business Media) – [www.conveniencestore.co.uk](http://www.conveniencestore.co.uk)
- *Drapers* (Emap Ltd) – <http://info.drapersonline.com>



- *Retail Week* (Emap Ltd) – [www.retail-week.com](http://www.retail-week.com)
- *The Grocer* (William Reed Business Media) – [www.thegrocer.co.uk](http://www.thegrocer.co.uk)

### **Websites**

- [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007mwv9/clips](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007mwv9/clips) – The BBC offers a number of clips taken from retail consultant Mary Portas' TV series, *Mary Queen of Shops*.
- [www.bized.co.uk](http://www.bized.co.uk) – Theory notes and case studies.
- [www.fashionwindows.com](http://www.fashionwindows.com) – Fashion, mannequins and visual merchandising.
- [www.internationalvisual.com](http://www.internationalvisual.com) – Examples of windows, interiors and point of sale.
- [www.internationalvisual.com/download/Visual%20Merchandising%202.pdf](http://www.internationalvisual.com/download/Visual%20Merchandising%202.pdf) – Visual merchandising tips.
- [www.marketingmagazine.co.uk](http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk) – Magazine for the marketing community.
- [www.speakers4schools.org](http://www.speakers4schools.org) – UK charity providing state schools with inspiring talks from leading figures, free of charge, to include retail and sales.
- [www.wearepopup.com](http://www.wearepopup.com) – Website for We Are Pop Up, a community marketplace that enables people to transact commercial property on short-term contracts.
- <https://vimeo.com/tag:visual+merchandising> – Vimeo has over 180 videos on visual merchandising from across the world.
- [www.vmsd.com](http://www.vmsd.com) – Visual merchandising and store design.

*Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling learners to access them through the school/college intranet.*