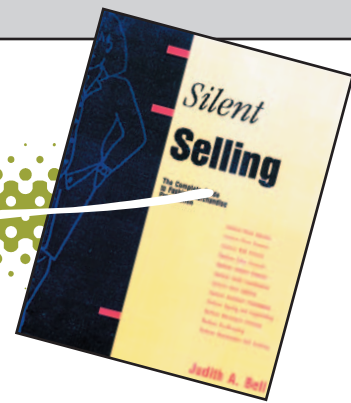


Top Spots

FOR DESIGN



MERCHANDISING YOUR STORE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE HARD WITH THESE HANDY RESOURCES.

By Sharon Leicham

As a merchandiser, I'm constantly asked for help in finding display and merchandising ideas. As most of you know, it's not that easy. To date, the Dummies book series hasn't published a Merchandising For Dummies edition and while there are scores of books about 15-minute meals no one has come out with The Twenty-Second Merchandiser.

You can always go online and sort through the 522 books Amazon.com lists under the key word "merchandising," or you can ask Google to point you in the right direction. But that takes time and the results are often not that rewarding. So to facilitate your hunt for information, I've listed what I consider to be the top resources in the following categories—websites, books, magazines, shows and design agencies.

➤ WEBSITES

www.ddimagazine.com

This is the website produced by Display & Design Ideas magazine. Its best feature is the Buyer's Guide that lists resources in 17 categories ranging from ceilings and fixtures to lighting, signage/graphics and wall coverings. The site also offers a review of each month's leading articles appearing in DDI magazine.

www.merchandisingHUB.com

I have created a new site that's a resource for ideas, information and sources specifically targeted at independent specialty retailers. It features down-to-earth and accessible merchandising and display ideas, basic merchandising techniques, resources for lighting, mannequins, props, fixtures and signage, and sends an electronic newsletter six times a year with the latest trend information.

www.fashionwindows.com

This site bills itself as the "Internet's database of fashion, visual merchandising and mannequins." Its VM Tips & Tricks section offers how-to's like "Dressing a Mannequin" or "5 Tips for Perfect Glass and Mirrors Every Time."

➤ BOOKS

Silent Selling: The Complete Guide to Fashion Merchandise Presentation
By Judith Bell (ST Publications, Cincinnati, Ohio)

Author Judith Bell, leader of the creative merchandising team at Target stores, has written a must-read merchandising manual for anyone working with apparel. It gives advice and techniques on floor layouts, fixtures, lighting, accessory presentation, stock keeping and apparel coordination.



Visual Merchandising: The Business of Merchandise Presentation

By Robert Colborne (Delmar, Albany, N.Y.)

This book covers the basics of visual merchandising including store design, display composition, color, props, mannequins and lighting. It's a reference book you'll want to share with your staff. The format includes lots of photographs and the text is easy to read.

Contemporary Visual Merchandising

By Jay and Ellen Diamond (Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J.)

As the name suggests, this book looks at contemporary merchandising techniques and presents case studies to educate the reader. It's simple and a great teaching tool as well as a refresher book for the experienced merchandiser.

➤ MAGAZINES

Frame: The International Magazine of Interior Architecture and Design

Don't let the title mislead you; this magazine is the best I've found for innovative store design ideas that have relevance for the outdoor specialty retailer. Published in England six times a year, it's full of photographs of the very latest design trends and fabulous stores. Check out the magazine online at www.frameimag.com.

Display & Design Ideas

This tabloid-sized, free magazine gets better with every issue. Chock-full of full-color photos of new stores and loads of display products, it is the best resource for merchandising materials and sources available today. For subscription information, go online to www.ddimagazine.com.

VM & SD (Visual Merchandising & Store Design)

VM&SD takes a sophisticated look at retail in the United States. Its store features are accompanied by colorful photos and its product reviews always give good ideas even though it tends to focus on high-end stores. Regardless, ideas are everywhere and a subscription to this magazine will prove a good resource. To inquire about the magazine and subscriptions, visit www.visualstore.com.

▶ MERCHANDISING TRADE SHOWS**GlobalShop**

This is the biggest visual merchandising show in the United States held once a year at McCormick Place in Chicago. The 2003 dates are March 16-18. It's actually five shows under one roof (so you get your money's worth): Visual Merchandising, Store Fixturing, P.O.P., Store Design & Op-

erations, and The Digital Store. If you go, don't skip the seminar series—it's excellent.

EuroShop

EuroShop is held every three years in Dusseldorf, Germany, in February. It is gigantic, exciting and offers the very latest in European technologies for the retail environment. The Europeans take their stores and merchandising very seriously and the exhibitors answer in kind by creating huge, visually stimulating booths. EuroShop is a great place to see the next generation of retail enhancements. Save up now for the next show in 2005.

▶ MERCHANDISING EXPERTS**Retail Resource Group**

P.O. Box 7266
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607
Contact: Brian Dyches, 949-363-5955
info@retailresourcegroup.com

RRG has proven business and design tactics for the retail community to increase sales, develop brand image and impact customers. The firm works with communities, retailers and manufacturers around the globe to analyze, direct and execute the best retail practices.

Route One

1507 Sanchez Street
San Francisco, CA 94131
Contact: Tery R. Young, 415-939-8724
tery@routeonedesign.com
Robert J. Shapiro, 415-647-4234
robert@routeonedesign.com

Route One is a new firm that provides consulting and contract services including store and fixture design, visual merchandising and presentation, in-store signage, graphics design and strategic sourcing.

Visual Marketing Services

Minneapolis, MN
Contact: Ralph Winkelmeyer, 612-789-0148
rwwink@aol.com

Services include on-site consults, merchandising training, fixture design and resourcing, and new store concepting. Winkelmeyer is also available for speaking engagements.

So, with this list in hand, start your hunt for the information you need. My sense is that, in the future, we'll see a greater emphasis on retail merchandising as the competition for the almighty dollar heats up in a competitive and uncertain economy and, as a result, more resources will become available.

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