PROJECTS TO ACCOMPANY:
Visual Merchandising 3rd edition by Tony Morgan

Tony Morgan has put together this set of projects to help students apply what they are learning on their course. Each project sets out the objectives and connects the activity to the text.

1. WINDOWS: Window themes and schemes

2. WINDOWS: Props

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1. WINDOWS: Window themes and schemes

Challenge: To think of an inspirational window theme and develop it into a full window scheme for ten closed windows.

Objectives:

• to carry a theme through many windows
• to create interest and cause a reaction
• to be aware of current trends that will help promote the product
• to consider social and cultural events

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider a concept that can be developed into a window scheme for more than one window display.

1. Take a piece of A2 cartridge paper and draw ten empty window boxes.
2. Take another piece of A2 cartridge paper and use it to brainstorm ideas (these should be written notes and rough sketches).
3. Once the initial theme has been established, you should then think of other ideas relating to the theme that can be carried through the ten windows.
4. Sketch or write the ideas in each of the ten empty window boxes.

Reading: pages 60-66

Notes for instructor:

• Try to encourage your students to think 'out of the box' and to come up with as many ideas as possible.
• Encourage your students to use a colour scheme that links the scheme together.
• A slogan in each of the windows may help tie the window scheme together.
• Encourage your students to consider seasonal and topical events.

Timing: This exercise should take two hours.

2. WINDOWS: Props

Challenge: To think of suitable window props that can be used to help support the merchandise and create a window scheme.

Objectives:

• to source a prop that will help support the product
• to create a theme using a prop that could be developed into a complete window scheme
• to consider the prop/product ratio

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider which props would best be suited for use in each of the following seasonal/promotional window displays.

• Christmas
• Easter
• Mother's Day
• Valentine's Day
• Launch of a new season fashion collection
• Eid
• Halloween
• Perfumery launch

1. Take a piece of A2 cartridge paper and use it to brainstorm ideas (these should be written notes and rough sketches).
2. Research each of the important dates and product categories.
3. Sketch each of the ideas out on a piece of A2 cartridge paper.

Reading: pages 66-73

Notes for instructor:

• Try to encourage your students to think 'out of the box' and to come up with as many ideas as possible.
• Encourage your students to think of one large prop that will dominate the window.
• A slogan in each of the windows may help tie the window scheme together.
• Encourage your students to consider seasonal and topical events.

Timing: This exercise should take two hours.

3. WINDOWS: Designing a window display

Challenge: To design a window display.

Objectives:

• to explore balance and prop to product ratio
• to examine balance and focal points

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider how best to design an effective window display.

1. Take a piece of A3 paper and draw a rectangle 30 x 20 cm. This is your window.
2. Find a fashion magazine and cut out three models (either male or female, or even both). These should all be around the same size (approx. 10 cm). These are your mannequins.
3. Take a piece of coloured card and cut five rectangular shapes: 15 x 10 cm, 16 x 8 cm, 12 x 6 cm, 10 x 7 cm, 14 x 12 cm. These are your props. Imagine that they are screens.
4. Draw a dot in the centre of the window rectangle - this is your focal point.
5. Try grouping the props in the window first.
6. Add the mannequins.
7. Try and get the mannequins to interact with each other and the props. Remember that all of the props do not need to be placed at the back of the window.

Reading: pages 74-79

Notes for instructor:

• Encourage your students to group the props around the focal point and to add the largest props first.
• The mannequins can be grouped together to create a strong focal point that draws the eye into the window.

Timing: This exercise should take two hours.

4. WINDOWS: Colour

Challenge: To explore the uses of the colour wheel and how it can be used to help create innovative window displays.

Objectives:

• to identify how colour can be used to create effective visual displays
• to identify the difference between primary, secondary and tertiary colours
• to identify the effects colours can have on the individual
• to be aware how different colours can be used to give the impression of space

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider the use of colours in a window display and how they can be used to create different environments.

1. Take three tins of water-soluble paint in the three primary colours - red, blue and yellow.
2. Using a pencil and rule draw a three-dimensional outline of a window on cartridge paper. Repeat this six times.
3. In each of the windows draw three different sized boxes in the centre of the window (the largest just off-centre and towards the back, the medium-sized one just in front of it to the left and the smallest in front of the largest and positioned to the right). You now have a 'grouping' of products.
4. Using the paint and a brush, colour in each of the windows and groupings demonstrating the six key colour combinations - complementary, split-complementary, double complementary, triadic, analogous and monochromatic.

Reading: pages 84-89

Notes for instructor:

• By simply watering down the colours and mixing them together, the three primary colours are all the students need to create every colour required to complete this exercise.
• Remind your students to colour in the walls and floors of each of the windows as well as the boxes.
• The students should be able to identify that painting the walls and floor a dark colour will make the interior of the window appear smaller - a bright window will make the window look larger.

Timing: This exercise should take three hours.

5. WINDOWS: Window signage

Challenge: To design a descriptive window ticket that would stand next to a mannequin and highlight how much each of the garments the mannequin is wearing costs.

Objectives:

• to include a brand logo
• to inform the customer of the price of each garment
• to be aware of layout and typefaces
• to consider how best to communicate the message to the customer

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider how best to communicate with the customer and to underline the price of each of the garments a mannequin is displaying.

1. This exercise is best done using Photoshop or any other creative PC package.
2. Design a logo that is creative yet commercial and represents the products which are for sale.
3. List the products on the left hand of an A5 set page (portrait). Remember to list the items from top to bottom and outside in as the mannequin is wearing them (i.e. hat, coat, sweater, shirt, jeans, shoes).
4. Add the prices next to the clothing items.
5. Ensure that the background colour of the ticket does not obscure the type colour.
6. Consider the design and layout of the text, ensuring that it is visible to the eye from at least 3.04 m away, as it would be if placed adjacent to a mannequin in a window.

Reading: page 100

Notes for instructor:

• Try to encourage your students to think creatively yet also to consider the message to the customer.
• Encourage your students to use a colour scheme that is sympathetic to the product category.
• Encourage your students to design an eye-catching logo.
• Encourage your students to consider how the products should be listed in the correct order.

Timing: This exercise should take three hours.

6. WINDOWS: Window calendar

Challenge: To decide how best to utilise windows throughout an entire year, considering themes and social events.

Objectives:

• to delegate windows to specific seasonal/promotional events throughout a year
• to be aware of how much revenue each of the windows will create
• to consider social and cultural events
• to decide how long each of the windows should be installed for
• to consider the removal and re-dressing of windows

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider the use of your windows and how best to utilise them to gain maximum exposure for the products and window schemes.

1. Take a piece of A2 cartridge paper and draw a grid consisting of twenty windows across the top of the paper and twelve boxes down (representing each of the months).
2. Write each of the months down the left hand side of the grid (January to December) and number the windows 1 to 20 across the top.
3. Fill in each of the window boxes with what you would expect to see in each of the store's windows throughout the year.
4. Keep in mind seasonal events and sale times - these should be added first.
5. Consider how long a window display would be in for and when the window should be removed (i.e. a Valentine's Day window should be removed and replaced on 15th February).

Reading: pages 106-109

Notes for instructor:

• Try to encourage your students to think 'out of the box' and to come up with as many ideas as possible.
• Encourage your students to research seasonal events.
• Make your students aware of the commerciality of removing and replacing the window scheme as soon as the date of the promotion has finished.
• Encourage your students to consider how much revenue each of the windows will generate in sales (i.e. a card giving promotion will not generate as much revenue as a gift giving promotion such as Christmas). This revenue should determine how long the window would be installed for.

Timing: This exercise should take three hours.

7. IN-STORE VISUAL MERCHANDISING: Product adjacencies

Challenge: To decide where best to position products adjacent to each other in order to encourage a customer to spend more and navigate the store easily.

Objectives:

• to encourage customer footfall
• to increase spending
• to decide where the product categories should be placed to gain maximum sales
• to identify the core product categories and the minor ones

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider where each of the following menswear product categories should be placed to encourage a customer to 'shop' the selling space.

• shoes
• denim
• suits
• shirts
• trainers
• underwear
• ties
• coats
• knitwear
• sportswear
• scarves
• belts

1. Take an A2 piece of cartridge paper and group the obvious categories together (i.e. suits and shirts) to create sub-groups.
2. When the sub-groups are placed together consider how they may then be placed next to each other.
3. Assume that the A2 paper is a store floor and start to write the product categories on to the paper so that they interlink with each other.
4. The final floor layout should have each of the product categories naturally leading into one other (i.e. sneakers leading into sportswear).
5. Mark the store entrance on the layout as this will determine where the customer enters the store from and where he/she should be led.
6. Arrange the fixtures so that they guide the customer through the store.

Reading: pages 120-149

Notes for instructor:

• It is important that your students think logically about how a customer will navigate the store and what he/she may be shopping for.
• Try to encourage your students to think about 'add on sales', such as placing ties next to shirts, shirts adjacent to suits and so on.
• Make sure your students think about the entrance and which products a customer will view first. The customer should be led to the back of the store to find commodity merchandise such as underwear.

Timing: This exercise should take one hour.

8. IN-STORE VISUAL MERCHANDISING: Floor layout

Challenge: To lay out a fashion floor of a store with the correct selling fixtures positioned to help a customer navigate the whole floor, as well as considering display sites, service areas and changing rooms.

Objectives:

• to encourage customer footfall
• to ascertain where selling fixtures are best placed
• to decide where the product categories should be placed to gain maximum sales
• to identify the prime and least selling areas within the floor

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider the floor space and the use of selling fixtures along with the key service areas.

1. Take an A2 piece of card as a template for your store floor.
2. Cut out shapes to represent each of the fixtures, display sites, till points and changing rooms.
3. Colour code each of the selling fixtures so that they represent a different product category (i.e. red represents denim, blue represents coats).
4. Mark the store entrance on the card as this will determine where the customer enters the store from and where he/she should be led.
5. Arrange the fixtures so that they guide the customer through the floor.

Reading: pages 122-149

Notes for instructor:

• It is important that your students do not dedicate a lot of retail space to service areas and changing rooms. Selling fixtures will obviously see a healthy retail growth in the store's profits.
• Remind your students that a customer must be able to walk around the fixtures and that they need to consider the walkways and the space each of the fixtures take up.
• Key trends should be placed at the front of the store in the platinum area.
• Core products should be situated in the silver and gold areas.
• Services and changing rooms should be placed in the bronze areas.

Timing: This exercise should take two hours.

9. IN-STORE VISUAL MERCHANDISING: Product handling

Challenge: To colour block a wall fixture.

Objectives:

• to merchandise a wall using products

Strategy: This exercise requires you to create a wall fixture using products.

1. Take a piece of A3 paper. The paper is to be used landscape.
2. Find a clothing catalogue or an Internet site with female or male clothing lines. Print out or cut out some tops, bottoms and accessories. These can be trend-led items or basics.
3. Draw three lines on your paper 8 cm apart, running from left to right. These are your clothing rails or shelves.
4. Take your product templates and try to merchandise the wall. Consider colour blocking or use the templates to create a trend wall.
5. Include a display or add a graphic on the highest shelf.

Reading: pages 150-154

Notes for instructor:

• Try to encourage your students to consider the use of colour, trends and ratios of tops to bottoms.
• Encourage your students to use all of the wall space. Remind them that commercially it is not viable to have empty wall space.
• Encourage your students to add accessories, especially if they are considering a strong trend.

Timing: This exercise should take two hours.

10. IN-STORE VISUAL MERCHANDISING: Garment folding

Challenge: To create a folding board and use it to fold a sweater correctly and neatly to a professional standard.

Objectives:

• to cut a folding board from mount board
• to fold a sweater using the folding board
• to present the finished product in a professional manner

Strategy: This exercise requires you to consider how best to present an item of knitwear neatly and to a professional standard.

1. Take a piece of mount board and cut it using a craft knife and metal rule to a size you wish the sweaters to be folded to.
2. Follow the step-by-step instructions on page 158 (the garment should be pressed beforehand).
3. Try folding more than one item to see if they are all the same size and sit comfortably on top of each other.

Reading: page 158

Notes for instructor:

• Try to encourage your students to be precise. They must take care cutting the folding board to the correct size. The board must also be cut small enough for the arms of the garment to fold in.
• Encourage your students to press the garment before they start to fold the item.
• Examine how neat each of the folded garments is. They should appear neat and tidy, with any labels hidden inside the neck.

Timing: This exercise should take half an hour.

11. IN-STORE VISUAL MERCHANDISING: Online retailing

Challenge: To shop for a product online, find it in the retailer's store and compare how it has been presented in both places.

Objectives:

- to ascertain if the product looks as good online as in-store
- to see how the product is promoted in-store
- to see if the product online and in-store is grouped together with other merchandise to help create add-on sales that are part of an outfit building tactic

Strategy: This exercise requires you to analyse the various strategies that the retailer has used to promote its products online and in-store.

1. Choose an item of clothing such as a branded pair of jeans, a pair of shoes or a little black dress.
2. Find the item online, selecting a retailer that also has a store you can visit.
3. Research how the retailer is promoting the individual item online.
4. Visit the store and review how it is promoting the same item. Is the product presented in the window display or as part of an in-store display? Is it easy to identify in-store? Is there relevant signage to help you find it? Is it available in other colours, sizes and styles? What other merchandise is displayed with it?
5. Compare the item with its online description. Are you happy with the actual item? How accurate is the online description?
6. Consider how the item can be promoted better in-store. Is there potential to create add-on sales?
7. Write a 500 word evaluation of your findings, with recommendations for improvement of the in-store promotion. Include screen shots and photographs taken in-store.
8. Present your findings back to your class.

Reading: pages 186-189

Notes for instructor:

- This can be an individual or group task.
- Try to get your students to source an item they would not necessarily purchase themselves in order to take them out of their comfort zone. For example, to select an item that is beyond their price limit or a designer item.
- Encourage your students to present their work using PowerPoint.

Timing: This exercise should take three hours plus time to visit the store.

12. MANNEQUINS: Mannequin dressing

Challenge: To dress a mannequin with an oversized outfit.

Objectives:

• to explore how to pin a garment on a mannequin

Strategy: This exercise requires you to dress a mannequin with an oversized shirt.

1. Take a male or female mannequin and ensure that it is secure on its base plate.
2. Take a large size men's shirt and iron or steam it.
3. Place the shirt on the mannequin, ensuring that the arms are secure and through the sleeves.
4. Take a box of dressmaking pins and pin the shirt so that it looks as if it fits the mannequin and the pins cannot be seen.
5. Remember to try to avoid damaging the garment.

Reading: page 209

Notes for instructor:

• The oversized shirt should be folded in at the back of the mannequin and pinned.
• The sleeves will also need to be pinned making the shirt look as if it fits the mannequin.
• Encourage your students to try rolling the sleeves up if it is a casual shirt.

Timing: This exercise should take one hour.