

THE LIGHTING OF RETAIL SPACES AND ITS ROLE IN THE PURCHASING DECISION

Diana-Elena Cozma-Matei, PhD, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

Abstract: The image of a product is directly connected to lighting because lighting can reveal both the advantages and the disadvantages of that product. The purchase act should offer the customers a certain degree of comfort, if their emotions, their pleasure, their feelings and the adaptation of the commercial environment to the types of commercial offer are taken into consideration. This is the way of creating a retail space which is as efficient as possible and that is why the experts in the field have to look for solutions regarding lighting and sensory marketing.

Keywords: lighting, retail space, customer, environment, product.

By the term *store* we understand a permanent exhibition of goods that reflect the level of development of the society and the structure of the population's consumption. The most known role of a store is that of selling goods, as it constitutes the source of supplies, therefore the source of fulfilling the demands of the population. Any store is characterised by an interior design (interior walls, ceiling, floor, lighting, sound) and by an exterior one (shopfront, shop window, entrance).

The design of a store should create an ambience that makes customers enter the shop, that attracts them to visit the departments, that gives them the sensation of comfort while shopping, that stimulates them to purchase products, and all this is in a strong relation with their degree of satisfaction. Together with other elements belonging to the marketing mix, the ambience of the store contributes to the overall image of the store.

The design is the one that helps in differentiating stores because customers are attracted by the name of the company – displayed at the entrance, by the position and, of course, by the arrangement in the shop windows. Despite the competition, a company should prove originality.

The shopfront represents the vertical surface that is displayed to potential customers, that is the interface between the space in question and the exterior. There are several types of shopfronts:

- Horizontal shopfront – parallel to the street - as in the case of shoe shops.
- Angled shopfront – it arises interest and also attracts
- Arcade shopfront – it has the horizontal shopfront as a starting point, but has niches for entrances and windows.

The signboard indicates the name and logo of the retail company, offering information to the customers. The place in the vicinity of the entrance influences the experience of customers positively or negatively, that is why it is difficult to keep under control. The shop windows should reflect the atmosphere of the shop and lighting, colour and composition should also be considered.

Among the objectives of modern merchandising I would like to mention the attraction and transformation of passers-by into visitors, the transformation of visitors into shoppers and the transformation of the purchasing process into a pleasant experience with the aim of stimulating the future visits of customers. To attract visitors, great stress is laid especially on lighting. Light has the role of influencing the perception the individual has of the surrounding space and it also has the role of changing the disposition, generating a state of good mood. This makes you feel relaxed and safe, that is why the study of interior lighting is very important. There are several types of lighting:

Natural lighting which comes from glazed spaces (windows or fanlights) and varies according to the season or weather. The degree of intensity and brightness differs very much.

General lighting ensures a uniform distribution of light, so that there is enough light for performing general activities – customers need sufficient light to see the products and the quantitative and qualitative variations. General lighting is weaker if the range of products is narrower and the price is higher but in this case the accent lighting is intensified.

Accent lighting emphasizes certain contrasts, products or spots, leading to the purchase of a product. Together with the decor, it influences the customer in a decisive way.

Asymmetric lighting has as a consequence the increase in store traffic, and in its case the visual support is ensured by the walls. Customers are attracted with the help of the lights at the back of the store, taking into consideration that that spot is colder.

According to the position of the retail space and to the colour range, warm, cold or neutral lights are used. Warm light is used in those spaces where a low lighting level is needed, especially in the case of current products. Cold light is used for the departments with small products and with the help of neutral light an aesthetic and practical effect is obtained.

The lighting of shop windows shouldn't be very powerfully intensified, taking into consideration the fact that the density of exterior lighting is greater than that inside the shop. To emphasize a product thin lighting devices should be used, so that light is not wasted. According to the above mentioned ideas, merchandising can be defined as a set of methods and techniques of active presentation of a product, a presentation made in the best material and psychological conditions, with the aim of purchasing optimisation and having as a result the satisfaction of customers during the search and purchase of products, which implies advertising, displaying and emphasizing. The retail space provided for each product or family of products can be modified in time, according to the following factors:

1. The profitability of the product
2. The display and sale forms – for instance, clothing items can be placed on shelves or coat hangers
3. The seasonality and life span of a product
4. The reciprocal stimulation of sales is related to the vicinity of some products, for instance bicycles – sport articles – trainers.

The typology of the customers should be taken into consideration because young people prefer strong lighting while adults opt for less aggressive lights. When choosing the type and amount of lighting devices, the type of the product, the typology of the customers and the position should be taken into account.

Another aspect of lighting refers to the staff of the retail space, because if the light is too strong it can lead to discomfort and even to headaches or sore eyes, if we take into

consideration the amount of time spent at the workplace. Besides the implied costs, a strong light emits heat and has as a result the leaving of the customers; moreover, the employees are prone to sick-leaves, which affects the image of the company. The majority of lighting devices have been manufactured for horizontal illumination, that is to light the ground or the work level and this is the reason why vertical spaces are not very well lit.

At present, the creation of a relaxing environment is a determinant factor for the success in business. Customers want to encounter unique experiences by spending as much time as possible in the store and this thing has as a consequence the increase in sales. Through the use of specific products a pleasant ambience and visual impact are obtained and light emphasizes on gondolas and special offers.

Bibliography:

Corodeanu Daniela - Merchandising. Teorie, metode si instrumente pentru eficientizarea punctului de vanzare, Ed. Tehnopress, 2008

[Dominique Mouton](#), [Gauderique Paris](#) - Practica merchandisingului. Spațiul de vânzări. Oferta de produse. Comunicarea la locul de vânzare, Ed. Polirom, 2009

Martin M Pegler – Visual Merchandising and Display, Ed. Berg Publishers, 2011

<http://www.lighting.philips.com/>