

Role of Store Layout In Apparel Retailing

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Abstract- In India, apparel is one of the largest retail category and is expected to lead the organized retail sector in India in future. The increasing purchasing capacity and awareness of fashion and trend has resulted in providing a huge market to the organised players of the country. A successful apparel store should keep a consumer interested and finally convert the prospect into the customer. Retailers use store layout to influence customers' behavior by designing the store's flow, merchandise placement and ambiance. Store layout is an important element which attracts the customer and makes more purchases than the planned purchase and leading to customer loyalty. This article attempts to explore the role of store layout in apparel retail store.

Keywords- store layout, apparel retailing, consumer behaviour, customer loyalty.

I. INTRODUCTION

Retail sector in India is witnessing a huge exercise as traditional markets make way for new formats such as departmental stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialty stores. A new focus on the apparel retail sector has attracted attention in recent days. A growing economy, rising disposable income and the growing aspirations of Indian consumers is expected to drive growth in the Indian apparel industry. Indian apparel market can be broadly classified into men's wear, women's wear and kids wear. Currently, men's wear holds the largest share in the apparel market followed by women's wear and then by kids wear.

The success of the apparel retail store is influenced by many factors such as store location, pricing, quality of the merchandise, brand image, advertising and sales promotion, knowledge of the sales personnel, etc. One of the important factor which influences the growth of the apparel retail store is the layout of the store. The design of the floor space of the store and the arrangement of the products in the shelves and aisles and display stands constitute the layout of the store. A well designed store layout can contribute to a positive shopping atmosphere, which results in the kind of shopping behaviour a retailer wants to achieve.

II. TYPES OF STORE LAYOUT

Grid Layout

Grid layout consists of display of merchandise on flat bottomed surfaces and aisles in a repetitive pattern. Although, the grid is not an aesthetically pleasing arrangement, it is very convenient for customers who need to move throughout the store to locate products of their choice. It has long aisles with highlighted items on the ends of the aisles which are known as end caps.

Racetrack Layout

A racetrack layout is used when a retailer provides a major customer aisle that begins at the entrance, loops through the store usually in the shape of a circle, square, or rectangle and then returns the customer to the front of the store. When retailers want to encourage customers to take time to explore and seek out new and interesting merchandise, they opt for the race track layout. The racetrack layout also known as a loop layout, is a store design that facilitates customers to have access to the store's multiple entrances and departments. As customers go around the loop layout they notice different merchandise displayed from various angles and thus this store design encourages impulse purchases

Free Form Layout

Free form layout is also known as boutique layout. In a free form layout, the merchandise and aisles are arranged asymmetrically. This is a non-structured layout design that can take any form, there is no defined traffic pattern, and it works best in small stores in which customers wish to browse where merchandise is the same type, such as fashion apparel. The customer is allowed to wander, change direction and backtrack all with ease because of the lack of restrictions, this has the added benefit of letting the customer glance or stumble upon an item they might be inclined to purchase.

Herringbone Layout

Similar to the grid layout, a Herringbone shop layout design is suited to spaces that need to cater for range of stock,

but have limited space. This layout usually has a single central aisle, with separate walkways either side for products.

Forced Path Layout

Forced Path layout is often called the mouse trap layout because it forces a customer to follow a predefined path from one point in the store to another while sticking through to a certain pattern. Customers wanted to experience a store and all its offerings are going to enjoy such a layout as they can spend their time going through each item one after the other without out having to select from a variety of paths.

III. ROLE OF STORE LAYOUT

Spend Longer Time

Store layout helps the retailer to predict the behaviour of the consumers. Store layout should make the customer to spend more hours in the store which will increase the possibility of purchasing the product.

Escalators and lift should be placed in the suitable location to enhance the shopping mood of the customer. Canteens and restrooms will further help the customer to spend more time in the store.

Create Positive Attitude

The mood of the customer should be positive such that he or she can do the shopping without any tension. The store layout design should enhance the positive mood of the customer. The factors such as merchandise display, colour, lighting, music and other aspects should maintain the positive mood of the customer. In apparel retail store layout, bright lights should be used to highlight the products. Colour of the store influences consumer perceptions and preferences, purchase and consumption behaviour, and helps companies to differentiate from the competition. Arousal induced by music results in increased pleasure levels, which in turn positively influences shopper behaviors, including time and money spend, approach behavior, and satisfaction with the shopping experience. The presence of an inoffensive scent in a store is an inexpensive and effective way to enhance consumer reactions to the store and its merchandise.

Arouse Additional Sales

The store layout can arrange different product categories such that the customers should be able to shop the various items in one location. The complementary products or similar brands should be kept closer so that the possibility of

buying the products will increase. Apparel retail layout may have tie, socks, etc., near the cash counter so that the customers may have an idea of buying them.

Impulse Purchase

In every retail store, encouraging customers to buy on impulse is a tried and tested way to boost average purchase value. Encouraging impulse purchases requires the right mix of product selection and product placement. Price is one of the most important factors in choosing the right products to use for impulse displays. Low priced items can be kept near the checkout area so that the customers will purchase them. Signage can be used to get the attention of the customers. Seasonal items are one of the best choices for the checkout and impulse displays because they tap into that sense of urgency that seasonal products are inherently available for a limited time.

Customer flow

Customer flow is the number and pattern of customers coming into or passing through a store. When a store understands its customer flow, it's also able to understand if the placement of its merchandise, or its store layout, is working correctly. A customer needs some time to decide to buy a product. The purchase of goods from particular product ranges is determined by ambiance. One of the main purposes of the store layout is undoubtedly to create smooth customer flow through the store.

Prevention of theft

Retail stores are of particular interest to thieves because they hold valuables and accessible cash. As such, retail store theft is quite common and in many areas. Store layout helps to reduce theft, with the correct positioning of lighting and displays both working to provide an environment that is less conducive to theft. Proper store layout and staff positioning plays a critical role in the reduction of shoplifting and theft.

All areas of the floor should be visible to staff members monitoring it, and the retail environment should be adequately lit so there are no dark spaces for shoplifters to lurk and conceal items.

IV. CONCLUSION

One of the most important criteria for customer satisfaction is the ease with which the customer finds his way in the store. The most important thing for designing an

effective store layout is to provide better customer responsiveness. Retailer has to choose which store layout will increase the sales. Grid layout is the most common type of layout used in retail stores. Racetrack layout provides an engaging shopping experience to the customers. Store layout displays the overall image of the store and influence the mood of the customer to purchase more products. A good store layout attracts the customer to the store, enable them to easily locate the merchandise, keep them in the store for a long time and make them to purchase with ease, induce them to make impulse purchase and provide an overall pleasurable shopping experience.

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