

STORE ENVIRONMENT- A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS IN RETAILING

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Abstract

Ambience of a shop plays an important role in creating an image in the minds of the customers. The influence of store Ambience on buying behaviour is increasing with the rise in two income and single head of household families who are mostly making more purchase decisions in the store. Retailers has also realised the impact of store environment on shopping behaviour and are therefore devoting considerable amount of resources to their store design and merchandise presentation in order to attract and retain customer. How good a retail store may be in offering the best of products at the best bargains, but all efforts would be fruitless if there are no people walking through the door. Therefore to beat the competition and survive in the market retailers need to make their store visually attractive from the inside and welcoming from the outside. The main focus of this paper is to identify the factors of store Ambience which customers consider important.

Keywords: Store Environment, Store Ambience, Atmosphere, Lighting, Sales Person, Retailing.

Introduction

Store atmosphere plays an important role in influencing customer buying behaviour. Kotler (1973) defined Atmosphere as a conscious design of an area in order to create a desired effect on consumers. It is the effort to design a shopping environment that produces emotional effects on the individual in order to increase their likelihood of purchase. Zomerdijk & Voss(2010)concluded by saying that there is an important difference between “desired atmosphere” and “perceived environment”. The first refers to the set of sensory qualities designed for the artificial environment in order to establish a specific “ambiance”. On the other hand, perceived atmosphere can vary from one individual to another, one’s reaction to colors, sounds, noise and temperature are partially learned, and they cannot be fully controlled by organizations. Turley & Milliman (2000) said that The atmospheric characteristics of a store are relevant for they influence a wide variety of consumer evaluations and behaviours. Soars(2009) said that atmosphere is a useful mean to draw the attention of consumers through the use of colors, sounds, sights, smells, touch and movements, to differentiate themselves from others. Kotler (1973) warns that even the atmospheres considered successful must undergo a periodic review, as its influence declines over time, depending on the customers getting used to it or the progress of competitors in the direction of more efficient and new atmospheres. Verhoef et al. (2009) said that creating a superior customer experience seems to be one of the central objectives in today’s retailing environments. Bitner (1990) said that significant effort has been made to understand which specific environmental cues need to be modified in a store in order to increase sales, extend the time spend in the store or other approach behaviours.

Review of Literature

Turley & Milliman (2000) said that the store atmosphere is the stimulus that causes the consumer evaluation in relation to the environment, and some behavioural responses. A major reason for non-functional in store purchases corresponds to sensory stimulation. The store atmosphere can enhance the quality perceived by consumers, which leads to higher levels of persuasion According to Kotler (1973).

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