

AN INVESTIGATION INTO DIFFERENT STORE LAYOUTS ADOPTED IN APPAREL RETAIL STORES.

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Abstract:

With the competition being intense in apparel sector to drive sales and profits retailers need to be competitive in attracting and retaining customers. Retail store attributes got an important role to in enhancing customer satisfaction, a store layout is one important variable that when effectively implemented aids to store performance. This study aims to know the importance and role store layout has got to play in apparel retail store format. This paper studies different of types of layout that have been used in a retail store format. This paper stress on the benefits of having well planned layout and its possible effects on consumer behaviour. The way store layout adds to the comfort of the shoppers is being analyzed. It highlights the key role of store layout and its benefits in increasing store sales. A study on store layout being one of important store attribute helps in knowing customers evaluation of apparel retailer's image.

Keywords: Store layout, Apparel, Store performance, Retailer.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Store layout is an important element of visual merchandising that engages and attracts a customer. It is used by a retailer to plan for merchandise placement and designing a store flow and ambiance of the store. while guiding a customer around the store and appealing for purchase as well as to consider unplanned purchase. A knowledge on consumer shopping behaviour and knowing target customers shopping pattern help a retailer to come out with the pattern that suits the customer. Organized retail store needs to understand a customer psychology to achieve success and contribute to long run efficiency in store operations. Layout should be engaging a customer because long time a customer is in store more likely is that they buy. They also contribute for the emotional segment with the aisle, floor, fixtures, merchandise color combination and lighting pattern implemented as part of layout technique adopted.

Store layout is a floor plan of a store that leads customer towards products displayed and also guides through a store. Well planned store put a customer at ease while finding a product he is looking for. A good store layout enhances his shopping experience and leads to customer satisfaction. It provides a well thought space management in store with appropriate product placement, shelf layout, walk space, fixtures placement. Every apparel store has its own way of leading customers to merchandise store layout can be one of those important elements that leads a customer towards merchandise. A good store layout attracts a customer's and guides him throughout with less complication. Store layout guides a customer through store and create a smooth customer flow in store.

Store layout help to achieve visual merchandising goals as it aids in well planned routing and planning for sufficient enough wide aisles to encourage smooth customer flow inside. Especially with apparels customer might need to examine the product, color, texture and design so he might need some time to stop, look and decide for a purchase. Good store layout can assist a customer in selecting merchandise at ease. In store spacing should be such that it helps logistics in carrying and placing merchandise with utmost care and reduce any damage possible.

A poorly designed layout can create confusion and lead to dissatisfaction. Poor designs add to cost of the store, no proper communication and increase discomfort while shopping. ill designed layout may provide an opportunity to shoplifters so care should be taken to prevent shoplifting .layout designed should be such that it may not encourage shoplifting ,easily visible aisles , comfortable shelf length ,eye level aisles so that employees can keep an eye on to .A well designed layout offers flexibility in terms of space, presentation, provide ability to adapt to changes in merchandise quantity to be added to store. A well-planned store layout is one that aims at maximizing sales for each square foot are in a retail store. It helps to assess how a store is performing in terms of revenue generated for square feet of store space.

Implementing quality store attributes in stores help to differentiate store with competitors. in spite of merchandise being same it's the visual merchandise elements that adds value and create an image in minds of customer and compel them to enter a store this is where store attributes help to stand different from crowd in the market. This will also leave an option of checking by a retailer whether a customer is actually involved in shopping or is he walking out of the store without purchase. This forms an important element of store interior design to impress and increase sale of a store. Retailer need to work on store layout in a such a way as to manage traffic flow and designing presentation space so as to achieve both. congested and improperly designed layout may create tension among shoppers. kind of layout need to be prepared keeping shelf height, aisle pattern, pathways, floor patterns in mind. structured store layout positively influences perception of consumers.

visually appealing store design is the key to get and retain customers attention. Store layout of the store works best when designed keeping in mind customers flow, the pattern of movement normally observed in store should be studied. A space should be managed between merchandise displayed and fixtures and walk space. Care should be taken to update display pattern in stores so that customers will not become too familiar with the layout arrangements. Freshening up the store look while bringing in changes in store layout is also required. Cross merchandising should be planned well as a part of store layout to encourage additional sales. store layout should go with the visual merchandising goal of the retailer and encourage purchase behaviour in store.

II. TYPES OF STORE LAYOUT:

Grid layout : This is the traditional layout where merchandise is displayed in the form of long aisles .It offers more space and can offer more quantity of merchandise while encouraging consumers to browse through various aisles in order to pick what they want .Impulsive buying is more encouraged in this pattern as a customer has to walk past all the items to store as he is not sure where to find the item he is looking for .Products placed in front of aisles attract customer to pick which may not be in his list. Lot of exposure to merchandise as it has multiple aisles

Racetrack layout: Also called as loop layout this layout offer maximum merchandise in store. A customer is made to go through a track of product once he enters and before he leaves he might have to leave .Creative displays by using this pattern engages the customer and may leave a customer with an impulsive buying where one is more exposed to merchandise .A executed track may be backed by a theme to create an interesting shopping experience.

Free flow layout: No rules defined in this form of layout it's all creativity of a retailer to present his store to customers. Common buying behaviour of customers and customers preference is taken into consideration while planning store layout. Products are placed considering high area of traffic flow of customers in store, per square footage and retailer imagination. It's also known as boutique layout

Spine layout: There is a single main aisle running from front to back of the store and on either side of the main aisle there is a pattern that contains free flow or grid form. combination of layout types is used in this pattern. Each main aisle connects to various section in the store. This layout gives ample space for customers to look around as it offers enough room for the featured merchandise to be visible.

The geometric floor plan is more suitable for apparel and clothing store. This form of layout makes store look full and store is best visible in this format giving eye view of what store is offering. Racetrack layout is also more popular among apparel retailers as it allows maximum showcase of merchandise to customers. There are various combinations of layout that can be formed with the above four main types of layout based on the retail store format. A mixed layout when used in store need to

be compelling for shoppers to have a look and be able to create a natural flow between one to another segment in retail store. Using racks, aisles, furniture aid in creating an interesting store design.

Store layout pattern also needs to consider the target customer while designing the format. Age, sex, number of merchandises offered, depth of products sold in store, retail store space, budget, kind of accessories sold, space between products and fixtures, display space are the few concerns to be taken into account while designing store layout pattern. fixtures, props, displays, color, lighting and flooring are the key store layout elements that has to be balanced well to provide sense and variety for apparel shoppers. Retailer need to plan considering store variables to create ultimate customer experience and gaining profits emphasizing on customer desires that also offers room for growth inside the store.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The impact of store layout and store atmospherics role on buying patterns is studied to know the retail shoppability (Priyanka Singh et al) store performance and consumer behaviour is understood by considering store layout and store interior into as a parameter. With the increasing competitions retailers are designing strategies to increases purchases and store layout plays a key role in increasing sales for the store. Research on location modelling with the well planned layout to scientifically place items in retail store is done to maximize total profit earned by initiating impulsive buying among consumers with the planned store layout technique (Joyendu Bhadury et al)store layout is planned to increases purchases .previous research shows how a well-planned layout may lead to impulsive buying among consumers .store layout is also assumed to be equally prominent in online retail store setup (Ilyas Masudin et al)like the way its relevance is assumed in brick and mortar setup with being influenced for customers perception. store layout along with interior displays has an influence on customer purchase decision (Ryalest M. B. Boka et al), convenience in store makes customer enjoy the shopping experience and significantly increase sales of the store an attractive shopping environment creates comfort while shopping and in turn impact purchase decisions. Influence of store layout and promotional approach was observed to measure the possible influence on impulsive buying (Jhanghiz Syahrivar). Store layout affects customers perception about the store as customer pay attention to the way store is been designed that influences the number of times customers visit.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To study store layout as an important variable of visual merchandising efforts of an apparel retail store
- 2.To study the convenience and benefits of planned store layouts in apparel stores.

V. IMPACT OF WELL PLANNED LAYOUT:



VI. FINDINGS:

A good store layout gives adequate space and also offer more depth and breadth of merchandise assortment when compared to store space they have. Layout should hold enough space for promotions, ads, signages, fixtures, aisles, shelf, bins a store requires. A well-planned Layout dives speed to shopping and influence customer shopping experience. A good layout takes customer throughout the customer making him explore more products, shop longer and may lead towards impulsive buying behaviour. It helps positive evaluation of product assists in making store stand out in the apparel retail market .Layout is an important visual merchandising technique that can work wonders if planned well especially for apparel as a customers need to experience the merchandise in depth in terms of color ,texture, design, pattern .Staff attitude towards customers works well in a planned layouts as a coordination could be mapped well of customers as that with employees.

Store layout increases shopping experience and improves consumer satisfaction. With a detailed understanding on store layout attributes a retailer will be map and manage his store environment and differentiate his store ambience so as to ensure satisfaction. A good store layout influences customers perception about store, merchandise offered with creativity in designing a store set a right impact in minds of customers. A good store layout maximizes store profitability by encouraging buying and putting retail space to maximum use. Knowing how customers navigate in store layout helps to reduce transition zone as much as possible. Use of racks, props and fixtures help to create an interesting store layout and planning for the right merchandising mix in an appealing manner is an important consideration while designing store layout. optimal store layout assist in ease of shopping, aids an element of change and flexibility, guides customers movements in store. Selecting a suitable floor plan and store layout that suits requirement of an apparel store is something a retailer need to plan for keeping store elements and customers into consideration.

VII. CONCLUSION:

A detailed understanding on store layout helps to draft strategies that suits best for an apparel store. utilize budget efficiently so as to bring in changes in store layout that enhances sales for a store and also as expected by a customer. The way a store is designed influence consumer buying behaviour. Designing a store layout by analyzing critical factors definitely add to convenience while shopping that encourages frequency of visits to stores and may make them buy impulsively. Store layout is an important variable of visual merchandising that serve as a silent salesperson by offering an element of convenience and attraction what customers expect from a retail store while shopping. Type of store layout selected should be done considering store elements and retailer perception. Store layout may not be as noticeable as a mannequin in store but it ensures that customer enjoys a store ambience that increases intention to visit, store patronage, recommendation to others. Store layout may not be too prominently visible factor but it creates a conducive environment making customer spend more time in store and converting to sale. Store layout in short is everything that a customer feels, look into, engage and evoke them to purchase. It's the overall experience what a shopper experience right from shop entrance to end.

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