

STORE DESIGN SELLS MERCHANDISE



Merchandising styles and techniques have come a long way from the 1950's (above) to the 1980's (page 6).

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *Many of you have made a significant investment in your business by pipelining your NAPA AUTO PARTS store. After making such a commitment, it only makes sense to maintain the store's professional look. In its continuing series on professional appearance, Outlook offers information on how upkeep can maximize a store's appearance.*)

The NAPA Store Design Program is in its third year and a successful one at that. Just ask any of the NAPA AUTO PARTS store owners who have converted to the common, nationwide look. The numbers speak for themselves, sales increases of pipelined stores are double that of non-pipelined stores.

More than 51% of all NAPA AUTO PARTS stores display the yellow pipeline, NAPA blue and grey and the interior design elements, and the program has certainly proven its worth. The benefits include instant store recognition, more in-store traffic, increased sales and profits and a tie-in to national advertising—a sure bet. The program is also flexible, capable of adapting to almost any store's size and layout. The NAPA pipeline is a familiar sight from coast to coast, so let passing motorists know you are a NAPA AUTO PARTS store that offers quality automotive products and services.

Once consumers stop to come into your store, make sure the interior reinforces the professional look of the exterior by using the complete NAPA Store Design Program. An abundance of merchandising aids are available for your store. Not only is NAPA the No. 1 aftermarket parts

distributor, but it also established several merchandising trends through its Store Design Program. It was developed to give customers the concept of continuity and high quality expected from professional looking stores. In today's marketplace, NAPA's design program, incorporating the blue and grey background, is the look needed to make a professional statement about the business you run.

Embracing the NAPA Store Design Program is a serious investment on your part. What can you do to earn the best return on your investment?

Look around your store. Walk down your aisles. If you were a first time shopper, would you want to browse through the entire store? Can you quickly find a product by looking for aisle signs or banners to direct you to the proper area? Don't overlook photo panels as a reinforcement of the parts your store offers. If you have a Machine Shop, say so.

Are the shelves fully stocked with merchandise? Only clean and undamaged merchandise should be shown in a display. Are prices clearly marked on the item? Are products displayed by similar usage, making it easy for customers to find all the items they need?

As customers browse, do they immediately see the best selling items at eye level? Angling the aisles allows shoppers to see more products and offers a greater view of any wall displays.

Where are your promotional items—on end caps or on the bottom shelf? How many specials are on one end cap? Placing more than three items on an end cap

will cause the products to compete against one another. Price out all merchandise on end caps. This is a good time to use promotional signs.

If a certain area has less customer traffic, try setting up a display to draw them to that area. A well designed, strong visual image will help stimulate unplanned purchases. Display planning pays off for impulse sales which may account for up to 60% of all purchases. Once you've set up product displays, don't forget to update them. A good rule-of-thumb is to rotate the merchandise monthly.

In setting up displays, watch out for your customers' safety. Separate hazardous chemicals—flammables and ignitables, for example—so they are not in the same location. Heavy products need to be on lower shelves or a heavy duty peg hook.

Strategic use of color will cause consumers to circulate throughout the store. NAPA grey serves as a pleasant background color with NAPA blue as an accent color. Setting up NAPA blue highlights along the floor gives the store a "race track" appearance and encourages shoppers to browse through the entire store. One effective floor plan is the loop—a single aisle pattern that channels customers throughout the entire store.

Blue shelf strips set into standard shelf fixture edges draw attention to items placed on lower shelves or other less strategic places. Drawing the shopper's eye to a product with a directive color increases sales opportunities.

(Store Design . . . continued on page 6)