

Education ExpertSource Featured

The Point About Focal Points

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BrandSource member Colders' draws attention and foot traffic with this fully appointed room vignette and faux dropped ceiling.

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Focal points are amazing tools that can affect how your customers travel through your store and help create that ever-important emotional engagement during the shopping experience.

What's a focal point? It's a well-defined visual statement that stands out from its surroundings, thereby attracting attention. Focal points serve to:

- Inform or tell a story
- Inspire
- Direct traffic
- Introduce or define a department
- Break up large areas of merchandise
- Celebrate a product line

Prime examples of showroom focal points include:

- Table displays
- Platform or pedestal displays
- Display vignettes (partial room setups)
- Endcaps
- Brightly illuminated objects, artwork, or architectural elements
- Mannequins in "action"
- Signage (large, illuminated, moving messages)
- Videos on large flat screens
- Live demonstrations
- Interactive kiosks

Well-designed focal points will stop the eyes and often the feet. Strategically placed throughout a store, they will lure and lead customers effortlessly throughout the space.

In a smaller store or in a department of a larger store, focal points should be placed within the first 15 feet of the entrance, and then every 20 to 30 feet, either on a zigzag course, or starting along the right side of the store or department, then running counterclockwise around the perimeter.

They should start out at eye level or lower (such as a nesting table display), and gradually increase in height as one moves further into the space. Focal points toward the rear of the store or department should be elevated so they can be seen from the entrance, and visually invite customers to venture in. Hanging a small "ceiling" over the display can also draw foot traffic from a distance. Remember, the back wall provides the opportunity to serve as a major focal point, luring customers to travel all the way into the showroom space.

Focal points can also bring life to a dead zone. By creating a "story" with merchandise, hanging signage, and/or brightly illuminating a display, you can draw a customer's attention to that light traffic area. Also, make sure that once you have their attention, there is a visible traffic aisle they can follow to delve further into the department. And don't underestimate the value of having a staff person standing near the focal point. He or she can bring even more attention to the display area.

Finally, change up your focal points. After a while, regular customers won't see them anymore and will just walk past them. You need to freshen them up, move them around, or illuminate them differently — anything to make them interesting and attention-getting again.

So, make the most of your retail space by positioning some fun, fresh focal points!



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