

Boost your window display

Practical guides
to optimise your shop

Summary

A

A key space: 52 tricks to boost your window

An area for stating your identity

02

Individual elements of the window display
under the microscope

04

Setting the scene - leave nothing to chance!

04

Colour and light, two important factors !

06

B

Who are we ?

Contact

07

Thanks

07

A key space: 52 tricks to boost your window

The appearance of your shop window is a vital tool for encouraging customers to step inside your shop.

Your window display is the first thing potential customers see. So, how should you lay it out? What colours should you choose? What type of lighting? These choices are by no means trivial. The attention you devote to planning and refining your display is essential. It must be easily visible, well-lit and showcase your merchandise.

But while beautiful, inspiring and balanced decor will help snare passers-by, it is not enough: there are a vast array of

strategic tricks for optimising its impact.

Creating an impactful display requires careful reflection: the overall layout follows precise marketing rules. Do not be afraid to use the services of a window dresser.

30 to 40% of your turnover depends on your window!



4 Shop Window:

The shop window is an effective means of showcasing products, as well as communicating. It acts as an invitation to enter the shop. That is why it is wise to keep things as simple as possible and avoid overloading the window with excessive information, thus losing the attention of the customer.

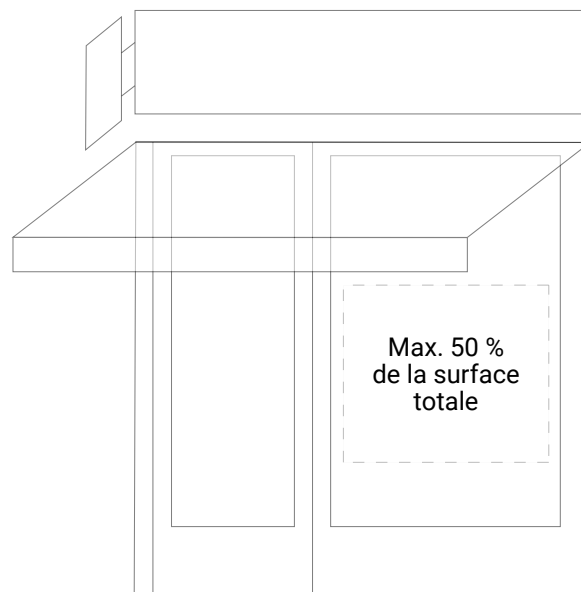
Regulations:

Do not cover more than 50% of the surface of the window.

Tips & tricks:

Too much choice kills impact.

Keep it subtle.



An area for stating your identity

1. Each year, draw up a schedule for changing the window display, following the seasons (Christmas, sales, new collections, etc.), as well as sporting and cultural events. Current affairs and social issues can also provide sources of inspiration.
2. When planning your displays, plan ahead and choose decorative elements that can be reused several times,

or even in every window. Less waste, less expense, and a step towards sustainability!

3. The basic rule: a window should never be "bare" with no text above!

A window display is changed on average 10 to 15 times per year, and approximately every three weeks in fashion boutiques.



4. Keeping it simple is often the most impactful and direct option: the name of your business and its speciality, in an attractive font, does the job perfectly well. A word of warning: while the font chosen for the name of your business can be artistic and unique, choose something easily legible for the tagline (your speciality).

A few inspirational examples:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52dbef69e4b09473684733c7/t/571e3c96b6aa60aa501d3ec6/1461599477561/Charleroi+Bouwemmester+-+Charte+ENSEIGNES-TERRASSES.pdf>.

The message of a window must be read and understood very quickly: pedestrians spend an average of just 3 to 7 seconds looking.



5. Make it inclusive of all customers: choose large, legible and contrasting lettering for partially-sighted customers, and position it 1.40 m from ground level for customers with reduced mobility.
6. Unless it is a clear graphic choice, for instance an art project, avoid overcrowding your window with drawings and text: an excess of photos, offers and writing is detrimental to legibility.
7. The easiest way of adding text to your window? Window stickers! As well as the fact it requires no particular skill, using stickers means that you do not have to deal with as many planning regulations. Several suppliers offer affordable personalised stickers.
8. The aim of your window is to attract customers by showing off what makes you unique: think of it as a magazine cover, which must stand out from the crowd in the newsagents.
9. It may seem obvious, but a shop window must be scrupulously clean! Any hint of dirt gives your business an uncared-for image.
10. Even if the name of your business is already present on your sign, it can be useful to repeat it on the window, depending on the layout of the street. Stand at pavement level and put yourself in the shoes of a passer-by when making this decision.
11. Use the surface of your window to display your web

address and social media accounts: a useful way of staying in touch with customers, if you are on holiday or closed!

12. If you have an artistic spirit and the talent to match, or know someone who does, transform your glazing into a work of art.
13. The design can also be brought together by a simple frame made of wide, coloured tape: this catches attention and highlights the composition of your display, while costing very little.
14. Take care when choosing the colour of the tape or any text: it must contrast with the window background and must not be too dark, to ensure it remains visible/legible.
15. Do not forget the display itself: graphics must never conceal the products.
16. Under current legislation in Brussels, text on shop windows must not cover more than 50% of their surface.
17. Before adding text or logos to your window, consider the overall impression created by your shopfront, including the sign, any awnings and the window. It should all be balanced and, above all, useful: not all of these elements are always necessary. The drawings below give you a glimpse of the possibilities.



Individual elements of the window display under the microscope

- 18.** Creating an impactful display requires careful reflection: the overall layout follows precise marketing rules. Do not be afraid to use the services of a window dresser.
- 19.** To stay abreast of trends and seasons, a window display should be renewed several times a year: choose modular, reusable, solid wood structures; these are also easy to recycle (see our guide “43 easy tips for an eco-responsible shop”).
- 20.** Take inspiration from the techniques used by the big brands: for ease of assembly and disassembly, make the base and vertical walls of your window display from removable and reusable wooden panels. This is also the best option for enabling you to change the various materials and colours that form part of the window display (wood, etc). This choice will enable you to easily attach accessories, mannequins and decorative elements and integrate lighting.
- 21.** It is best to avoid composite materials. However, if you do opt for MDL or OSB, choose adhesive-free options, which do not contain formaldehyde (very damaging to health), with an ecolabel (see our guide “43 easy tips for an eco-responsible shop”).
- 22.** Can't afford to buy new items of decor every time you change your display? Consider hiring or borrowing furniture, or using salvaged materials!
- 23.** Be creative and build displays from unusual materials, like the one below, made from cables and pegs...
- 24.** Do not forget that from street level, passers-by have a view through your window and into your shop interior, albeit partial. Make sure not to obstruct this with the “backs” of units or your till.
- 25.** If your window display is isolated from the rest of the shop, access it via the side wall, which is more discreet.
- 26.** Ideally, allow a depth of at least 1 metre to enable you to move freely in the window when changing displays.
- 27.** If it is not possible to create an enclosed window display, remember that the whole shop will be visible from street level: it must therefore be immaculate.

- 28.** Ideally, the ceiling of your window display should consist of a metal structure (a grille), allowing you to hang graphic panels, decorative elements, or the products you sell.

Make sure access to the window is wide enough for you to manoeuvre mannequins and accessories (at least 83 cm).



- 29.** Furniture, decor, graphics... use them to enhance the product, not drown it out! The ideal proportion is 2/3 product to 1/3 decor.
- 30.** All decorative objects, even second hand ones, must be immaculately clean and regularly dusted. Throw out those sun-bleached artificial flowers!
- 31.** When designing your window display, consider the location of electrical sockets, which should be placed on the side walls.

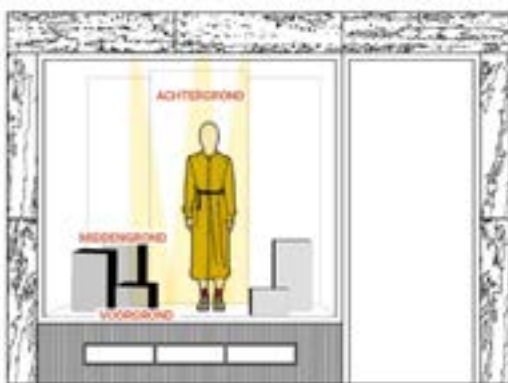
Setting the scene - leave nothing to chance!

- 32.** When arranging your window display, make sure it is visible from different viewpoints: the pavement outside the shop, the opposite pavement and the street (for passers-by in cars and buses).
- 33.** Generally, customers “read” windows from left to right. Any display, large or small, must be constructed around a “vanishing point” or “focal point”, which naturally steers the gaze of passers-by. This point is generally situated at eye level (1.60 metres) and slightly off centre.
- 34.** If your window display is slightly elevated in relation to the pavement, change the focal point, placing it at a slightly lower level. Remember, it should always be at eye level to passers-by.

35. Orientate your merchandise according to the direction of travel of passers-by: if the majority approach from the right, angle products slightly to the right.
36. Put your star products in the centre of the display and not on the side walls: they create appeal and must be clearly visible.

The 6 types of window display

- **The mass display**, which presents a large volume of products to create a feeling of abundance, useful during sales or promotions.
 - **The variety display**, which presents a sample of the various product types available in the shop. Avoid overloading your display with too many products. This creates "visual noise" and makes it less eye-catching.
 - **The selection display**, which only exhibits part of the store's range, focusing on a specific product category or theme.
 - **The prestige display**, which only presents a few products - or perhaps just one - in order to create a feeling of luxury.
 - **The "wow" display**, which surprises and piques the curiosity of customers (for example animated Christmas displays).
 - **The brand display**, which highlights a single brand.
37. Think in 3D! Make the most of the depth, height and width of your window display. The depth can be considered as a series of planes: foreground, middleground and background.

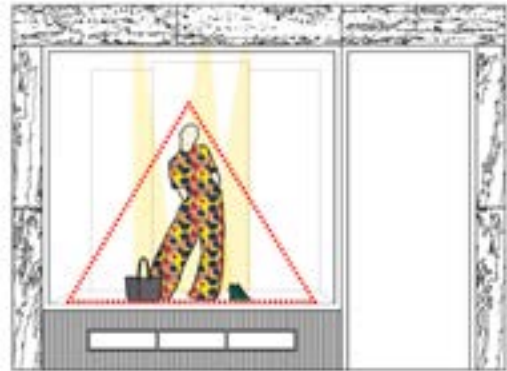


This diagram shows how a 3D window display can add dynamism by playing with different levels (in terms of height, depth and width), making it more eye-catching to passers-by.

38. Each composition strategy has a different impact on customers: a horizontal layout generates a feeling of calm, a vertical layout highlights the item placed at the top, while angular compositions add dynamism to

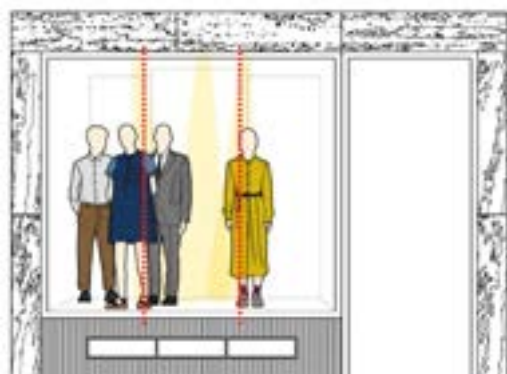
the whole and curved compositions imply lightness.

39. Try combining products in a "pyramid formation". This relatively easy to achieve layout initially draws attention to the highest, most central item, then to the secondary elements (see diagram below).



The pyramid formation encourages people to spend longer looking at the product you wish to highlight.

40. More complex, "grouping by repetition", is best left in the expert hands of a window dresser. The challenge here is not to lose sight of the vanishing point of the display. For example, in a row of three mannequins, it is unclear whether the central mannequin is the vanishing point - if one of the side mannequins is wearing a brightly coloured garment, the eye will be drawn to this one first.
41. Play with visual balance: group objects in odd numbers. Three mannequins in a row have greater visual impact than two (see diagram below).



Grouping by repetition requires the support of a window dresser. As shown in this example, the fact that mannequins are presented in a "3+1" formation makes the display more dynamic than a simple row of 4 mannequins.

Colour and light, two important factors!

- 42. Colour, an effective way of catching the eye of passers-by, is also relatively cheap and easy to use.
- 43. Use colour to transform spaces, just like you would at home: use white or pastel tones in narrow windows to make them appear wider.
- 44. Although colours can have different connotations depending on the country and local culture, certain symbolic meanings are universal: blue represents serenity and peace (e.g. the United Nations "Blue Helmets"), while red, often used to announce sales and promotions, catches your attention.
- 45. Avoid overly dark backdrops, which create more reflections on the window, particularly if your premises is double glazed, as can cause a mirror effect, making your merchandise invisible. This issue can be countered by using brighter lighting, though this consumes more energy. For more on this topic, consult our guide "43 easy tips for an eco-responsible shop".
- 46. If the panels of your window display are covered in fabric or carpet, you will need to add extra light sources, as these materials absorb more light than smooth, glossy surfaces. Remember, additional lighting will increase your energy bills.

To be sure to avoid visual overload, limit yourself to 3 different colours: one for the backdrop of the display, one for the display units and one for the items themselves. Other options for creating a high-end feel: monochrome or shades of a single colour.



which offers great flexibility and the option to use different bulb models. The width and power of the beam will depend on the items you want to illuminate and how they are arranged.

- 50. Window lighting is used to accentuate items, and is set at a higher level than the rest of the store, around 1500 lx (light level is measured in lux - luminous flux received per unit area).
- 51. If your store has several windows, they must all have the same light intensity.

Remember, in order to prevent light pollution, window displays must be turned off after a certain time of night: ask your local authority for more information on the regulations in your municipality.



- 52. Contrary to popular belief, windows need less lighting at night than during the day, when they must "compete" with natural light. Consider installing a system that automatically adjusts the lighting according to the time of day.

- 47. The lighting of your display enhances products, as well as steering the gaze of passers-by exactly where you want it: choose spotlights with beams that can be adjusted each time you change your window. Be careful not to dazzle passers-by.
- 48. When choosing a lighting system, avoid those that emit a magnetic field.
- 49. Of the various systems on the market, we recommend track lighting with adjustable lamps,

B

Who are we?

hub.brussels is the Brussels Agency for Business Support.

hub.brussels is driven by the ambition to make Brussels the most attractive and pleasant place to launch a business.

We offer tailored support, free tools and proven expertise to strengthen your independence, simplify your decisions, and help you succeed in Brussels and beyond.

hub.brussels is also over 200 attentive, dedicated and passionate people, and a promise to support, inspire and propel you, your business, and your most daring projects...

We are hub.brussels; we are with you.

Contact

Got a question or comment on this practical guide? Want to design a shop interior that is both eco-friendly and on trend? Contact the hub.brussels Retail

Design expert, Thibaut Surin, at the following address:

red@hub.brussels

Thanks

hub.brussels offer our warmest thanks to everyone who has contributed, directly or indirectly, to making this guide a reference on the subject of sustainable shop fitting and design.

While it is not possible to mention all of them here, we would like to give special thanks to Steven Bollé, for his expertise and contagious enthusiasm, and Anne Boulord, for her creative writing skills and unfailing professionalism.

We would also like to express our huge gratitude to all of the brave and inventive retailers and entrepreneurs, who have patiently and passionately answered our numerous questions and supported the publication of this guide.