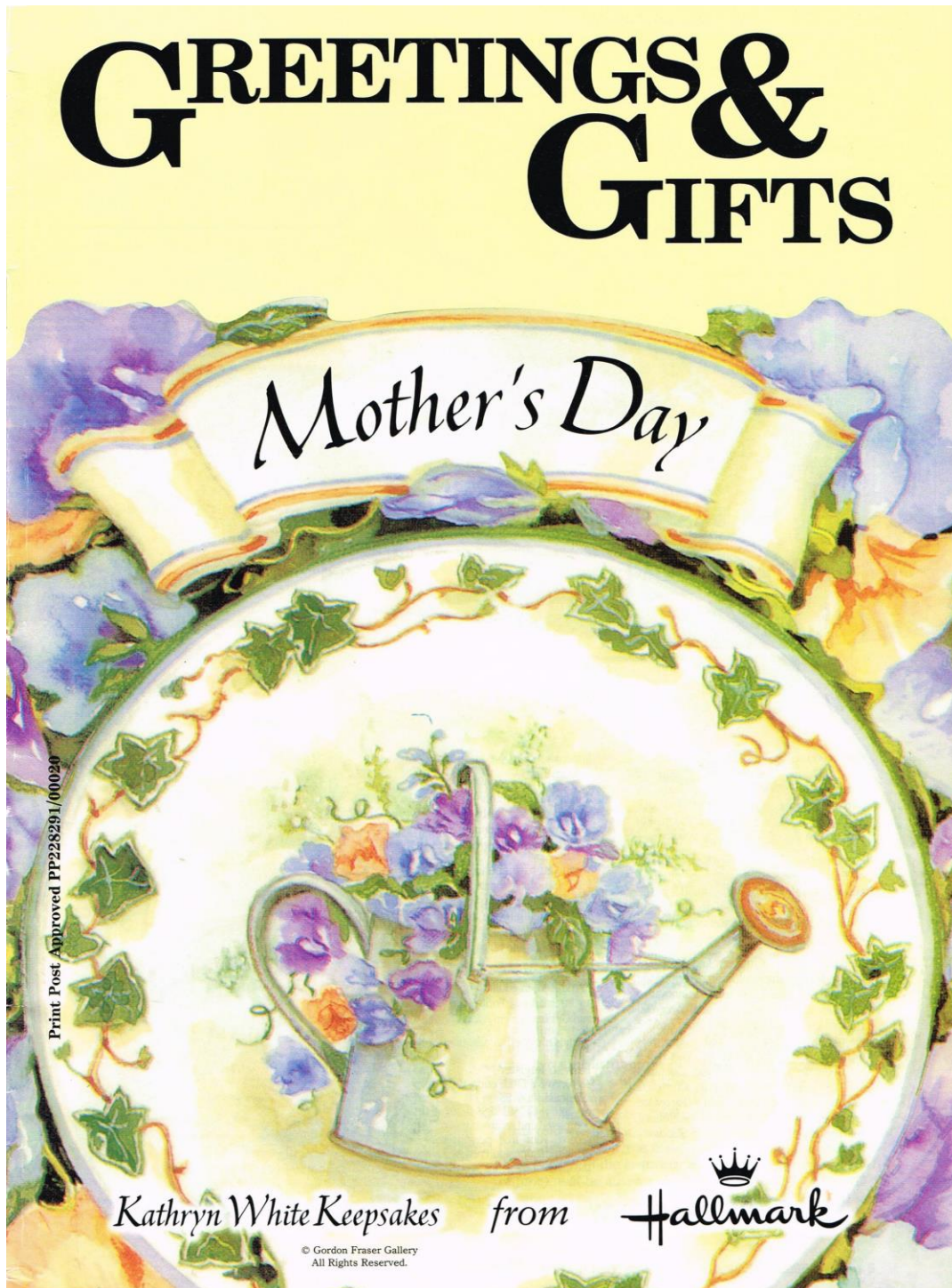


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Maximum Impact Window

By Linda McKendry,

Retailer Question: "Please help. Our store has very large display windows that often dwarf the products. How can I do more suitable, scaled display?"

Linda's Answer: Nothing is worse than vacant spaces in a retail shop including large expanses of bare windows. Use them or lose them! If extreme sun exposure or security are problems paint or cover the windows. This will provide great backdrops for your interior displays.

People are drawn to abundance and in this decade, they also expect the retailer to educate and motivate them, inspire and entertain!

Use your big windows to do all of that and more. Show lots of product with oversized props. Show lots of displays. Give customers great reasons to come in and take a closer look.

Plan presentations for different areas of the storefront based on the season and what you want to promote.

Keep the distance and eye-level in mind as you design signs and begin to group products.

Distance and eye-level. See the entire store front as a single venue the way your customers see it when they drive by or approach it on foot. The closer the distance the lower the eye-level of product placement. The farther the distance the more dramatic the display to be seen.

This means exaggerated patterns, extra contrast in colours, bold shapes, mega large props and good lighting. Bigger is better if you want things to be noticed from a distance.

Divide the spaces into the areas that balance with each other and the entire store. This usually inside the frames of individual windows.

You may want to assign certain spots for specific lines or merchandise that relate to the different departments in the store.

An easy way to fill at least one

window space is to put a shelved fixture right in front of it and create displays by grouping and spacing relative products on the shelves.

The whole unit filled with colourful products will attract some attention from a distance and encourage prospects to come and take a closer look.

Put miniature items right at eye level, large items either high on top of a fixture or on a platform at the customer's knee level.

Whenever you try something new, run outside and take a look at it from across the street. Anything white placed close to the glass shows up from the greatest distance. Check this

"keep the distance and eye level in mind when you design signs"

out the next time you drive around.

Fixtures and fittings: Purchase or build in platforms that bring the base of all the display area between one and two feet up. For flexibility and variety have them designed in smaller sections and different dimensions so they can be moved, grouped or stacked, and even set up on end for a backdrop or riser. This will bring basic displays to a better eye level from the sidewalk, the street or across the way.

Brackets secured between the windows inside the store that support bars at one, two or three distances from the window all you incredible flexibility for supporting and hanging backdrops, signs, products and lights.

This makes creating, arranging and changing displays easy and simple. It brings all the elements in the display to the correct eye level in relation to

the display while balancing everything with the scale of the window.

Once you get the "hang of it" you will know exactly where to place merchandise so it is seen from the best vantage point without running outside at each step.

Use fishing line, once strung, again and again without having to bring out the high ladder each time a window display or sign is changed.

Beg, borrow or buy extra large fixtures that work in colour, pattern and style with the image of your store.

Their design should reinforce the product lines but have enough variety in shape and function to show lots of product in many ways. That way your customers never get bored and you will target more markets.

Example: Wrought iron and plain pine work with many products of varying colour, pattern and style.

Products and props: Super props like extra large flowers, wide bordered frames, four foot high vases or flag-sized banners in light colours or reflective finishes work the best in large windows.

Use these to attract attention, fill up lots of space and draw the eye towards the smaller products being displayed.

An example of this would be an arrangement of three oversized wreaths balanced with the exterior architecture.

This article has been reprinted with the kind permission of Gift and Tablewares, Canada, and Linda McKendry President, Visual Merchandising Presentation Consulting Ltd., Ontario, Canada. To contact Linda McKendry direct: Phone: 1(905) 813 8725; Fax: 1(905) 813 8505