

Are you thinking of starting a career as a Visual Merchandiser?

If you love making things look good and like being creative, this could be perfect for you. Visual merchandisers use their design skills to help promote the image, products and services of retail businesses and other organizations. They develop, deliver and communicate visual concepts and strategies to promote retail brands, products and services in-store, in catalogues or online. The concept is now extensively used as a marketing tool in the retail sector. Visual merchandising puts the merchandise in focus in an appealing and stimulating manner, creates desire and attracts customers, thus augmenting the selling process and maximizing sales.

What does a Visual Merchandiser Do?

Producing design ideas for displays and developing floor plans. Creating special displays to promote a specific product or offer. Drawing designs and plans by hand or computer. Deciding how to use space and lighting creatively. Making best use of a store's space and layout. Creating branded visual merchandising packs to send to each branch of a store. Setting up displays, dressing dummies and arranging screens, fabric and posters. Sourcing display materials and hiring, borrowing or making props.

The greatest challenge of the job is to ensure that a four-month-old product looks as good as new on the shelf. The job is to turn window shoppers into stoppers and eventually push sales. To identify a slow-moving product and decide how it needs to be given prominence. A Visual Merchandiser is expected to do up certain moods - a casual story, a business format, a sports event and even a fashion evening - all packed into the window and eventually the store. The idea is to create excitement for the brand being represented.

Skills required:

The Job demands spending a lot of time inside the store — training staff on how to fold and clothes, teach them how to follow manuals and merchandise that needs to go on the racks. This Position is also a bridge between the design and the marketing department. You will need to be a great team player, a person full of inspiration – who also knows how to inspire others. A high level of attention to detail is must along with the need to be able to work to deadlines. The ability to work well as part of a team is also important. Artistic sensibility and creativity with a sense of perspective, lighting and colour along with the ability to blend fashion design, interior design, architecture and even music

Career prospects:

Most visual merchandisers are employed by retail chains and large department stores, such as Marks & Spencer, Lifestyle, Shoppers Stop. Some are employed by agencies that provide contract services to various clients who do not have an in-house team. Other employers include promotions and event management companies. With the expansion of multi- brand outlets opening in the country, there are immense opportunities for students in this field.

Before you decide to pursue a career as a visual merchandiser however, you should consider if this career path is a good fit for your skills, interests and personality traits. Visual merchandising provides an interactive retail experience. It's a science that blends fashion, architecture and even interior design. If you are sure you do not want to become another fashion or an accessory designer and want to do something different, Visual Merchandising has immense opportunities for you.