



# **USING VISUAL MERCHANDISING TO MAXIMISE PLANT-BASED SALES**

# WHY DOES MERCHANDISING MATTER?

Supermarkets are packed with so many **different food and drink items** that they can easily seem **overwhelming**, making it difficult for customers to find the items they want – as well as the things that they don't yet know they want. So, how can we make aisles and shelves **easier for customers to navigate** so that they are **more likely to make plant-based purchases?**

Shoppers often **scan shelves from left to right and/or top-to-bottom** as if reading a book, so retailers should make this scanning process as **easy and effective** as possible. Utilising **visual-merchandising blocking** techniques is key.

Here are some of the most **effective merchandising** approaches you can take, along with their benefits and challenges to bear in mind.



# COLOUR-BLOCKING

Colour code areas of a shelf to attract customers' attention, provide easy scannability, and encourage multiple purchases.

Too much colour will appear fussy, so make sure that your colour scheme is well thought through.





# BRAND-BLOCKING

Group plant-based products **together by brand** so that consumers can easily locate their favourites. It's important to ensure a **solid assortment of brands** in order to optimise this approach, but too many brands or choices can **overwhelm** consumers.





# INGREDIENT-BLOCKING

Group products together that contain the **same key ingredients** in order to help customers **find particular ingredients** with ease (for example, in the dairy-free-milk category, you can **group by almond, soya, oat, and so on**). It's vital to have a **variety** of ingredients, but make sure you know which are most **popular** with your audience – and **don't overwhelm** them with choices.





# VERTICAL MERCHANDISING

Group merchandise in a **vertical column** or display to get customers to buy more products. Shoppers tend to focus on products placed at **eye-level** – by displaying products vertically, you're allowing shoppers to **stay in one position** while they use their eyes to follow your display of items, from top to bottom. This gives **improved aesthetic appeal**, and offers **better organisation** for your store. Plus, all brands at eye level will receive **equal visibility**.<sup>1</sup>





# HORIZONTAL MERCHANDISING

Organise products **horizontally** across a shelf. By doing so, you encourage consumers to **walk through your entire display**, exposing them to more products.<sup>2</sup> The downside to this is that most **shoppers like to stay in one place** and scan an aisle with just their eyes, without having to move, so this may **limit visibility** for some products.





# CROSS-MERCHANDISING

Display **complementary products from different categories together** in order to increase sales across the store (for example, place hot dog buns near plant-based sausages). By pairing indirectly related products together, you're making shopping easier for convenience shoppers so they don't have to search for these related products themselves. A downside to this is that you could face possible **shelf-space limitations**.





# TOP TIPS

When it comes to selecting the right merchandising techniques for your plant-based products, **you don't have to choose only one** of the above approaches. Many stores use a combination of visual-merchandising techniques to **optimise shelf navigation and improve shopper experience**, with the techniques used depending on the product type.

With merchandising, **product volume and variety are vital**. However, too much choice, as well as too much of the same product, can also prove detrimental – it's **important not to overwhelm the consumer** with either.

Do you need trusted advice on how to merchandise and display your plant-based products in-store to maximise sales? Get in touch with ProVeg International at [corporate@proveg.com](mailto:corporate@proveg.com).



Lisa Gawthorne,  
Founder Bravura  
Foods

“Range and choice are key. If consumers dislike a product or it doesn't appeal to their taste palate, there must be other lines for them to try otherwise it can mean lost sales. Constantly scanning the market and keeping up to date with new ranges and new launches from existing brands is essential. The larger the category, the larger the choice. However, be mindful of SKU duplication. Yes, consumers want choice but not too much choice of the same thing.”



# PHYSICAL MERCHANDISING AIDS

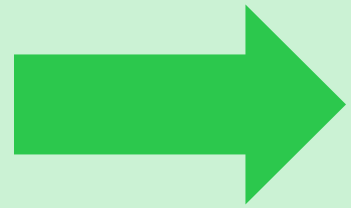
As well as rethinking shelf layout, ProVeg recommends using the following **physical merchandising aids and signage** to point out plant-based products and make shelves **easier to navigate**:

- The simple yet effective tactics of **clear branding** or **promotional messaging** on **shelf-edge label strips**
- **shelf-dividers** detailing categories
- **'Wobblers'** (printed shelf markers that wobble)
- **'bus stops'** (double-sided printed shelf markers or wobblers that highlight a product, offer or price)
- other **eye-catching point-of-sale** devices.

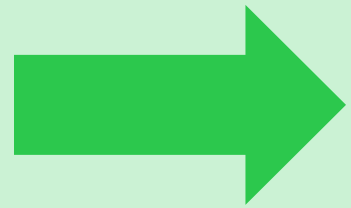




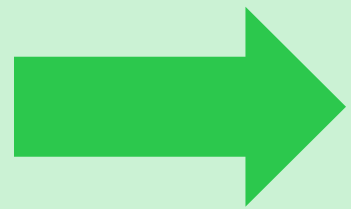
# KEY INSIGHTS



Make shelves and aisles as easy to navigate as possible. You can do this by using visual-merchandising techniques like colour- and brand-blocking, and vertical- and cross-merchandising. Test what works best for your shoppers and apply what brings in the most sales and customer retention.



Stock the right number of products – offer a wide range of plant-based products and brands but avoid too much duplication. This will save on shelf space allowing you to stock a greater variety of products.



Use physical merchandising aids like category dividers, shelf-edge label strips, 'bus stops' and 'wobblers' in order to point out plant-based products and make your shelves easier to navigate.



# REFERENCES

- 1, 2) 4 Merchandising Techniques All Retailers Should Know (2022). Dot Activ. Available at: <https://www.dotactiv.com/blog/merchandising-techniques> Accessed 2022-10-18.