

MERCHANDISING PLAN

Whether you're starting from scratch or modifying your existing cellar door, a carefully constructed plan will definitely pay dividends and avoid costly changes later. Remember, things change, so your plan should be flexible enough to accommodate future changes in direction – either because of your overall marketing strategy or consumer demand.

Layout

- ❑ Visit other cellar doors that stock merchandise, as well as specialty stores that appear to reflect their brand congruently and have visual appeal.
- ❑ Make a list of the things that seem to work and things that don't. Spend some time observing the behaviour of customers and traffic flow. Make rough sketches to consider later.
- ❑ Create a working floor plan. Include entry/exit points, windows, tasting bar, product placement, fixtures, fittings, displays and anything else that's relevant. Observe your current traffic flow and document that.
- ❑ Identify hot, warm and cold spots. If you already stock merchandise, document what is currently placed in each area and categorise according to what type of product it is. If not, list what is in these areas currently.
- ❑ Revise your plan. Fixtures determine traffic flow. Consider how you want people to walk around your cellar door and what you want them to see first and last. What changes do you need to make?
- ❑ Based on your intended product range, decide the likely areas for placement.
- ❑ Call in professional expertise to discuss your plan and identify likely suppliers of fixtures and fittings.
- ❑ Devise an appropriate budget.

Visual Displays

Your whole cellar door is a display from which visitors are gaining information about you and your brand. The objective of creating effective visual displays is to bring your store to life, give it personality and create a desire to purchase.

Purpose of Visual Displays

- ❑ Encourage customers to purchase
- ❑ Demonstrate the use of a product
- ❑ Show combinations of products (wine, glasses, waiters friend and decanter)
- ❑ Advertising/ spark interest
- ❑ Provide information
- ❑ Act as a directory for the cellar door (point visitors to specific areas)
- ❑ Highlight an area or product
- ❑ Reinforce brand image

Factors for Creating Successful Displays

- ❑ Keep it simple and maintain focus
- ❑ Attract attention by being distinctive/different
- ❑ Personalise ownership – show products in use
- ❑ Neat, clean, safe and secure
- ❑ Appropriate to brand image
- ❑ Incorporate a theme
- ❑ Plan thoughtfully by considering appropriate positioning
- ❑ Use good lighting
- ❑ Use of colour (especially one or two colour tones)

Merchandise to Include in Displays

- ❑ New and interesting products
- ❑ Items wanted/needed by visitors
- ❑ Items that relate to theme or promotion
- ❑ Advertised lines
- ❑ Exclusive merchandise
- ❑ High profit lines
- ❑ Sale items (only if having a major clearance)

Areas to Position Displays

- ❑ Window Displays – These are the face of the cellar door; never block views; only position items of real significance that reflect your brand – you're not a retail store in a busy city mall.
- ❑ Floor Displays – Use for specials and promotional lines; avoid cut cases like retail wine stores unless you want to be perceived this way; use tables (or other risers), bins and other items that can contribute to a bulk floor display; ensure fixtures are movable; need to be able to encourage quick sales.
- ❑ Wall Displays – Often used as a directory and therefore have a longer life; relate to the merchandise immediately below or relate to a theme (often store-wide theme, eg. Christmas); can easily be combined with general tourist information, PR boards, artwork, etc.
- ❑ Fixture Displays – Highlight a classification of merchandise on the fixture; work well for new merchandise; can include accessories.
- ❑ Showcase Displays - Can be situated at the cash register for impulse purchases or behind the bar to provoke conversation; suitable for fragile, expensive or small merchandise.

Merchandising Promotional Plan

It is worth putting some thought into a yearly promotional plan for your merchandise to maximise sales and build loyalty. Use the following ten-point process to guide your decisions.

1 Set Objectives

What outcomes do you want to achieve from your promotional activities?

2 Develop a Promotional Calendar

Set and sequence the activities or tasks that must be achieved in a logical order. Consider the theme, event and associated special activities that will support it

3 Identify Responsibilities

Assign tasks and accountability to specific staff members

4 Schedule Activities

Allocate sufficient time to achieve the identified tasks

5 Budget Resources

Consider money, equipment, personnel, floor space, product costs and selling price, display requirements and other resources and construct a budget

6 Set Standards

Define measurement criteria for each identified task. Garner support from staff by ensuring they are familiar with the purpose and outcomes of the plan

7 Identify Risks

Consider what events could occur to prevent a successful outcome. Identify ways to minimise or eliminate risks

8 Establish Control

Define how you will monitor the promotional plan once it's underway to ensure success

9 Measure Results

Define how you will monitor the results to determine appropriate ways to adjust the promotional activities

10 Make Corrections

Evaluate the results and use the information for planning future promotional activities

Get Professional Advice & Training

Information for some of these checklists has been obtained from the merchandising workbook *"Improving Your Profit"* tailored for wineries. Workshops are available nationally through Tony Moore at City Corporate Consultants (see Contributor Section for contact details).