

FINAL EXTERNAL INTEGRATED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT (EISA)

EXEMPLAR MEMORANDUM

Date:

QUALIFICATION	Occupational Certificate: Visual Merchandiser														
SAQA ID	99688														
NQF LEVEL	3														
CREDITS	30														
TOTAL MARKS	70 Marks														
PASS MARK	42 Marks														
TIME	09h00-11h00 Duration: 2 hours														
	LEARNER DETAILS														
NAME AND SURNAME															
ID NUMBER	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>														
EISA REGISTRATION NO.															
NAME OF PROVIDER															
ASSESSMENT CENTRE															
ASSESSMENT CENTRE ACCREDITATION NO.															

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

GENERAL EISA RULES

This External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) Question Paper consists of THREE (3) QUESTIONS AND EIGHT (.....) pages.

INSTRUCTIONS

NB! THE QUESTION PAPER IS USED AS THE ANSWER SHEET

1. Please read the questions carefully;
2. This is a Closed Book assessment;
3. Read the instructions for each question before answering;
4. Use the mark allocation for each written question to guide the length of your answer;
5. Candidates are not allowed any form of assistance and must always adhere to the invigilator's instructions;
6. All cell phones are to be switched off for the duration of the EISA and **MAY NOT** be used for calculations;
7. Candidates may only use their calculators:
8. Candidates may not leave the Assessment Centre within the ONE (1) of the start of the EISA; and during the last 10 minutes of the allotted EISA period;
9. Candidates are prohibited from conversing during the duration of the EISA;
10. Candidates who are found to be disruptive in the Assessment Centre will be requested to leave the Assessment Centre by the invigilator;
11. Candidates are only allowed to use a black pens; and
12. The candidate is required to **ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.**

Mark allocation (70)

Each tick (✓) constitutes one (1) mark.

- **Question 1 (21 Marks)**
- **Question 2 (28 Marks)**
- **Question 3 (21 Marks)**

Question 1: Develop visual merchandising plan/action plan (21 Marks)

Promotional visual merchandising scenario

Makro, a leading retail warehouse chain, is gearing up for its biggest shopping event of the year: **Black Friday**.

Products Featured

- Electronics: Discounts on TVs, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and gaming consoles
- Home Appliances: Sale on refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, and kitchen appliances
- Furniture: Discounts on sofas, beds, dining sets, and office furniture
- Groceries: Special deals on bulk purchases of food, beverages, and household essentials

Promotion Details

- Up to 50% off on selected electronics and home appliances
- Buy one, get one free on furniture and groceries
- Exclusive discounts for Makro loyalty programme members
- Free delivery on online orders over R500
- Extended shopping hours: 6am - 10pm on Black Friday

Visual Merchandising

- Eye-catching signage highlighting promotions and discounts
- Themed decorations and balloons in Makro's brand colours
- In-store displays featuring sale products
- Social media campaign encouraging customers to share their Black Friday shopping experiences using a branded hashtag
- Online advertising and email marketing campaigns to promote the sale

Additional Offers

- Early bird special: First 100 customers in line receive a R100 voucher
- Social media contest: Customers who share a photo of their Black Friday haul on social media using a branded hashtag can win a R1,000 gift card

This Black Friday sale aims to attract customers looking for deep discounts on a wide range of products. By offering exclusive deals, extended shopping hours, and additional offers, Makro aims to drive sales, increase customer loyalty, and make this Black Friday one to remember.

1.1.1 Read the scenario of Black Friday and decide on five (5) principles of Visual Merchandising that can be followed to do this promotion **(5 marks)**

1. Attract Attention

- The window display features bright yellow and turquoise backgrounds, dynamic lighting, and a rotating mannequin stand. This catches the eye of people walking by.

2. Create a Focal Point

- A central mannequin dressed in the latest summer outfit is elevated slightly and spotlighted to draw attention immediately.

3. Balance

- Two mannequins are placed symmetrically on either side of the focal point, wearing complementary outfits. Accessories are placed evenly throughout the display.

4. Color Harmony

- The display uses a coastal color scheme (blue, white, beige) to evoke a beach atmosphere, with pops of coral for excitement.

5. Theme and Storytelling

- Props like sand, surfboards, and beach umbrellas help tell a cohesive story of a fun day at the beach, aligning with the collection's theme.

1.1.2 Visual Merchandising has its own terminology, define the following three (3) terms used in Visual Merchandising **(3 marks)**

Merchandising – using effective presentation techniques to encourage customers to purchase products.

Fixtures – Shelving, display cabinets and other items that are permanent attachments to a retail store.

Themes– This is the idea your display should convey. Consider the way that your products are used, and build your theme around that.

1.1.3 Read the scenario of Black Friday and decide where the visual merchandising display should be and give a reason **(2 Marks)**

Definition

A focal point is a hotspot that acts as the centrepiece of a merchandising design in combination will be mostly at the end of aisles and in areas that feature concentration of customers

1.1.4. Identify the merchandise items in the list that relate to the scenario of Black Friday and give reason for your answer. **(5 marks)**

- Up to 50% off on selected electronics and home appliances
- Buy one, get one free on furniture and groceries
- Exclusive discounts for Makro loyalty programme members
- Free delivery on online orders over R500
- These are products being promoted for sale (1 **mark each**

1.1.5 Identify and name any three fixtures and display carriers that can be used to display the merchandise give a reason for using each one of them **(3 marks) 1 mark for each fixture given and reason for using them. (Half mark for the name and half mark for the reason) 1 mark**

General Fixtures and Display Carriers to Use:

1. Gondola Shelving (Aisle Shelving)

- Use for: Electronics, small appliances, and groceries
- Features: Versatile shelving, adjustable heights, side signage holders
- Tip: Add Black Friday-branded shelf talkers to highlight discounts

2. End Caps (End-of-Aisle Displays)

- Use for: Promoted products like BOGO deals and loyalty specials
- Features: High visibility, ideal for impulse purchases

- Tip: Place “Buy One, Get One Free” signs here to catch traffic from both directions

3. Dump Bins & Wire Baskets

- Use for: Bulk grocery items, clearance electronics accessories
- Features: Great for rummage-style shopping during sales
- Tip: Label with bold Black Friday price tags and “BOGO” or “Special Buy” signage

4. Pallet Displays

- Use for: Large-volume items like TVs, furniture, or bulk groceries
- Features: High load-bearing, easy to restock
- Tip: Wrap pallets with Black Friday-themed wraps and use pallet skirts with promotional messaging

5. Digital Signage / Screens

- Use for: Flashing key deals, loyalty programme offers, or free delivery promos
- Features: Attention-grabbing, dynamic content
- Tip: Include countdown timers or rotating deal ads to create urgency

6. Freestanding Display Units (FSDUs)

- Use for: Loyalty programme sign-ups, exclusive member deals
- Features: Can be branded and placed in high-traffic zones
- Tip: Include QR codes for quick online sign-ups and highlight member-only pricing

7. Furniture Pods or Room Setups

- Use for: Showcasing furniture BOGO deals
- Features: Visually appealing displays simulating home environments
- Tip: Add “Buy One, Get One Free” signage prominently and use mood lighting

8. Hanging Signage & Banners

- Use for: Navigating customers to deal zones
- Features: Overhead visibility from a distance

- Tip: Use bold “BLACK FRIDAY DEAL ZONE” signs above each department

9. Checkout Impulse Units

- Use for: Last-minute add-on sales (batteries, cables, snacks)
- Tip: Feature smaller Black Friday deals and loyalty programme perks

1.1.6 The date for the Black Friday is predicted to occur on a very cold day with rain. How would you adapt your merchandising plan to address this variable **(3 Marks)**

Individual items or groups of items will be used to tell your product's message.

- Signage of warm clothes
- Heaters
- Rain coats and umbrellas

(any prop a student would think is suitable for this weather related promo)

[21 marks]

Question 2: Set up and dismantle visual merchandising displays

2.1 A simulated retail environment



2.1.1 Retail graphics can play a huge role in communicating to your customers. Name five (5) ways graphics can be used in retail. **(5 marks)**

- Enhancing the storefront
- Creating custom printed wall coverings
- Custom storefront signage
- Window graphics and custom printed window film
- Banners

2.1.2.. Name two (2) techniques that can be used to create a high converting display, just like the image above. **(2 marks)**

Any 2 of following

There are plenty of different techniques that can be used to create high converting product displays:

- Colour blocking – captures attention and creates impact
- Symmetry and balance – keep displays simple and uncluttered
- Repetition – helps products to stand out
- Odd numbers – work well as the brain takes slightly longer to process, and they look more attractive
- Mirroring and triangulation – creating a high focal point and creating a triangle effect draws the eye and can be very impactful

2.1.3 You are required to dismantle a display fixture in a busy retail environment.

Outline **three key procedures** you would follow to ensure the task is carried out safely and securely, while minimising risk of injury and loss of materials. **(3 marks)**

- Use of appropriate PPE and tools – e.g., wearing gloves, safety footwear, and using correct equipment.
- Secure and clear the area – e.g., placing warning signs, restricting access, moving merchandise.
- Safe handling and storage – e.g., proper lifting techniques, labelling parts, storing dismantled items securely.

2.1.4 Which **three** actions best demonstrate adherence to housekeeping standards when preparing a retail display?

(Select three correct answers)

- A. Leaving packaging materials on the shop floor for quicker access later
- B. Cleaning the display area before and after setup
- C. Ensuring tools and equipment are stored safely after use
- D. Blocking emergency exits temporarily while working
- E. Disposing of waste materials promptly and appropriately
- F. Placing merchandise randomly to save time

(3 marks)

1 mark each

B

C and

E

2.2.1 As you plan for the Enchanted Forest promo, name five (5) points to check when maintaining your fixtures **(5 marks)**

Any 5 of the following

- External store is well-lit, including doorways, back lots and sides (if applicable).
- The store exterior is clean and free from debris (no chipping paint, burnt-out bulbs, cracked walkways, scuffs, graffiti, etc.).
- Landscaping is well maintained and compliant with brand standards (if applicable).
- Store is adequately staffed to keep exterior clean.
- Sandwich boards are in good repair and feature current promotion (if applicable).
- Display supporting equipment (fixtures, shelving, lighting, mannequins, props) are in good repair and clean.
- Aisleways are free from debris
- Flooring displays do not block aisles or customer movement. No tripping hazards.
- Displays and aisles are wide enough apart to accommodate strollers and mobility assists.
- All fixtures, floors, walls, windows, and surfaces are clean and well maintained

2.2.2. Define Standalone POP display and name three (3) that would be used as part of the Enchanted Forest promo. **(5 marks)**

A standalone display is a type of POP display that exists separately from traditional aisle shelves. These displays often appear in the middle of large store aisles or anywhere else in the store where there is open space. Standalone displays play a huge role in a brand's visual merchandising strategy and should be carefully designed to stand out within a retailer.

Any 3 of the following except mannequin and garment racks, store doesn't sell clothing

Dump Bins

Dump bins certainly live up to their name — they are literally giant bins in stores that are commonly stocked with individually packaged products. You'll often see them full of candy and other small products that provoke impulse buys.

A great advantage of dump bins is that they are standalone displays and can be strategically placed to be seen or interacted with from all angles. They are also usually made out of cardboard or are otherwise customizable, so bins are not only a great opportunity to get creative with how you project your brand's image, but they're also easy for your field team or distributor to ship and set up.

Freestanding Displays

Freestanding displays are similar to dump bins in that they are also standalone displays and can be interacted with from 360 degrees. That being said, they are more organized in appearance than dump bins, and often neatly display slightly larger products on shelves or hooks. Like dump bins, freestanding displays are also commonly made out of cardboard, so they are a great chance to experiment with some attention-grabbing shapes or designs.

Entryway Displays

Displaying your products near entryways can put your brand at the top of shoppers' lists before they even see your competitors. Entryway displays are effective at encouraging impulse buys, as customers at the beginning of their shopping trip are entering the store ready to spend money. If you're lucky enough to be in a place with nice weather, setting up an outdoor entryway display is a great way to catch shoppers' attention before they even get inside.

Gondola Displays

Gondolas are two-sided, standalone shelving units that also appear in larger, more open areas of a store. They have adjustable shelves, which makes them customizable to accommodate different sized products. While they typically are made with steel frames and pegboard, there are options for brands to promote their product through graphics and an attractive colour scheme.

Window Displays

Window displays, also known as window dressings, are exactly what they sound like — product displays that are set up in the window of a retailer. These displays are extremely lucrative as they represent the retailer and can be the deciding factor on whether a shopper enters the store in the first place. If given the opportunity to occupy a window display for your product, it is imperative to create a visually appealing design that will positively represent your product and the retailer.

Display Tables

Display tables are also a very common clothing display, likely due to their versatility. Display tables can host a myriad of products, from apparel to accessories to jewellery. One benefit of display tables is the amount of room they provide for merchandisers to get creative. Create themes around your brand, the season, or holidays by incorporating signage and decorative elements.

Clip Strips

Clip strips are long, vertically hanging strips with hooks that are ideal for holding small products. Using these strips gives you a chance to get your products on shelves beyond your primary placement, or simply to add a few extra facings to the SKUs you already have. They are ideal for cross-merchandising, as you can set up a clip strip display of chips next to salsa, or lip balm next to other cosmetics.

Mannequins

Mannequins are the embodiment of visual merchandising. They display products in a context that gives the shopper a clear visual of the product in use. To capitalize on this visualization, merchandisers should use the best of their products to create trendy outfits shoppers will want to wear themselves. Mannequins definitely promote impulse buys as they showcase to the shopper multiple items that they may not have been shopping for in the first place. Thus, be sure to have your products nearby, as there is nothing worse than missing out on a sale because the shopper couldn't locate your product.

Garment Racks

Garment racks are one of the most common types of clothing displays. Still, not all garment racks are the same — some are circular, some have multiple levels to hang items on, and some include shelves with them as well. Additionally, merchandisers don't just toss the product onto the shelf and walk away. There are many ways to organize clothing on a garment rack to capture a shopper's attention.

For example, grouping items by colour is visually appealing and also makes it easy for the buyer to see their options.

2.2.3. Name five (5) types promotional activities. (5 marks)

Any 5 of following

1. Personal Selling

This is the face-to-face communication process that occurs between a customer and the store's sales representative. In addition to promoting products personal selling strives to build long term relationships with the customer. Generally, it is an expensive option when you consider the costs associated with employing staff. The store's image will influence the level of personal selling and service it offers and this is usually reflected in the store's pricing policy.

2. Advertising

Advertising is any form of paid non-personal presentation by an identified sponsor. It incorporates television, radio, print and digital methods. This form of promotion is the most common communication strategy used by retailers. While it can be expensive, if used sensibly advertising can be a very effective tool. It is critical that the message and the medium reflect the store's image and be appropriate to the target market.

3. Sales Promotion

Sales promotions are designed to supplement and extend other promotional activities (usually advertising). Sales promotions generally offer short-term incentives to encourage the customer to purchase a specific product within a designated time. Sales promotion activities include:

- In store displays (Promoting a single brand or product range)
- Free samples (Giving customer's sampler packs of a new product)
- Brand promotional products (Cooler bags or T-shirts).

4. Direct Marketing

These are generally non-personal efforts to gain a direct response from the customer. Direct marketing tends to use interactive communication with the customer i.e. television advertising supported by a plea to 'call now'. While, classed as non-personal,

they can incorporate a personalised message or salutation. Direct mail is a commonly used example of this strategy.

5. Publicity

Publicity is a non-personal form of promotion that is designed to build a positive attitude towards the company. The retailer does not pay for this form of promotion and frequently has no control over the end message. This can lead to the message being distorted or even presented in a less than positive light.

A favourable news story promoting the store is an example of publicity.

6. Public Relations

Public relations are the planned efforts of a company to influence the attitudes and opinions of existing and potential customers. The focus of public relations is to 'build a good public image' or to head off negative rumours or events.

Unlike publicity, the promotional messages created by public relations efforts are paid for. The retailer has total control over the message, who will receive it and where it will be delivered. The release of information designed to create good publicity is a function of public relations.

[Total = 28 marks]

Question 3

3.1.1 Explain the importance of maintaining a Visual display (2 marks).

It is vitally important that once a visual display has been implemented, to ensure that it is being maintained according to the plan.

If it is neglected and not maintained, this can lead to it not fulfilling the objectives or outcomes that it was intended to fulfill and a lot of time and money will have been wasted in setting it up.

3.1. 2. Name and briefly describe any four (4) visual merchandising techniques to increase sales. (8 marks)

Any 4 of the following

1. Create displays for target customers

The customer's journey begins with discovery, then moves into option comparison before the final conversion and sale. Setting the tone for your target customers using visual merchandising is a key element in taking them from discovery to sale. Who are your target customers? That's an important question when designing displays. Aim to appeal to their lifestyle or the lifestyle they desire.

2. Less can be more

A visual assault on the senses overwhelms the customer. Too many items and clashing colors results in a display that looks like a toddler tossed all the toys on the floor; the result is chaos. When overwhelmed, customers tend to walk away.

Avoid clutter and chaos in displays. Instead, focus on spotlighting a single item or a few related items to create a coherent theme/story.

3. Tell a story

A story for your visual merchandising display helps both during the design process and makes it easier for the customer to connect with the product(s). The story can be specific to a single display or be made to flow through the entire retail space by using a singular cohesive theme from display to display. Begin the latter at the storefront with the main window or space near the entrance.

The narrative doesn't have to be complicated and can be something as tried and true as "back to school" or "summertime fun." Rely on color and signage to keep the story/theme cohesive. This may be as simple as using the same color backdrop or keywords in the signage.

4. Be specific with signage

The display may showcase the items perfectly, but if the signage fails, it all fails. Avoid wordy signs — too much information gets ignored.

Try the five-second rule: You should be able to easily read the sign in five seconds or less, absorbing its meaning without any confusion. If your message needs to be longer, consider a series of signs incorporated aesthetically into the overall visual merchandising theme.

5. Window displays attract foot traffic

Display the new and more valuable products in the window or nearest the entrance to attract foot traffic. First impressions do make a difference. A passer-by won't be interested in a storefront that appears dark, dirty or neglected.

The front windows need to be kept clean and the display well-lit or lit to create an emotional impact. Sometimes, however, minimal lighting works best for specific

designs. Again, signage should be clear, concise and connected to the theme/story of the window.

6. Sales team knowledge

Every member of the sales team needs to be knowledgeable about the items curated in the visual merchandising displays. This is especially important for interactive displays. If a team member can't answer a customer's question, confidence falls and the potential to lose the sale increases.

7. Analyze weekly sales and change displays

Your visual merchandising is another touchpoint in the customer's decision journey. To be effective, it's important to analyze weekly sales and determine if and how displays are affecting sales. Old displays become invisible to regular customers and look worn to new ones. Keep it fresh to increase potential for conversions.

To increase sales, visual merchandising must engage the customer, while reflecting the brand. It should tell a story, appeal to the senses, and act as a reminder for secondary purchases — such as painter's tape to go with a gallon of paint. Effective visual merchandising has the power to increase sales — playing a key role in final conversion.

Bonus tip #8. Audit stores for merchandising compliance

60% of promotional displays are not executed properly! You have spent months perfecting your merchandising displays and following the tips above, but you still aren't seeing the sales results you hoped for. Creating a merchandising checklist and auditing your stores for merchandising compliance to ensure proper execution can increase sales by 193%! Every merchandising promotion execution should be followed by an established merchandising audit process

3.2 Evaluate Visual Merchandising displays .

TWO IMAGES OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAYS

IMAGE 01



Meta AI

IMAGE 02



Meta AI

3.2.1 Name any five (5) ways to evaluate the quality of your new merchandise (5 marks)

Personal experience

If you've been in the business for a while, then you likely already know and follow one of the best indicators of quality—your personal experience! You know what types of items are hits and which are misses, so you should apply this insight to decisions you make on quality.

Materials

The material of a shirt, hat or other item you buy is a big part of its quality. Learn to feel the merchandise as you evaluate its quality (or lack thereof). Is the clothing soft and comfortable while still being durable—that is, it won't easily rip or fall apart? Quality materials are also a big determinant in whether or not customers will even want to purchase an item. Will customers like the feel of the item and decide to bring it home, or be disappointed when they touch it and decide against it? Ask the same questions for other types of items in your store as well.

Customer response

Use your customers' response to decide whether an item is a quality buy and worth repurchasing, or not. You can do this in a variety of ways, but don't forget the usefulness of methods like customer surveys to gauge their response! With social media and other online tools, it has never been easier to know how your customers feel about a specific item.

Price

A quality item at a great price is worth repurchasing. Every retailer should have an idea of what's a fair price for a quality item, and what's just too much.

Necessity

A quality item fulfills some need of the customer—whether it be a need for practical

items, souvenirs, luxury pieces... whatever it may be. As a retailer, you should strive to always know what your customers need so that you can stock your shop with quality items that match those needs. This can vary depending on your type of store, location and other factors.

The sellable factor

When it comes to retail, the best products are those that don't need much help to be sold. These items—whether they are souvenir favorites or always-practical accessories—can be virtually guaranteed to make their way out your door, no matter when or how you sell them.

3.2.2 Name any six (6) areas your reps should focus on, in order to maximize sales and avoid poorly maintained displays in the pictures above **(6 marks)**

Any 6 of the following

1. Merchandising Shelves

One of the most important aspects of visual merchandising is organizing the shelves. A clean, well-maintained shelf will look more appealing to customers than a messy, nearly empty shelf. You want your reps to pull all of your products up to the front and have them facing the same way.

If certain products are running low on inventory, reps can make shelves look more full by displaying double rows of the product. There should not be any misplaced items on the same shelf as yours, nor should there be any gaps where your products should be.

2. Restocking and Reordering Products

Stores don't always pull products from the back room onto the shelf. Thus it's important to make sure that there is enough product on the shelf to sell and enough in the back room to restock the shelves. When out-of-stock instances occur, the

supplier loses much more than the retailer; therefore, the retailer has less incentive to restock or pull product from the back than suppliers do. Restocking as needed is imperative for avoiding OOS instances.

Out-of-stocks result in a direct loss of brand loyalty and equity, and encourage shoppers to reach for competitors' products, Procter & Gamble found. This means that OOS instances not only cause brands to lose sales revenue in the short-run, but also future sales revenue as long-time customers transition find new favorites.

3. Setting Up POP Displays

POP displays are important because most customers do not shop with a physical checklist - 34% of shoppers don't have a list at all, while 47% rely on a **mental shopping list**, according to a 2012 POPAI Mass Merchant Study. This makes shoppers more prone to impulse buys. Of the sixty-two percent of shoppers that pick up items on impulse, 16% did so because of a prominent display.

The graph below shows the percent increase in sales when implementing POP displays at various locations in the store. As you can see, effective POP displays can boost sales by more than 12%. Maximize the benefits of this by making sure that your field rep knows how to set up a POP display, as well as know where to set it up. If it is the retailer's job to set up displays, have the rep confirm that it is set up properly, since retailers can sometimes neglect to set up the display.

4. Negotiating Additional Placements

By enabling your field reps to negotiate additional placements, you can potentially increase your sales - but only if you believe that you would benefit from additional facings, especially from impulse buying. The heat map below shows high-traffic areas in a typical store - securing secondary placements in these areas could improve impressions and sales.

if your current retailer carries two flavors of your beverage and they are both selling well, try having your field rep convince the retailer to sell an additional flavor. Like negotiating additional placements, this takes finesse and you may want to provide your rep with materials to present a strong argument for the retailer to carry additional SKUs.

The more of your products the retailer carries the better, so if the opportunity should arise, empower your field rep to make this negotiation.

5. Correcting Voids

Although many believe that stockouts are the biggest issue merchandisers have to face, product voids are more serious. With a void, not only is the product out of stock, but there is no longer a space for it on the shelf.

How does this happen? If your product sells out and the shelf tag happens to fall off, an employee may rearrange the shelf so that there are no gaps, not knowing that there was a product that was supposed to be there. Then, when your field rep goes to check in on the shelves, they don't know that that particular product was supposed to be there, so they don't reorder it. This results in your product virtually disappearing; it not only goes out of stock but out of distribution as well.

This is an issue because it is probably your most popular product, since it sold out the fastest. This issue is hard to catch without order history data, and will lose you a lot of money if not corrected. An easy way to prevent this is to by giving your field team access to a list of all the products that should be on the shelf, as well as the products that were placed in the last order.

6. Monitoring Competition

In order to remain relevant in today's markets, you need to be aware of what your competitors are doing and be able to adjust accordingly. Have your merchandising team record your competitors' price, promotions, labels, shelf location, and packaging, as well as any other metrics you wish to keep tabs on. By collecting data on your competitors, you can practice competitive pricing and learn from their successes or losses.

Different venues also have different prices - for example, specialty retailers might charge more for certain items than convenience stores. It is therefore important to maintain pricing records at every location where you distribute your product.

7. Enforcing Planogram Resets

Resets typically happen when new products move in, promotions begin, or the seasons change. They are an integral part of merchandising as the new look stimulates customer interest. Products and POP signs are usually switched out as well, so you want to ensure that your reps do this correctly. When your reps are performing planogram resets, have them send a picture of their completed reset.

This may not necessarily be for you to identify the before and after effects of the reset; rather, it is a good way to ensure accountability and motivate your field rep to do the reset to the best of their ability. These resets are important to your sales growth - 100% reset compliance can mean a sales lift of 7.8% and a profit improvement of 8.1% within two weeks, according to a benchmark study by the National Association for Retail Merchandising.

In one specific case study, **careful planogram resets** boosted sales and profits by more than 40 percent each, illustrated in the graph below.

8. Opening New Outlets

Since you already have a team of reps in the field, you can send them to identify potential retailers and/or capture any leads. According to Bloomberg BusinessWeek, some **questions for reps to ask themselves** when identifying potential retailers are: “How many stores does this client have? How much sales volume do they do? Are they in your product or customer category?”

If they think that these retailers are a good fit and that more retailers in their territory could carry their product, give your field reps the freedom to follow this lead and possibly gain you another retail location.

9. Gathering Demographic Data

Demographic data is important because the more you know about your customers, the easier it is to market successfully to them. The more data you collect, the more you can focus your marketing to the needs of your target market. You will also gain better insight as to what products to distribute to what retailers.

Collect data on the neighborhood around the retail location (is it urban, suburban, or rural?), the income of the people living in the neighborhood (can be inferred by

collecting data on the types of homes or cars in the area), and the gender, age, and ethnicity of the residents, to name a few factors.

By having your field reps regularly gather demographic data, you can see demographic shifts in each territory. Since these shifts can result in a shift in customer needs and tastes, you will be ready to adjust your product distribution as needed.

The example below from The University of Wisconsin shows **the results of a demographic survey** of one store neighborhood. With demographic data organized and illustrated clearly, it's easy to create and target a store-specific shopper persona.

[Total = 21 marks]

[Grand Total = 70 marks]