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# Zoning Your Store

By Ani Nersessian

Customers start to map their shopping path the moment they enter a store. This means they need to understand the different sections of the store at a glance. The way you lay out your store and the way you have displayed your products help to define each section for customers. They need to see your store in zones for an easy shopping experience. What are you doing to define these zones for your customer? Have you created the right zones needed for fulfilling your customer's shopping experience?

Zoning your store means creating definition from one section to the next. Think about how you would differentiate each room of a house without any walls. Now think about doing the same for your store, purely through visual presentation. Some retailers, such as grocery stores, literally label the sections with hanging signs above each zone. Needless to say, this does not suit every retailer's image. Therefore, to communicate each zone without using overpowering signage, we rely on visual merchandising. More specifically: group merchandise into clear categories, plan the order for presenting each category, and then consider which merchandising style is most appropriate for each product grouping.

Zones can be visually defined in several ways: utilizing the contrast between entirely different product types; varying fixture types and layouts per section; and merchandising each section in its own distinct style. You can even create a visual display to introduce the start of each new section.

There are four basic shopping zones that should be reflected at the very minimum, no matter what type of retailer you are.



**STAPLES**  
Clark Street Mercantile, Montréal, Canada  
Courtesy of Unsplash.com



Planning your merchandise groupings using these zones capitalizes on your layout to increase your sales. It also creates an organized and enticing shopping experience for your customers. The easier it is to shop, the harder it is to say no!

## 1. The Statement

The trend of pop-up spaces is proof that customers enjoy the urgency and fast-turnover of specially curated assortments. To connect with today's consumers it is critical to stimulate the same sense of urgency in a bricks-and-mortar store. Consider giving your most visible area a stimulating makeover. Curate a product grouping that immediately draws the customer's attention to the most interesting merchandise on display.

## 2. The Seasonals

It is very likely that in addition to your brand's main focus there are other key stories driven by holidays, the current season, or local neighbourhood events. While Seasonal Stories are not as "temporary" as The Statement, they excite interest with their relevance. Display them in the second most visible zone. While the Statement zone can be more about triggering trends, the Seasonals could support customers' actual needs.

## 3. The Staples

There are staple items in every store that customers expect to find. Meet your customers' expectations by showcasing clear sections for core goods. These do not have the same intensity as the two prior zones and can be placed in less visible areas of the store. They should also present a less curated merchandising style to reflect a more basic organization rather than a display.

## 4. The Accessories

You may call them add-on items, point-of-purchase items, impulse buys, or simply accessories. Place them where customers are likely to discover them while lingering at a cash register or a seating area. Position them near to corresponding larger items. When it is easy for customers to discover complimentary items they learn to appreciate your entire offering in order to complete their shopping package.



**SEASONALS**  
Clark Street Mercantile, Montréal, Canada  
Courtesy of Unsplash.com