

LEARNING GUIDE

PROGRAM TITLE: Parts Specialist*

DUTY: Merchandise the Store

COMPETENCY A-1: Develop Store Layout

INTRODUCTION:

Whether renovating an existing store or establishing a new one, the benefits of an effective store layout and superior merchandising are numerous. As a Parts Specialist, it is important to understand the procedures and supporting information for creating a store design and organizing the store layout in a manner that best meets the needs of your customer base. This guide will provide you with the knowledge and skills required to develop a store layout and merchandising strategy that steadily grows your business.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

Given the need to renovate an existing store or establish a new one, develop a store layout so as to meet the RVDA standards of excellence outlined in the Performance Test on pp. 21-22.

ENABLING OBJECTIVES:

1. Gain a working knowledge of the benefits and challenges of an effective store design.
2. Practice creating the overall store design/layout.
3. Practice implementing the store layout plan.

PREREQUISITES, IF ANY:

- Inventory management
- Research process for merchandising trends
- Safety requirements
- Types of lighting and fixtures

*This competency is also required of Parts Managers.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE #1

ENABLING OBJECTIVE #1: Gain a working knowledge of the benefits and challenges of an effective store design.

Learning Activities	Special Instructions
Read the Information Sheet titled “Benefits and Challenges of Designing a Profitable Store” on pp. 3-4. Review any additional reference material that applies such as the following documentation: a. Manual titled <i>Planning Your Store Renovation and Layout/AfterMarket Volume III</i> b. Modern Manufacturing program c. Relevant issues of industry publications such as <i>RV Technician</i> and <i>RV Executive</i> d. RV industry websites Demonstrate your knowledge of the benefits and challenges of an effective store design by completing the Self-Check on p. 5. Check your answers against the Self-Check Model Answers on pp. 6-7.	These documents are available from the RVDA Education Foundation. Refer to pp. 3-4.

INFORMATION SHEET

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DESIGNING A PROFITABLE STORE

Benefits

Merchandising – Superior merchandising can improve your bottom line by:

- Carrying more varied stock
- Maintaining your margins
- Managing inventory to avoid duplication
- Providing a stronger return on your accessory investment

Attracting customers with exterior features – The right exterior appeal and effective signage attracts drive-by customers who will give you the chance to win them over.

Promotion – With an effective store layout, you will increase floor traffic with fliers and sales, develop a solid base of loyal customers and expand your mailing list.

Remerchandising after the initial start up – Keep a fresh and exciting store look by remerchandising periodically to maintain that initial appeal to shoppers. An inviting store provides a comfortable shopping experience that welcomes customers back on a regular basis and encourages them to tell others about your store.

Note: A vibrant and appealing store also generates more impulse business.

Security – Store design affords you the opportunity to improve security.

Examples: Place lights in parking areas and position alarms on exterior doors and windows.

Providing service – Your Service Department will be more profitable. When the customer is accustomed to relying on you for the products they want to buy, bringing their RV to you for service will logically follow.

Employee attitude – Employees become more positive and take pride in their store for both products and service.

Reducing the cost – Creating an excellent layout can be inexpensive if you do most of the work yourself.

Example: Avoid the cost of painting and restocking shelves by hiring less expensive temporary help for these tasks.

INFORMATION SHEET (continued)

Challenges

Educate yourself – Learn important merchandising concepts or you will not be able to maintain the store as you want. Although distributors and suppliers can assist with the plan, thoroughly educating yourself allows you to plan the layout and remerchandise the racks by relying on your own merchandising skills and knowledge.

Capitalize on your advantage – Since the competition may be intense, identify your particular competitive advantage and emphasize that element of your business when designing or redesigning your store layout.

Examples: Your competitive advantage may be the RV lines or wide variety of accessories you carry, your convenient location, being well known for competitive pricing or the sterling reputation of your Service Department.

Key point: Make the most of your best features.

Use staff wisely – If you are short staffed, the time required to implement this activity may be prohibitive. With thorough planning, you can still accomplish your goal.

Example A: The most time consuming tasks involve physical labor such as painting and stocking shelves. Hire lower cost help for this type of work whenever possible.

Example B: In the north, retailers may be able to find the time for redesign during the winter when floor traffic is light. Plan to make these changes when business is slowest.

Apply the merchandising information that you have learned – Merchandising is a retail science, but it is not clearly defined. It incorporates visual product presentation, advertising, promotion, sales technique, market research, and the coordination of distribution and retail.

Key point: Expect deviation from the norm occasionally. Respond by adjusting your strategy. When your customers react positively, you are on the right track!



Prosper from maximizing the benefits and overcoming the obstacles by investing the time required to properly plan and implement the best store layout possible. It will be well worth it when you realize your goals!

SELF-CHECK

DIRECTIONS: *Assess your knowledge of creating the overall store design/layout by responding to the following questions. Write a brief response to the questions. Then check your answers with those on the Self-Check Model Answers page that follows.*

Benefits

1. Describe the ways in which merchandising can improve your bottom line.
2. State the benefits of providing attractive exterior features.
3. Explain the advantages of promoting your products and services with an effective store layout.
4. Explain the importance of re-merchandising after the initial start up.
5. Describe how store security, your Service Department and employee attitudes can be impacted by store design.
6. Suggest a way to reduce the cost of designing a new store layout.

Challenges

7. Explain how to make sure you maintain the store as you really want and need to.
8. State how to rely on your competitive advantage for success and state an example of what you consider to be your store's best feature.
9. Suggest some ways to use your staff most wisely when (re)designing a store layout.
10. State the importance of applying the merchandising information that you have learned.

SELF-CHECK MODEL ANSWERS

DIRECTIONS: *Compare your answers to the Self-Check with the Model Answers provided below.*

Benefits

1. Superior merchandising allows you to:
 - Carry more varied stock
 - Maintain your margins
 - Manage inventory to avoid duplication
 - Provide a stronger return on your accessory investment
2. The right exterior appeal and effective signage attracts drive-by customers who will give you the chance to win them over.
3. With an effective store layout, you will increase floor traffic with fliers and sales, develop a solid base of loyal customers, and expand your mailing list.
4. Keep a fresh and exciting store look by re-merchandising periodically to maintain that initial appeal to shoppers. An inviting store provides a comfortable shopping experience that welcomes customers back on a regular basis and encourages them to tell others about your store. A vibrant and appealing store also generates more impulse business.
5. *Security* – Store design affords you the opportunity to improve security such as placing lights in parking areas and positioning alarms on exterior doors and windows.

Providing service – Your Service Department will be more profitable when you consistently provide high quality service. When the customer is accustomed to relying on you for the products they want to buy, bringing their RV to you for service will logically follow.

Employee attitude – Employees become more positive and take pride in their store for both products and service.

6. Create an excellent layout inexpensively by doing most of the work yourself and by hiring less expensive temporary help for tasks like painting and restocking shelves.

SELF-CHECK MODEL ANSWERS (continued)

DIRECTIONS: Compare your answers to the Self-Check with the Model Answers provided below.

Challenges

7. Make sure to learn important merchandising concepts, or you will not be able to maintain the store as you want. Although distributors and suppliers can assist with the plan, thoroughly educating yourself allows you to plan the layout and re-merchandise the racks by relying on your own merchandising skills and knowledge.
8. Since the competition may be intense, identify your particular competitive advantage and emphasize that element of your business when designing or redesigning your store layout. For example, your competitive advantage may be the RV lines or wide variety of accessories you carry, your convenient location, being well known for competitive pricing or the sterling reputation of your Service Department. Make the most of your best features.
9. If you are short staffed, the time required to implement this activity may be prohibitive. With thorough planning, you can still accomplish your goal. A couple of examples are hiring lower cost help for time consuming tasks involving physical labor such as painting and stocking shelves and finding the time for redesign during the winter when floor traffic is light.
10. Merchandising is a retail science but it is not clearly defined. It incorporates visual product presentation, advertising, promotion, sales technique, market research, and the coordination of distribution and retail. Expect deviation from the norm occasionally. Respond by adjusting your strategy. When your customers react positively, you are on the right track!

Level of Performance: Your responses to the items on the Self-Check should match the Self-Check Model Answers. If you missed some points or have questions, review the Information Sheet, or if necessary, consult with your mentor.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE #2

ENABLING OBJECTIVE #2: Practice creating the overall store design/layout.	
Learning Activities	Special Instructions
Read the Information Sheet titled “Store Design” on pp. 9-10. Review <i>Planning Your Store Renovation and Layout/AfterMarket Volume III</i>, pp. 9-40. Compare and contrast the different model store layouts on pp. 26-30 to develop a layout for your own store. Demonstrate your knowledge of creating the overall store design/layout by completing the Self-Check on p. 11. Check your answers against the Self-Check Model Answers on p. 12. Practice your skills in creating the overall store design/layout while an experienced co-worker observes and offers help, as needed. Ask your co-worker to use the checklist titled “Creating the Overall Store Design/Layout” on pp. 13-14 to assess your progress.	Note the <i>RV Accessory Classification Guide</i> on p. 36 and accessory layout on p. 40. Ask a co-worker to observe and help you with your practice sessions and the practice checklist.

INFORMATION SHEET

STORE DESIGN

The initial stage in planning a new store design or during renovation is to identify the store concept. This activity includes elements such as theme and color scheme that are pleasing to the eye. Gather data for this decision from:

- Reference material
- The internet
- Merchandising trends
- Customer preferences
- Observation of other retail outlets
- Suggestions from outside sources

Key point: The proper concept increases sales and profitability.

Designing Your Store

After determining the concept, follow these steps to organize your store:

1. Measure the store dimensions, striving to maximize inventory turns.
2. Based on customer demand, determine the product categories or product mix. Be sure to include:
 - a. Plumbing
 - b. Electrical
 - c. Hardware
3. Consider the workflow including available staff and their skill sets.
4. Decide whether you will draw manually or use CAD for layout drawings. With the proper tools, draw the layout including:
 - a. Lighting
 - b. Fixtures
 - c. Technology
5. Purchase the required materials according to established outsourcing procedures (bidding, financing options, payment options, etc.).

Reference: For information on product and system suppliers, refer to Appendix B of *Planning Your Store Renovation and Layout/AfterMarket Volume III*, p. 43.

INFORMATION SHEET (continued)

Layout Components

The components of store design include lighting, fixtures and technology.

- Identify which type of lighting best shows off the product on display. Choose lighting that eliminates shadows and eases eyestrain.
- Select fixtures consistent with the store concept.
- Meet every need for technology such as computers, phones, fax capability, internet access and scanning.

Purchases

For the most cost-effective materials, refer to product catalogs and industry data and follow the established process for choosing a supplier. Make sure you stay within your budget.

Checklist

The items to include on your checklist for purchasing materials include:

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| ✓ Paint | ✓ Signage |
| ✓ Lights | ✓ Phones |
| ✓ Flooring | ✓ Computers |
| ✓ Gondolas | ✓ Fax machine |
| ✓ Shelves | ✓ Scanner |

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

You will need the following tools, equipment, materials, and supplies to create the overall store design/layout:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Budget | • POS software |
| • CAD software | • Product catalogs |
| • Data on competitors | • Supplier floor plans |
| • Industry publications | • Tape measure |
| • Internet access for website | |

WORKER BEHAVIORS

Worker behaviors play a key role in creating the overall store design/layout. The behaviors important to your success in completing this task are:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Accurate | • Deliberate |
| • Analytical | • Detail oriented |
| • Cautious | • Honest |
| • Collaborative | • Open minded |
| • Creative | • Safety minded |

SELF-CHECK

DIRECTIONS: Assess your knowledge of creating the overall store design/layout by responding to the following questions. For True/False questions, circle “True” if the statement is correct and circle “False” if the statement is incorrect. For short answer questions, write a brief response to the question. Then check your answers with those on the Self-Check Model Answers page that follows.

1. The initial stage in planning a new store design or renovation is to draw the layout.

TRUE
FALSE
2. Always draw layouts using CAD.

TRUE
FALSE
3. Name two elements of store concept and state the benefits of choosing the proper concept for your store.
4. Describe the components of the store layout.
5. Identify a few considerations when making purchases.

SELF-CHECK MODEL ANSWERS

DIRECTIONS: Compare your answers to the Self-Check with the Model Answers provided below.

1. FALSE The initial stage in planning a new store design or renovation is to identify the store concept.
2. FALSE Depending on the situation, you may either draw manually or use CAD for layout drawings.
3. POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
 - Elements include theme and color scheme that are pleasing to the eye.
 - The proper concept increases sales and profitability.
4. POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
 - *Lighting* – When determining store lighting requirements, consider which type of lighting best shows off the product on display, and choose something that eliminates shadows and eases eyestrain.
 - *Fixtures* – Select fixtures that are consistent with the store concept.
 - *Technology* – Consider computers, phones, fax capability, internet access, and scanning as potential technology requirements.
5. POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
 - For the most cost-effective materials, refer to product catalogs and industry data.
 - Follow the established process for choosing a supplier.
 - Stay within your budget.

Level of Performance: Your responses to the items on the Self-Check should match the Self-Check Model Answers. If you missed some points or have questions, review the Information Sheet, or if necessary, consult with your mentor.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

DIRECTIONS:

- First, **review** your knowledge of creating the overall store design/layout using the following checklist as a guide.
- **Discuss** with your co-worker the fundamentals of this task.
- **Practice** each stage of planning a new store design or renovation.
- **Ask** your co-worker to use the checklist to evaluate your ability to create the overall store design/layout.

Creating the Overall Store Design/Layout			
Topics	Level of Performance		
	Yes	With Help	No
When creating the overall store design/layout, the learner...			
1. Determined the store layout most appropriate for his/her own store.			
2. Described the procedure for organizing the store including:			
a. Measuring the store dimensions.			
b. Determining the product categories or product mix including:			
1) Plumbing.			
2) Electrical.			
3) Hardware.			
c. Defining the workflow including available staff and their skill sets.			
d. Drawing the layout including:			
1) Lighting.			
2) Fixtures.			
3) Technology.			
e. Purchasing the required materials according to established outsourcing procedures.			

PRACTICE EXERCISE (continued)

Creating the Overall Store Design/Layout			
Topics	Level of Performance		
	Yes	With Help	No
When creating the overall store design/layout, the learner...			
3. Chose the proper components for the store including:			
a. Lighting that best shows off the product on display.			
b. Lighting that eliminates shadows and eases eyestrain.			
c. Fixtures consistent with the store concept.			
d. Required technology such as:			
1) Computers.			
2) Phones.			
3) Fax capability.			
4) Internet access.			
5) Scanning.			
4. Purchased the required materials according to established outsourcing procedures.			

Level of Performance: When you are finished with this Practice Exercise, you should be able to comfortably discuss and perform any of the actions included in it. Your ratings on the checklist for this Practice Exercise should be **Yes** for all items. If you received **With Help** or **No** ratings for any items, review your performance with your mentor.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE #3

ENABLING OBJECTIVE #3: Practice implementing the store layout plan.	
Learning Activities	Special Instructions
Read the Information Sheet titled “Store Layout Plan” on pp. 16-17. Review <i>Planning Your Store Renovation and Layout/AfterMarket Volume III</i>, pp. 17-36. Demonstrate your knowledge of implementing the store layout plan by completing the Self-Check on p. 18. Check your answers against the Self-Check Model Answers on p. 19. Practice your skills in implementing the store layout plan while an experienced co-worker observes and offers help, as needed. Ask your co-worker to use the checklist titled “Implementing the Store Layout Plan” on p. 20 to assess your progress. Arrange to complete this Learning Guide titled <i>Develop Store Layout</i> by asking your mentor to evaluate your performance using the criteria in the Performance Test on pp. 21-22.	Note the information on fixtures on pp. 17-33 and product mix on pp. 34-36. Ask a co-worker to observe and help you with your practice sessions and the Practice Checklist.

INFORMATION SHEET

STORE LAYOUT PLAN

Location

When deciding where to place fixtures, conduct a “mud study” to see where customers walk to identify the natural traffic pattern (a mud study identifies the natural traffic pattern for your store). Also obtain customer feedback when possible.



A mud study determines the natural paths people take in your store.

Benefits of Placing Products in the Right Place

Properly placed merchandise increases sales by making products easy to find by both customers and staff. It also facilitates inventory turn and identification of out-of-stock merchandise for replenishing.

Implementing the Layout Plan

With the design in hand, follow these steps to implement the layout plan:

1. Install store fixtures. Whenever possible, renovate existing ones.
2. Place products in the designated categories
3. Label products (backtag)
4. Price each labeled product
5. Post signage
6. Install the required technology including:
 - a. Phones
 - b. Computers
 - c. Printers
 - d. Fax
 - e. Scanners

INFORMATION SHEET (continued)

SAFETY CONCERNS

When installing fixtures, always make sure to follow these safety practices.

- Comply with all government safety regulations
- Follow the manufacturer's safety guidelines
- Follow HAZMAT rules
- Maintain a clean, clear work area
- Get help when handling heavy objects
- Be especially careful around J-hooked items (potential eye injury) and sharp edges on shelving
- Never overload electrical circuits

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS, AND SUPPLIES

You will need the following tools, equipment, materials, and supplies to implement the store layout plan:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Backtags | • Price gun |
| • Battery backups | • Printer for labels |
| • Installation guidelines | • Small hand tools |
| • Labels | • Surge protectors |
| • Merchandising aids such as "cheaters" | • Tape or other adhesive |

WORKER BEHAVIORS

Worker behaviors play a key role in implementing the store layout plan. The behaviors important to your success in completing this task are:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Accurate | • Detail oriented |
| • Cautious | • Honest |
| • Collaborative | • Organized |
| • Deliberate | • Safety minded |

SELF-CHECK

DIRECTIONS: Assess your knowledge of creating the overall store design/layout by responding to the following questions. For True/False questions, circle “True” if the statement is correct and circle “False” if the statement is incorrect. For multiple choice questions, select the response that is more correct. For short answer questions, write a brief response to the question. Then check your answers with those on the Self-Check Model Answers page that follows.

1. When addressing store fixtures, always remove existing fixtures and install new ones.

TRUE
FALSE
2. When deciding where to place fixtures, identify the natural traffic pattern by conducting a
 - a. Foot traffic study
 - b. Mud study
 - c. Dirt path study
 - d. Desire line study
3. Explain two effective techniques for deciding where to place fixtures in your store.
4. Describe the benefits of placing products in the right place.

SELF-CHECK MODEL ANSWERS

DIRECTIONS: *Compare your answers to the Self-Check with the Model Answers provided below.*

1. FALSE Whenever possible, renovate existing store fixtures.
2. b. When deciding where to place fixtures, identify the natural traffic pattern by conducting a “mud study.”
3. POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
 - When deciding where to place fixtures, conduct a “mud study” to identify the natural traffic pattern.
 - Obtain customer feedback when possible.
4. POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
 - Properly placed merchandise increases sales by making products easy to find by both customers and staff.
 - Properly placed merchandise facilitates inventory turn and identification of out-of-stock merchandise for replenishing.

Level of Performance: Your responses to the items on the Self-Check should match the Self-Check Model Answers. If you missed some points or have questions, review the Information Sheet, or if necessary, consult with your mentor.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

DIRECTIONS:

- First, **review** your knowledge of implementing the store layout plan using the following checklist as a guide.
- **Discuss** with your co-worker the fundamentals of this task.
- **Practice** following through on the layout plan.
- **Ask** your co-worker to use the checklist to evaluate your ability to implement the store layout plan.

Implementing the Store Layout Plan

Topics	Level of Performance		
	Yes	With Help	No
When implementing the store layout plan, the learner...			
1. Installed store fixtures (if possible, renovated existing ones).			
2. Placed products in the designated categories.			
3. Labeled products (backtag).			
4. Priced each labeled product.			
5. Posted signage.			
6. Installed the required technology including:			
a. Phones.			
b. Computers.			
c. Printers.			
d. Fax.			
e. Scanners.			

Level of Performance: When you are finished with this Practice Exercise, you should be able to comfortably discuss and perform any of the actions included in it. Your ratings on the checklist for this Practice Exercise should be **Yes** for all items. If you received **With Help** or **No** ratings for any items, review your performance with your mentor.

PERFORMANCE TEST

Learner's Name	Date	
Competency: A-1 Develop Store Layout	Test Attempt 1st 2nd 3rd	
Mentor's Signature/Approval	OVERALL EVALUATION	
Directions: Your mentor will provide you with one or more opportunities to develop the store layout . You are to perform the actions needed to deal with the situation(s) in a way that meets company requirements and ethical business practices. Your mentor will evaluate your performance using the criteria listed below.	Level Achieved	PERFORMANCE LEVELS
		4 – Can perform this skill without supervision and with initiative and adaptability to problem situations.
		3 – Can perform this skill satisfactorily without assistance or supervision.
		2 – Can perform this skill satisfactorily, but requires some assistance and/or supervision.
		1 – Can perform parts of this skill satisfactorily, but requires considerable assistance and/or supervision.
	Mentor will initial level achieved.	

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS		Yes	No	N/A
For acceptable achievement, all items should receive a "Yes" or "N/A" response.				
When creating the overall store design/layout, the learner...				
1. Measured the store dimensions.				
2. Drew the most appropriate store layout including:				
a. Lighting.				
b. Fixtures.				
c. Technology.				
3. Determined the product categories or product mix, basing this decision on customer demand. The learner included:				
a. Plumbing.				
b. Electrical.				
c. Hardware.				

PERFORMANCE TEST (continued)

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS For acceptable achievement, all items should receive a “Yes” or “N/A” response.	Yes	No	N/A
When creating the overall store design/layout, the learner... (cont.)			
4. Purchased the required materials according to established outsourcing procedures.			
5. Chose the proper components for the store including:			
a. Lighting that best shows off the product on display.			
b. Lighting that eliminates shadows and eases eyestrain.			
c. Fixtures consistent with the store concept.			
d. Required technology such as computers, phones, etc.			
6. Purchased the required items in a cost-effective manner including:			
a. Referring to product catalogs and industry data.			
b. Choosing a supplier according to the established process.			
c. Staying within the budget.			
When implementing the store layout plan, the learner...			
7. Installed store fixtures or renovated existing ones.			
8. Placed products in the designated categories.			
9. Labeled products (backtag).			
10. Priced each labeled product.			
11. Posted signage.			
12. Installed the required technology.			

Level of Performance: All items must receive a “Yes” or “No” response. If any items receive a “No” response, consult with your mentor to determine which additional activities you need to complete in order to achieve competency in the weak area(s).