



Plumbing Merchandising Tips

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Review some of the basic best practices of creating and maintaining effective displays in the plumbing department.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: Approximately 5 minutes for the PowerPoint. Use the Additional Discussion section to spend more time on this topic.

HOW TO USE: The lesson includes a PDF you can use as a presentation. The trainer's notes will offer notes for each page of the presentation, but you may elaborate on each as much as you wish.

Slide 1 - Introduction

The plumbing department is generally divided into two areas: fashion items and maintenance items. Customers will have different needs when they visit each area. They may be dreaming about how they can redo a kitchen or bathroom, or they may have a plumbing problem they need fixed. Either way, this area must be well merchandised and maintained so it is easy to shop.

Slide 2

We'll start with plumbing fashion items. These are fixtures such as faucets and showerheads. The best way to show fashion items is out of the box and assembled. Customers like to be able to see the different finishes and styles, and they like to be able to touch them. We like to put these items at the beginning of the plumbing department, leading off the main aisle, so they catch shoppers' attention as they're walking past.

Slide 3

It's a good idea to show add-on sales nearby. If you're selling a faucet, towel bars and bath tissue holders make a good add-on sale. If customers are updating the look of their bathrooms with a new faucet, they might want other bath hardware to match. Even if these are not merchandised nearby, you can suggest them as an add-on sale.

Slide 4

Other fashion items, such as toilets and toilet seats, should be sold out of the box. If we only have the space to show a couple of models, make sure you tell customers you can special-order items.

Slide 5

The other area of the plumbing department is maintenance and repair items. This area will require a lot of care, because it includes so many individual parts. Lengths of pipe are tall and bulky. They can easily become messy, so take time to straighten them up throughout the day. We arrange pipes by type and by diameter.

Slide 6

Bins full of pipe fittings can also easily become disorganized or messy. Typically, they are arranged with the largest fittings on the bottom and the smallest fittings on the top. The display should be consistent side-to-side and top to bottom. For example, the 1" tees will be directly below the ¾" tees, directly below the ½" tees.

Slide 7

When we're displaying chemicals, we want to make it easy for customers to shop and compare different types, so we put similar types next to each other. Also merchandise plungers and augers next to chemical drain cleaners, since they are used for the same purpose.

Slide 8

It's helpful to have how-to information nearby that covers specific plumbing projects. This information can be helpful for you to refresh your product knowledge. It can also help customers as they walk through a project.



Slide 9

Here are some of the steps we can all take to help keep the plumbing department neat and organized.

- Keep bins full. We want customers to be confident we have all of the fittings they need for their projects. Keep the bins of fittings full and alert the manager when stock runs low. A customer who cannot find all of the products they need for a project at our store may drop everything and buy the entire project elsewhere.
- Keep bins organized. It's easy for customers to pick up a fitting from one bin, and then put it back in the wrong place. Keep watch for items that might be in the wrong location, and return them to their home.
- Straighten bulk items. Bulk items can easily get messy. For example, bulk rolls of plastic tubing and lengths of pipe can get disorganized. Take the time to straighten them up when you see something out of place.
- Remove damaged packages. If a carded package accidentally gets torn, remove it from the display and clean up the spill as soon as you can.
- Dust fixtures and faucets. Customers won't want to buy that faucet on display if it's dusty. Keep faucets and fixtures free from dust, dirt and anything that would keep them from looking shiny and inviting.

Slide 10 - Closing comments

These are a few of the steps we can take to make our plumbing department a better place to shop. By using good merchandising techniques, we make it easier for customers to get what they need, and we make our store more profitable.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- What are some of the other ways you've helped maintain a clean plumbing department?
- If you sell cabinets, discuss how you can integrate plumbing items with cabinet sales.

FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING

For a refresher on plumbing product knowledge, employees can take the Plumbing department of the Basic Training Course in Hardware Retailing. It is available to NHPA members at yournhoa.org.