

## Retailing 101 Planning

The LOOKING GOOD PROCESS is a simplified, yet comprehensive, method of assisting the local retailer in defining their store in their community. The questions of “what do I display?”, “what do I charge?”, “where do I put it?” are all questions that can find an answer in the LOOKING GOOD PROCESS.

The Chinese proverb says that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The journey to a successful, well-positioned and profitable business begins with a plan.

The value in the LOOKING GOOD process is the assistance provided to the retailer in the development of priorities. Following that, aiding in the development of a more comprehensive plan to address all of the variables affecting the successful and profitable operation of a retail store. From a small hardware store in a large community to a large store in a small community serving the old community and a “new” rural consumer population of “hobby farm” owners. This means addressing all of the factors that are important to that community, from product selection to product presentation....from pricing to promotion....from personnel to process. All need to have a place, all have a priority, all require attention, all require a plan.

The first part of the LOOKING GOOD process – planning -- provides a natural starting point for a new store. The planning part of the LOOKING GOOD process provides an excellent review process for an existing dealer/retailer who may be considering expanding the existing business or expanding into new areas and offering for the market. The planning part of the LOOKING GOOD process is part of an ongoing evolution of the business to which a retailer must plan, prioritize, and implement. After which the store must analyze the results and adjust, where necessary, which leads to the next new plan.

The planning process and a plan, itself, have many elements and may involve a variety of individual processes:

- **The Budget:** Your United Hardware representative will assist in the development of a capitalization, or finance, plan. This could be for a store new to the community or an existing dealer/retailer seeking growth and expansion. Existing dealers also find the budget plan a useful tool providing focus and direction to those elements requiring attention in the upcoming year from developing merchandising plans – that is what to buy and when -- to advertising and promotion schedules.
- **Market Research:** For others, the plan involves a complete market study and analysis which is provided through the Retail Profit Management (RPM) program. RPM is a unique and exclusive market research and analysis program providing the new or existing dealer with a comprehensive review of the geographic market area. It provides a wealth of information about the demographics of the market, information about how consumers in the market spend, as well as providing insight into the stores competitors. The RPM research provides detailed information needed to address questions from product to price to promotion and other questions related to positioning the store in the marketplace.
- **Category Planning:** A formal, organized, systematic approach to a review of all of the categories of product that are important to the store and relevant to the market.
- **Pricing Planning:** Through a variety of market specific pricing tools, including United Hardware’s exclusive VAMPS pricing program, United Hardware will assist the retailer in creating a competitive price position and image in the market.
- **Marketing Planning:** United Hardware will assist the retailer with the planning and development of the tools to take the store’s message to the consumer in the market.

You can begin your plan today with a call to your United Hardware representative to start the process. Create a plan, define your store in your market and develop an image that stands out as an important brand with your customers. Do it today.