

## Retailing 101 Product

Having product is not the key to your success. Having the **right** product is. How do you know what is the right product?

What does your store stand for? Most consumers make a judgment of what your store means to them from the Product selection you offer them. If the Product selection meets their needs and is complete in it's offering, then you become meaningful to that consumer and that customer will be back again and again.

It is extremely important that the product you offer is the product your consumers want. This not an easy task. You can go by the seat of your pants or you can due diligence.

Due diligence must be given to identifying your competitors. After they have been identified, they need to be comp shopped to determine what product and categories they focus on within their retail store. How and where does your competition place the categories within their stores? What depth and breath of the product categories do they exhibit?

Answers to these questions, help identify some of the specifics of product categories for you, for your market.

Due diligence must also be given to the understanding the demographics of your market. After a understanding of what the consumer base wants, needs, shopping patterns are, life styles, income levels and etc. will further help identify specifics again for your market.

After thorough research and a complete understanding of the marketplace it is time to determine the importance and size of each of the categories are within your retail store. What do you want to accomplish in with these categories? Which will be dominant, competitive, focused or convenient categories of product.

After determining the size and importance of each category, the store will have a blueprint for the future. It will tell you and your customer what and who you are. It also determines how meaningful you will be to that consumer.

You can go it alone - - Or

If you have read the "Planning" page then you already know United Hardware has a program called Retail Profit Management (RPM). It provides a wealth of information about the demographics of the market, information about how consumers in the market spend, what they may need, as well as providing insight into the stores competitors.

It is the result of this market research that gives you and us the ability to decide what departments and size of each along with it's underlying depth and breath of categories is correct for your store.

Your District Manager from United Hardware will assemble a "Category Selection" team to facilitate the Product selection. The make up of this team is you the Dealer, the RPM research person, United's Store Planner, Region Manager and the District Manager.

This team will meet off site for three days. Based on the market research and the expertise of the team members will result in giving definition to the department priority and the breadth and depth of each category within that department for your store.

Once you have the right product, the work continues. It is an ever-changing world, and the marketplace needs to be continually shopped to stay current with what categories of product the consumer wants. Keeping in touch with the marketplace and using tools that United Hardware provides, you can keep adjusting to the consumers needs.

Once again, having product is not the key to your success but having the **right** product is.