

How to Create An Amazing Christmas Tree Display

Maximizing Store Interiors for Better Retail Sales

by DEBRA YOUNG



Galleries Lafayette; Paris, France — they have the most amazing tree

photo courtesy of Laura McGuire
www.Lauremcguire.com

Would you like to know how to decorate a tree to be the focal point of your store? Or decorate a show-stopping tree that is featured in your window? These notes will teach you how to decorate a Christmas tree and compliment your décor by using your ornaments and a few extra tips. This is intended for a retail store environment not a family home. You can do anything want in a family home!

Step 1 - Ornaments

Decide on the overall color scheme of your tree. The color options are endless. The color scheme should compliment the color scheme of the store or window it is going into. It is essential that you buy a lot of one to two colors only. The ornaments can be different styles but must be common in the color. If picking out different styles, choose shiny, metallic, textured, matt and possibly velvet or crystal. The different textures make the tree look interesting. Buy small, medium large and only extra large if you have tree that is over 2.5 metres. There are many non-traditional ornament colors available this year, such as bright pink, tangerine, aqua, silver & black and navy, that will give your tree an updated look. If you want to build your Christmas look over the years then stick with the traditional colors of red and green with gold or silver as they never go out fashion and are easy on the budget. Get the look at half the price if you buy in October. Hit the mass discount stores like Two Dollar Store, etc., buy large quantities and have first pick. For a 2.0 metre tree at the discount store be prepared to spend \$80 for ornaments.

Step 2 - Theme

Decide if you are going to have a theme. The theme could be angels, cartoon characters, stars, nutcrackers, snowflakes, teddy bears, flowers or anything you can dream up. Having a theme is optional.

Step 3 - Set up

Purchase Christmas ornaments, garland, floral ribbon and any other designer items that compliment your color scheme. I would suggest 10 ornaments per 30cm height of tree. You can also use artificial natural elements such as ornaments shaped as birds or butterflies.

Step 4 - Tree

Once you have all your material, buy a tree and set it up. Go thru branch by branch fluffing the tree. The tree's branches on each arm should be fluffed and fold out like starfish. Two branches up, then down, then side to side. This is very important. Most people do not

Christmas Props

- Props look great in odd numbers 3, 5, 7,
- Oversized prop like a 2.0 metre wreath or 40 cm wreath for the window with white lights looks amazing. Timeless classic.
- Ensure the props you choose work in with the chosen colour scheme of the tree
- "Pop" and create attention with the colour RED
- Buy quality props that can be used over and over again. Make inventory list and store it on the computer.

Store Props, Scent & Music

- Garland for around the windows with fairy lights
- Oversized pine wreaths - undecorated - then decorate to your Christmas tree theme
- A nice Christmas scent is welcoming and gets people into the mood
- White fairy lights to attract attention
- Oversized Christmas baubles in the same colour hung with fish line within the store. Hang in groups of 3.
- Sparkly Christmas items attract attention
- Lots on one thing create impact – like the boxes below
- The discount dollar store is great place to buy props but remember simple. Simple, simple and one item.
- Christmas music without words or singing tends not to drive the staff and the customers away. Sometimes the singing can be off putting or if you have heard the Christmas CD a thousand times while working.

fluff their trees or angle the branches upwards. This make the tree look flat and bare.

Step 5 - Lights

Put Christmas lights on first. Make sure you put the lights on evenly, both towards the trunk of the tree and towards the outside of the tree. Use approximately 100 lights per 30cm or one foot of tree. If you have a 6' tree, or 2.0m, you should use 600 lights - 100 lights (6 strands of 100 count lights). You will need a "multi" board with ten sockets to plug in all the lights. Ensure the board complies with any health & safety regulations. This might have to be tagged and tested. I would also buy a timer switch so you do not have to think about turning it on and off every day.

White tiny lights are elegant and never go out of style. The more lights the better. My tree had 1,000 lights on it last year. Try to find the lights that have on and off movement. This makes a show-stopper tree in any retail environment.

After the lights are on it is time to add the garlands, florals, ribbons, and any non-ornament that you have purchased. There are many ways to add garlands to your tree. You can add the garlands running from the top of the tree down, tucking the garland into the tree about every 60 cm going down. Another option is to run garlands in a circle around the outside of the tree. A third option is to run the

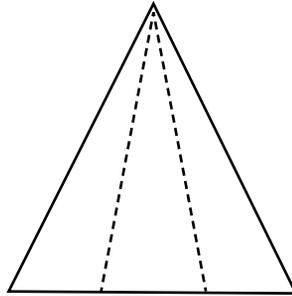
garlands in a circle around the trunk of the tree. I put it on first because it is easier to put the decorations into the holes.

Next divide the tree into 3 or 4 sections vertically.

Step 6 - Hanging Ornaments

To ensure the tree is evenly balanced with ornaments divide all the ornaments up into 3 or 4 sections. This way each section will not receive too many ornaments of one kind. Ensure all ornaments are laid out on the floor to use on the tree. Then, in each section place larger ornaments towards the bottom and middle of your tree and smaller ornaments towards the top and outside of the tree.

Keep putting the ornaments on evenly until you run out. Adding a tree topper finishes off the tree. It could be a traditional star, angel, Santa, fancy-designer bow or anything else that will top off your tree.



Step 7 - Presents Under the Tree

For a designer look, color coordinate your gift wrap to your tree ornament colors. Use multiple colors, textures and patterns of paper and ribbon for interest. Place your store's name on some tags to give further branding awareness.

Step 8 - Take a digital photo of each side

Take a photo of each side of the tree and preview on the computer. You will be able to spot flaws in the set up and it gives you a record to call back to next year when you want to add more ornaments, lights or update the color scheme.

Debra Young is Founder and Director of Boom! Retail and Boom! Merchandising Services, a nationally-recognized, small business consulting firm specializing in sales & marketing development and understanding how consumers buy using visual merchandising & design techniques. Debra has also had many published articles, including "Sharing the Secrets of the Art of Merchandising," "Brands Going Retail," Rag Trader Magazine's "Do You Have that Email in a Size 8?" "Mall Concierge and Corporate Services," "Selling Beyond the Mall" and "Visual Merchandising—the Under-Estimated Tool for Sales." For further information, please visit www.boomretail.com to review the client list or training services.

How to Create Box Props

These are 6 polystyrene boxes wrapped in red fabric and fabric ribbon. Round the box edges first with sandpaper. Place two Dowling rods in the corner and thru the next box to angle the box at the top. Glue all boxes together to make one piece. The box at the bottom should have a heavy weight inside the box before it is wrapped. The key is to find boxes that are slightly smaller than one another or custom make your own out of cardboard. This is easy and cheap but time consuming.

Christmas retail sales are what you put into it and how you merchandise it. As we head into the largest quarter for retail sales for the year; these Christmas notes hopefully have given you ideas of how to decorate and see the value of visual merchandising as your secret weapon this Christmas. Christmas decorations should go in your store on the first week of November. This date is the date that all shopping centre, major retailers and stores install their Christmas trees and interiors.

I encourage you to try these techniques for creating a superior Christmas shopping experience for your customers. Being prepared and planning early is the key to success.

So sell gift solutions and make a great effort which in turn will make you the dollars for a really GREAT CHRISTMAS!

Good luck

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ps - send me a photo of your displays! I love to have a look and happy to answer any questions.

