

Your guide to good retail practice



Just to let you know...

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Introduction from Boots UK

Boots UK is delighted to be working with Business in the Community to support local charity shop managers and employees in the East Midlands. With over 160 years of retailing experience, this is part of our ongoing commitment to the local community.

We recently supported a national charity on improving the retailing performance of their charity shops. It was so successful, we agreed to run a local seminar to share the learning from this work. By offering you an opportunity to find out how to improve the retailing performance of your charity shop, we hope you feel better equipped to understand what your customers want and what great customer service looks like.

I hope you find the Retailing Toolkit useful in helping you make a positive difference to your charity shop.

Alex Gourlay
Chief Executive, Health & Beauty Division,
Alliance Boots



Introduction to BITC

Business in the Community (BITC) works with business to build a sustainable future for people and the planet.

We're one of The Prince's Charities and this year marks HRH, The Prince of Wales' 25th Anniversary as President of Business in the Community.

BITC was set up 27 years ago against a backdrop of high levels of unemployment and urban rioting in the UK. A few leaders among the business community had the vision and foresight to know that business had a vital role to play in offering solutions, driven not by pure altruism, but because it was the right thing to do for business – 'healthy back streets makes for healthy high streets'. This was the start of our organisation.

One of those founding companies was Boots. To this day, they continue to be one of the leading lights in BITC, using their influence and reputation to inspire other companies to make Corporate Responsibility an everyday part of running their business.

For the past year, Alex Gourlay, Chief Executive, Health and Beauty Division, Alliance Boots has been The Prince of Wales' Ambassador for the East Midlands. We've spent the year with Boots UK (a member of Alliance Boots) developing a programme of activity to mark this special accolade. I'm thrilled that the Charity Shops Retailing Toolkit has been produced as part of this special year.

Generating a charity contribution of over £120 million a year and employing 120,000 staff and volunteers, charity shops are making a huge difference to our social fabric in the UK. It makes perfect sense to me that the retailing knowledge and experience of Boots UK can be used to add value to this thriving industry. Building on earlier work with a national charity, I'm sure this very practical toolkit will be a great asset to many other retailers in the charity sector.

Increasing shop sales and profitability can only mean one thing: a greater impact on the communities we all aim to serve.

David Cooke
Regional Director, East Midlands

Designing a good shop front

The first thing your potential customers see is your shop front and that's what attracts them to come in. So it's important to make sure your frontage is bright, attractive and interesting. Here are some ideas to help...

Your fascia

This is where you tell the public who you are and what you do. To use it to best effect, extend it right across the width of the unit (like the example on the right) and check that it reflects your brand fully; so uses your corporate colours, logos and typefaces etc. It's a good idea to develop a kit of parts that you can use to suit a variety of shop fronts. Try picking a 'model shop frontage' which you refer to each time.

The right lighting plays a big part in giving some prominence to your fascia. If you're looking for something cost effective, try external lighting – although some fascias do come ready for internal illumination, which can add real impact.

When you're positioning the fascia, think carefully about what your customers will see as they walk along the street, and make sure your shop front is a real standout.

Sometimes planning issues can arise, so speak to your local planning officer as soon as you can to find out if your building is listed, or the area is of special interest. They'll be able to help you develop your proposal accordingly. Remember, even if a neighbouring property has a similar fascia, planning requirements do change, so you still need to check before you install yours.

Always follow planning legislation; it's the law.



Your shop front

A little effort here will go a long way with your customers. Simple things like keeping your window and door frames looking neat, and having a good quality door handle, will make a good first impression. Décor should be fresh and simple, and complement your brand colours. White is always a good option, especially for PVC windows.

The area below the window (known as the stall riser) can easily get dirty, so choose a dark colour, such as grey. Select an easy-to-clean material and refresh the grouting to really lift the look.

Your window

Many customers start by window shopping so here's your opportunity to entice them into your shop. The key is to keep everything clean and simple; don't try to cram too many products onto your display. Carefully selected products convey quality much better than an overloaded display.

Try using raised platforms or window beds to elevate your chosen products, making them appear special. You could also try to theme your windows as the seasons change, and make full use of special occasions like Christmas or Chinese New Year.

Here's another chance to enhance your brand, by using your brand colours for your messages. This links them to your fascia and gives a professional, cohesive look to your shop.

Don't forget, you still want your customers to be able to see into your shop! So try to avoid clutter, and make sure that the features inside your shop are clearly visible. Also, while it's tempting to stick notices all over your windows, this will just confuse your customers. If you need to put any notices up, plan carefully where the best place is for them.



A really good window display, with good structure, coordinated colours and not too much product

Inside your shop

Once your customers have come into the shop, you want to keep them there. So you need to offer a warm, welcoming environment that encourages them to stay a while. Choose complementary materials and finishes that won't detract from your products.

The interior of your shop should be a blank canvas for the products on sale, presenting your products at their best.

Think carefully about the layout of your shop, what your customers will see as they come in, and any displays, images or messages you could use that will be in their line of sight.

Clever use of colour can help add real impact. For example, if you have a large shop you could try colour zoning to differentiate product areas (don't try this in a smaller shop though, as it can look messy). Remember your brand colours too, and make sure everything links in with them.

Signs are another great way of helping your customer navigate your shop. A coloured band over a product can create space for a sign, or you could fill extra retail space with a large sign with information about your charity.

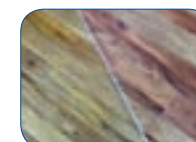
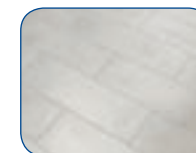
Special displays can be real standouts if they're done properly. Think about the best place for them, such as at the end of a route way, or to break up product types. Try using colour blocking to highlight the display, which could be a particular product or even a mission statement.

Pay particular attention to highlighting your payment area. The backdrop is the perfect place to communicate with your customers so choose your messages carefully here.

Choosing your materials

For your floor

Your floor needs to look good, stay clean and be non-slip, even if it gets wet. Vinyl flooring is a good option – it's long lasting, fairly inexpensive and comes in a variety of natural effects.



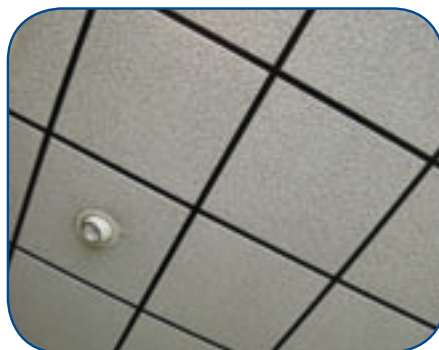
For your walls

Most of your walls will be covered with fittings so there won't be room for much else. Keep your walls looking neat by using a neutral colour, perhaps choosing certain areas for colour blocking.



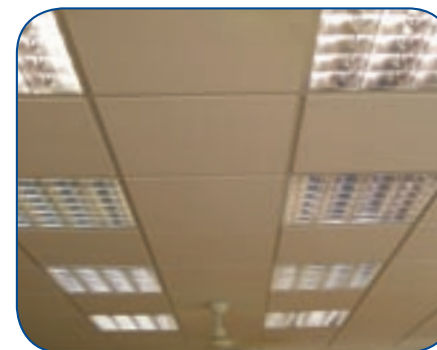
For your doorway

To protect your floor, it's important to have some good quality matting in the entrance to your shop, which can absorb dirt and moisture. A good rule of thumb is that a mat should be long enough for customers to take four steps on before they get to the main floor (so their shoes are likely to be cleaner when they tread on the floor).



For your ceilings

The best type of ceiling is a lay-in, grid-type suspended ceiling, which is really flexible and easily incorporates lighting. As a general rule, the ceiling should be 2,570-3,000mm above your finished floor level – this gives a good amount of height above your wall displays for signs to be installed. Paint your ceilings matt white for a clean, fresh look.



For your lighting

Getting your lighting right can be a bit of a balancing act. You want a bright shop that doesn't look dull or dim, but also you need to avoid harsh, glaring lights. Lighting is measured in lux levels, and about 800 lux will offer a good level of light. Your building contractor will be able to help you with this.

Make sure your windows are well lit, and use feature lighting (like spotlights) to enhance displays. Overall, you're aiming for a warm, welcoming feel without any overly bright or dark areas.

When you're fitting out your shop, it's essential to consult a qualified, experienced contractor. They can give you specialist advice on all the areas we've covered in this section, as well as give you the benefit of their local knowledge of suppliers and equipment.

Designing a good layout

First things first: when you're planning the layout of a shop, you need to make sure it's appropriate for retail. This means having a good-sized sales floor which can hold plenty of stock, and space for a stock room at the back.

Here are some guidelines to help you plan your layout:

- A good layout means:
 - Customers can find what they're looking for
 - Browsing customers spend more time and money with you because of your warm, welcoming environment

- Your sales area reflects your customers (eg you devote more space to ladieswear than menswear). You'll be able to analyse your product sales from your till reports to find out which are the most relevant products to your customers
- Try to avoid trading on two floors – it's harder for your customers to access the top floor, and harder for you to maintain it
- Lay your shop out with products grouped together, using a block plan like the one below
- Make sure product types are next to each other too, so for example all your clothing is in one place. Plan the space in between carefully, so formal clothing is separate from casual clothing etc
- Larger products naturally need more space, and are well placed at the back of the shop, while smaller products fit better at the front
- Specialist, gift or seasonal items can help create interest at the front of the shop. Try to keep moving things around though, to keep everything new and fresh for your customers
- Take inspiration from your local high street chains (like Marks & Spencer and British Home Stores)

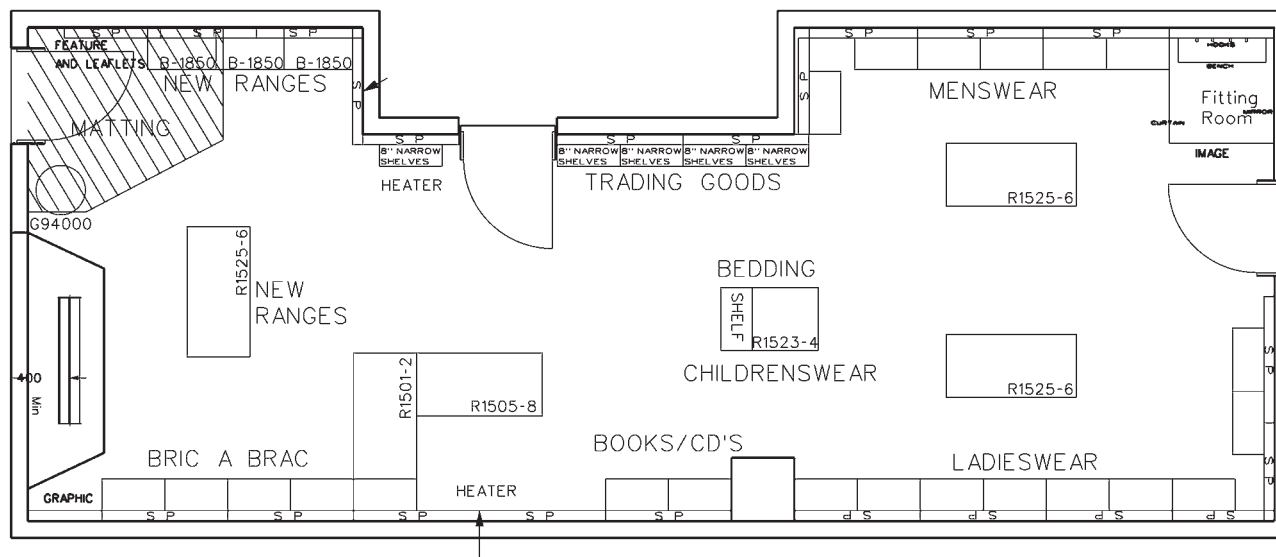


Planning your layout in detail

You'll need to produce a layout plan for your whole team to follow. See the example below for a sample using a computer-aided design pack.

Here are a few practical tips to help with your planning:

- Keep fittings parallel or at 90 degrees to your walls (this is the most logical way for customers to shop)
- Avoid lots of clutter, and don't overfill your shop with fittings
- Make sure your doorway and counter are clear – a good rule is to leave at least 1,500mm for customers at the counter and before the first display at the entrance
- Keep your fire exits clear all the time
- Remember to allow enough space for prams in your children's area (about 1,500mm)
- Give your customers a good, clear pathway without stock on the floor – if you need to put stock down plan a specific area for this
- Leave enough room for wheelchairs between displays (about 1,200mm)
- Put your till counter at the front of the shop, so it's clear to your customers – this also gives your staff a good view of the shop
- Be security conscious. Try to avoid tall, mid-floor displays that could cause blind spots. If you do have any blind spots in your shop, install a security mirror and avoid putting any merchandise out of sight. Also, try to make sure there's a good line of sight to your changing room
- Put your high-value products near your till – you could even think about putting a display behind the counter

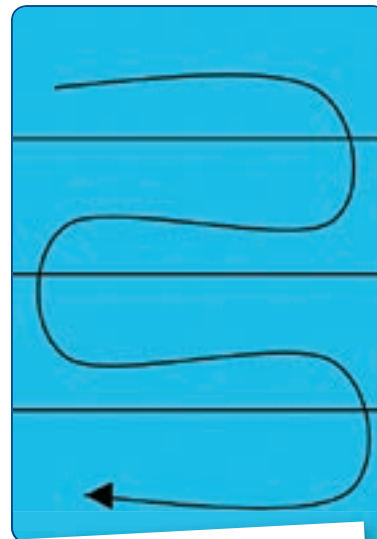


Merchandising principles

When customers shop, it's not a random process. There's a whole science attached to understanding how customers shop a display, and understanding some of these principles can help you create effective, easy-to-shop displays.

Here are a few things to remember when you're building your displays:

- Eye level means buy level. So customers tend to buy most from what's in their immediate line of vision. Choose lines you want to promote the most to put in this space
- Customers generally look for recognised brands and products to help them find what they're looking for. Keep brands and product types together (such as books, clothing etc) to help them easily find what they want
- Most customers browse unconsciously before they find what they're looking for, so you need to think about how to place key product types to draw your customers into a 'conscious' state of shopping
- Customers tend to use one of two ways to find what they're looking for:
 - Constant flow, which is used when they're looking at a functional display, uses a systemic linear flow of product and works in a bay rather than across a display
 - Central strikepoint, which is used for browsable displays and uses a central focus (which can be at the centre of the display or bay) – the rest of the display is shopped from the central focus
- As well as shopping, customers do the opposite – deselecting. This means they'll say, "I don't want clothes or books, so won't go into those areas"
- Understandably, customers want to find what they want easily, so they're looking for logical displays with easy-to-find products. So think through how you shop, and what you're looking for, and categorise everything as much as you can (so books can be fiction or non-fiction, and run a-z or by size, for example)



Constant flow



Central strikepoint

How to make your display attractive and easy to shop

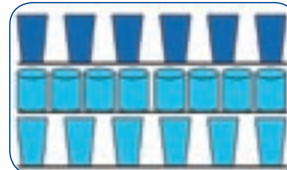
Mass



This means putting the same product on all the shelves of a module. It's a good technique where you have a lot of volume without much variety.



Horizontal or vertical?

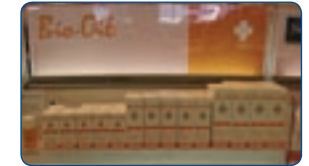


As you'd imagine, this is where you position products in either a horizontal or vertical pattern. The general consensus is that vertical blocking works best; try placing the product type in a vertical block with subjects running horizontally.

Size



When you're displaying by size, start smallest to largest, left to right, top to bottom. This is great when you have products with a lot of size ranges.



Balance



This is a central feature with bookends, which you can use over one shelf or a whole number of bays. Use this technique when you want to encourage browsing or to create interest. You can create balance through the shape, texture or pattern of a product.



Other things to think about

Your displays are key to selling products, so it's worth putting in the time and effort to get the best from your displays. Here are some answers to some common questions to help you on the way:

How do I create logic to the products I need to display?

Consider all the things that make the products similar and relevant.

How do I bring the display to life and encourage browsing and purchase?

Put your best products at eye level. Create a central focus point to draw customers in. Look at the latest trends and place them at eye level and create a display around them using the balance technique (so if Jamie Oliver's been on TV lately you could use his books, for example).

How often should I change the display?

Try updating seasonally, or in line with how often your customers shop with you. It helps keep them interested and think you constantly have something new to offer. Don't change the display too often though; the products might change but your approach shouldn't, and you don't want to confuse and frustrate your customers by changing things around too often.

How can I encourage people to buy more than one item?

- Put an outfit of clothing together on display
- Place jewellery over a jumper (make sure they can see both price tickets though)
- Show a whole set of crockery together

How should I price my products?

Just make sure that your prices are clear and visible. It's also a good idea to have a different price mechanism for new and donated goods.

Should I display new products differently?

Try creating an area for new products, using better display furniture. But as with all your products, it's all about making your products look special.

Shopfittings and displays

Once you've looked at the merchandising principles (in section 4) you need to choose the shopfittings to help you create the displays you have in mind.

A project manager can help with the design of your shop, making sure it complies with the latest legislation.

Slatwall



This simple, cost-effective display system helps you use a variety of components to show your products.

Think about using shelving to make your new goods area stand out. See above for a good example of using items to create a story and mix several themes to draw customers in.

Clothing

There are lots of great ways to show your clothing off to best effect:

- Separate the products into distinct areas, eg ladies, men's, children's
- Use your walls to create theatre for clothing
- Merchandise each area based on type (coats, jumpers etc), then by size, or you could try grouping by colour to add a little extra interest
- If you've space, create an outfit on a mannequin to add theatre
- Take a look at local clothing shops and draw inspiration for how they merchandise and demonstrate their ranges. After all, they're the experts!
- Think about adding some rails or hooks to show clothing and accessories off in their best light

Hooks



These add structure and interest to your displays, offering lots of different ways to show your clothing.



Acrylic holders

These are great for displaying smaller items, like cards and gift bags.



Gondolas

Try using freestanding wooden-slatted gondolas to use your floor space effectively and display lots of different products. Display clothes on steel freestanding gondolas, which are easy to move around, and let your customers see across the shop. Don't overfill your hooks though, as it can become difficult to browse.

See the above example as a good way of separating your clothing displays.



Baskets

These are a brilliant way of grouping little products that can become untidy easily.



Secure cabinets and mannequins

If you want to display any valuable goods, try using a secure cabinet (remember where you keep the key though!)

Using a mannequin is an excellent way of showing your customers how to create an outfit, encouraging them to buy several items. It'll also increase their perception of the quality of your shop. The above picture gives a good example of this.

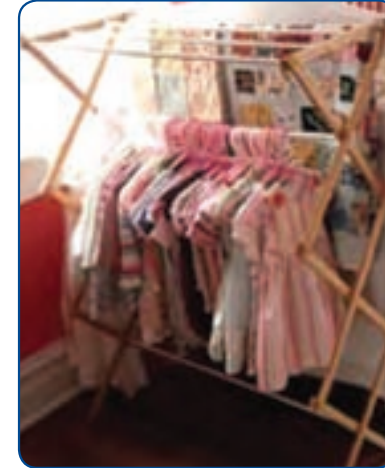


Promotional areas

You can add a little fun and creativity by using tables and donated items to create seasonal and promotional areas. Just bear in mind that your main aim is to highlight your products, so make sure the display item doesn't detract from this.

Check that donated goods fit well with the overall design of your shop (see above).

Try using a mobile card fixture for seasonal items, like Christmas cards.



Get creative

Here's a great example of using something that's already available. The textures and patterns, along with the quilted blankets at the back, all add to the theatre.

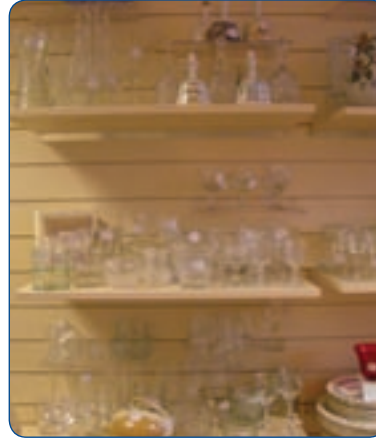


Shoes

It makes sense to keep shoes near or in the clothing areas, either on the bottom shelves of the walls or on a freestanding unit. Group them as precisely as you can, so from left to right, smaller to larger sizes and into occasions they'd be worn (sports, everyday, special occasions etc). Use colour to make the display really stand out. See above for a good example of displaying shoes.

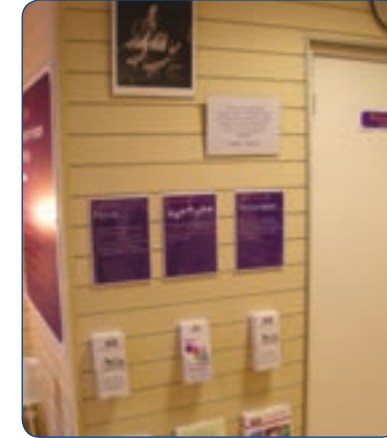
Accessories

Here's a great opportunity to encourage your customers to buy more than one item. Put handbags and other accessories next to the appropriate clothing, and match handbags with shoes (if you can, put them in the same space). Use colour to create theatre; and remember that most accessories look best when they're displayed hanging, although shelving is another good option.



Glassware, crockery and ornaments

These are breakable! So remember this when you're displaying them, and make sure they're out of reach of little fingers. Group the products into attractive displays, for example putting matching sets together to encourage a multi buy.



Leaflets and information about your charity

Lots of your customers will be interested in finding out more about your charity. Use spare space, or space that can't be merchandised onto a slat wall, to display leaflets or information.

Most of the fixtures we've described can be bought from shopfitting suppliers, such as www.shopfittingsworld.co.uk and www.shopequip.co.uk.

When you're developing theatre-style displays, think about if you want people to buy from them or if they're purely there for display.

Changing rooms and counters

Changing rooms

Think about what you expect from a changing room and make sure yours fits the bill.

When you're planning your changing room, here are some things to consider:

- Make sure there's plenty of room to move about, including for wheelchair users
 - Keep the changing room in sight of the counter, to put off thieves
 - Add a picture and keep the paintwork fresh – it's all about creating a nice space for your customers
 - Make sure the light is flattering. Bright lights are off putting, but so is dim lighting
 - Put a chair or stool inside so customers can sit down
 - Install a long mirror inside, and if you've space put one outside as well, so customers can step outside and see how they look at a distance. This also helps people trying on jackets and coats, as it saves them having to use the changing room
- A coat hook is a must, as is a coat hanger with a bar for hanging trousers
 - Put a good-quality curtain across the entrance, leaving a gap of about 18 inches at the bottom. This helps it to hang properly, and puts off thieves
 - If you're worried about theft, ask your customers to check with a member of staff before using the changing room
 - Never store boxes or other items in the changing room
 - Keep the entrance free and clear

You'll find most shopfitting manufacturers make 'off the peg' changing room cubicles, which are a great idea for your shop.



Payment counters

This is the important area where your customers pay, so you need to get it right!

Some things to think about when you're buying your counter:

- Make sure your till fits the counter!
- Check how much space you have, and think about how many people need to fit behind it. It's a good idea to mark the area out on the floor in tape first before you order your counter
- Always keep your colours in mind and make sure the counter fits in with the rest of the shop
- If you sell jewellery or watches, try displaying them in a glass-topped display counter

And some things to think about when it's installed:

- Keep the counter top clear and uncluttered, to give your customers plenty of space to pay
- Always make sure you can see the shop from the till. Obviously this is great for security purposes, but you'll also be able to see customers trying to get your attention
- Keep a tidy area for pens, calculator, notepad and carrier bags, and make sure everything's to hand
- If you'd like to display some leaflets, put them in a proper holder

- Try putting some impulse purchases on the side of the counter (magazines, sweets, bag for life etc), which can increase your sales as people wait to be served
- Make good use of the space behind your counter. It's somewhere all your customers will see, so it's a good place for information about your charity, advertising upcoming events etc
- Keep the area in front of and behind the counter clear and uncluttered
- Don't have any wiring running across the floors. It looks unpleasant and it's easy to trip over!



Signage and shop communication

Creating clear, straightforward signage is a must, and there are a few things to think about to help you achieve this.

Understand what you're trying to say

It sounds obvious, but you need to clearly understand what message you're trying to get across. Think about what relevance it has to your customers to help you really get their attention.

Pay careful attention to the size of your signage

A mission statement works well on a big sign in a key area of the shop, but product prices are better placed on smaller, shelf-edge signage.

Always think about your brand

All your signage needs to be relevant to your branding and identity – this helps your customers to engage more with your business. So, use your corporate colours and be consistent with your typefaces to help promote your brand coherently and effectively.

Work with your layout

Your shop is unique in terms of layout and design, so you need to plan how the shop flows and how your customers can move around.

Good signage helps to create clear focal points and areas of interest.

When you're planning your signage, think about how your products are laid out. You may want a sign to show where the clothing area is, or to highlight a new product. The main thing is that your signs are placed in a clear, consistent way to help your customers shop easily.

Keep things simple

Simple signage is key. Don't overwhelm your customers with too many messages and an array of colours, as it'll confuse them and make their shopping experience less enjoyable. Rather than having lots of signs with the same message, one well-placed sign can do the job equally well.



Creating your own designs

If you want to make your own signage, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and basic art programmes that come with most computers are fine. If you're a bit more adventurous, you could try high-end graphics using Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator.

If you're producing your own material, here are a few things to consider:

Consistency

This is essential for good design. All body text should be in the same format, typeface and size, all your headings and subheadings should be consistent throughout, and only use a different format if you're offering a different type of information.

Colour

Start off small, maybe just using your charity's colours and selecting two or three that complement each other. Then you could look at darker and lighter shades of these colours. Darker, muted colours often look better than brash, bold colours. If you need some advice, look at 'complementary colours' or 'colour wheels' online.

Fonts and lettering

Again, less is more. Choose a couple of complementary typefaces that can also be easily distinguished from each other. Too many fonts look messy and unprofessional. Try to stick to consistent spacing and techniques throughout; your text should be simple and easy to read.

Layout

Make sure everything lines up and looks neat on your page. Don't be afraid to experiment with images and text, but group everything together so they work well on the page together. Think about how your customers will read it, and highlight the key areas.

Proofread

It's easy to make little mistakes without realising. Give your work a thorough read through to check for typos and errors – or even better, ask someone else to read it for you.

To find out more about everything in this section, check online for step-by-step guides and tutorials. Search for basic graphic design principles, graphic layouts, fonts, lettering and layout, and colour principles and colour wheels.

Thinking about legislation

Building regulations

It's essential to submit alteration proposals to local building control officers or approved inspectors for approval. If you're in England or Wales, you don't need approval to go ahead, but if you don't get approval granted then you'll have to undo everything you've had done. Before you start any building work you'll need to submit a formal application.

If you're in Scotland, you'll find the rules are stricter, and you'll need a licence before you can start any work.

Building Regulations will consider compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act as part of your application.

The Disability Discrimination Act

You need to consider all forms of disability. This means, where practical, you'll need to offer a level access to your shop, and make the interior easy to navigate with clear aisles and simple signage with good colour differentiation.

It's a good idea to spend some time considering your policy approach to the Disability Discrimination Act.

Make all your staff aware of their responsibility to treat all your customers equally, regardless of disability. They'll need to give due consideration to the needs of every customer, offering reasonable assistance to help their shopping experience.

It's not always practical to provide everything in every shop, but think about how to get around any issues (so if you can't offer a level access, make sure customers can alert staff to help them in, for example).

Health and safety

Every employer must ensure the health, safety and welfare of their staff and customers. Key risks inside a shop include:

- Tripping
- Slipping
- Collapsing shop fittings
- Injuries from bumping into things
- Lifting injuries
- Fire hazards
- Use, or misuse, of equipment

General safety considerations

Lighting

Keep all areas well lit, and make sure there are no areas in darkness.

Flooring

Make sure there are no tripping or slipping hazards. This means keeping the floor clear from obstructions, cleaning spillages up straight away and putting matting at the entrance to stop the floors getting wet. Keep a close eye on the entrance to make sure there's no risk of anyone tripping. If any issues do crop up, put up clear warning signs or highlight to customers using yellow or white paint.

Waste removal

Designate an area of the shop to store waste before it's collected.

Merchandising

Please bear in mind these safety tips when you're merchandising your shop:

- Don't overstock or overload your shelves – it could cause the merchandise to fall or the shelves to break
- Don't put anything on the floor unless it's in its designated area. It's too easy for somebody to trip on things left lying around
- When your staff are restocking, ask them not to leave anything unattended on the floor
- It's really important that escape routes and doorways are kept clear in case of emergency
- If your customers leave any areas of your shop untidy, make sure you tidy it again quickly
- Store heavy items near the floor, never above head height
- Keep sharp items like candlestick spikes covered by using a small block of polystyrene on the tip
- Take extra care in displaying breakable items, and don't put them in hard-to-reach places
- Move damaged items out of the display straight away
- Put a plastic cap on the end of each hook – ideally a brightly coloured one
- Don't hang clothes or other combustible material next to heating equipment – it's an added fire risk
- Make sure you test all electrical items you use, or that are on sale, for safety using a certified Portable Appliance Tester

Here's some safety advice about the best use of display equipment:

- Store away any unused equipment
- Make sure all your display equipment is secure, stable and has no sharp edges
- Check all your display and window stands every day to make sure they're secure and steady
- Move damaged equipment out of the way straight away, and either repair it or dispose of it
- Don't leave hanging arms or hooks empty as they can cause injury quite easily. Remove or replace them straight away
- Make sure your customers have safe access to your shop and a clear, unobstructed walkway when they come in
- When you install wall fittings, make sure they're easy to merchandise and don't carry any risk of things falling from them at a height
- Staff and customers need safe, easy access to window displays
- Remember, small children like to pick things up, so put small or breakable items out of their reach

Guidance for retail security

Unfortunately every retail premises is at risk from theft, so you need to take extra care to secure your shop, and make sure you're giving your staff a safe place to work. With the help of your staff, carry out a risk assessment, identifying all the potential risks and think of the best ways you can prevent hazards.

We've outlined some ideas, but each shop will need its own individual plan.

Your premises

- Keep your property well secured, using good locks, alarm systems, lights etc, and make sure you're meeting the requirements of your insurance policy. Speak to your local crime prevention officer for extra advice
- Move your bins away from your wall and lock them away. This helps to prevent arson, and stops thieves using them to access your premises
- Have a clear system for locking up (preferably using your most experienced staff) and agree on a daily routine for checking windows, doors etc
- Lock staff and stock areas and check no one's hiding in there, especially at closing time

Protecting yourself and your staff

- Always work in teams of two or more, and never have just one person alone in the shop, especially at opening and closing times
- If someone becomes aggressive or violent, never confront them. Always put your personal safety first, and tell your staff to do the same

Layout

- Make sure that there's always a clear line of sight around your shop, without overly high fixtures. Use mirrors to prevent blind spots
- Place your till out of reach of customers and make sure it's near an easy escape route for staff
- Keep any high-value items away from the entrance, preferably in a cabinet or behind a counter
- Lock your stock room and put any high-value items in a separate room or cupboard
- Use signage to tell people you won't tolerate theft, and to let them know if you have CCTV

Managing your money

- Store your money in a secure safe overnight, and make regular deposits at the bank so you're only keeping a small amount on your premises
- Vary your time and routine each time you visit the bank
- Only keep a small amount of money in your till, and put extra banknotes in the safe
- Authorise credit cards in line with recommendations from the bank
- Train your staff to spot forged notes (ask your bank for guidance)

Set staff rules

- In a very small number of cases staff steal from the shop, so be aware and stay alert
- Give your staff clear guidance about handling money and securing stock
- Have an easy-to-follow policy about staff shopping and discount
- Offer your staff a secure area to put their bags and coats, away from the shop's stock and till
- Make it clear that you regularly check the money in your till

Be very careful when you're recruiting staff and volunteers, and ask everyone for a reference

Always report crime to the police and get a crime number.

