CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
MONTEREY BAY

Target Visual Merchandising Module

CAPSTONE PROPOSAL

Submitted in partial satisfaction of requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF

Instructional Science and Technology

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Capstone Approvals:

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<th>Advisor Name</th>
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</table>
Table of Contents

Executive Summary .............................................................. 1
Introduction ........................................................................... 3
Solution Description ............................................................ 6
Methods/Procedure ............................................................... 8
Resources ............................................................................. 9
Timeline/Progress Report ....................................................... 10
Evaluation/Testing Plan ......................................................... 12
References ............................................................................ 14
Executive Summary

The Target Visual Merchandising module is an interactive learning website designed for beginners in visual merchandising that need to be trained on how to set up displays in order to portray new products, trends, and concepts. The tutorials provided by the module are crucial in the learning experience of the visual merchandiser because it exemplifies real world scenarios in which he or she will be encountering when performing the daily tasks. The activities will include: reading, drag and drop, multiple choice assessments, and matching.

The capstone project will entail multiple step by step tutorials on how to style and begin to merchandise. Such tutorials will include: “What is Visual Merchandising?”, “How to Brand and Style”, “How to Promote Sales”, and “How to Read an Adjacency”. Each tutorial will be followed by a quiz to assess the knowledge and skills the learner needed to acquire during the tutorial, then with an exam at the end of all completed tutorials and quizzed to assess the overall content of the module.

The general goals of the website are to captivate the eye of the consumer with the merchandise and trends at hand, maintain the brand of the store, and increase sales for the company. Without eye catching displays, the consumer will not be interested in the products that the store has to offer, nor in the current style trends that the products can be used for in their everyday life. However, even when a visual merchandiser has captivated the eye of the consumer with a display that he or she has created, the display will still need to maintain the brand, in other words, the distinguishable characteristics that differentiate Target to the other retailers. By maintaining the identity of the store while drawing in the consumer, the visual merchandiser will then to be able to promote sales and increase the overall profits of the company.
Even though the target audience comprises of an inclusive range of education and age levels, all of the learners are adults and therefore have ownership of their own learning. Using the theory of andragogy, a visual merchandiser does a great deal of independent learning, as well as relying on previous knowledge as resources for solving complex problems. In addition, by basing the module through adult learning theory, context-based adult learning is also important because the learners will be able to shape their own learning through the tools, environment, and principles that are being set in the learning situation at hand.

The website will be created and programmed using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and jQuery on Adobe Dreamweaver. The media will be created and edited through Adobe Photoshop. The storyboard will be fabricated on Microsoft PowerPoint. The website will be tested on multiple web browsers, such as Chrome, Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.

The website will undergo a usability test through learners that are new and experienced with visual merchandising within and outside of Target. In addition, the website will also go through an evaluation assessment to ensure that all of the learning content is correct and current.
Introduction

Background

A visual merchandiser is someone who sets up displays within a store. “To show product items and concepts on how to use said product items at their very best, with the final purpose of making a sale,” (Pegler, 2006, p.7). His or her job is to show off the new products, trends, and concepts at their finest. The ambition for this work in retail derives from making a sale by convincing the consumer of the product’s worth value being displayed.

The main drive of the visual merchandiser is to produce a “story” from the products and trends the retailer has for sale. In a sense, he or she will fabricate a visual display that will connect the consumer with the products and trends and attempt to convince them that they need to buy it because it is relevant in their everyday life. Visual merchandisers apply design, fashion, trends, as well as new concepts to develop and style a focal point within the store for said “story”. These focal points consist of, but are not restricted to: mannequins, display tables, and display rooms. Through the endless variations of weather, seasons, fashion, and style trends, the visual designer needs to think outside the box and present the merchandise on sale so that it will fascinate the eye of the consumer.

Problem Description

Even though visual merchandisers can think outside the box, he or she still needs to preserve a parallel, as well as a standard for the brand of the store, in this case, Target. A few rules of how the brand, or say, the identity of the store, needs to be consistent are: selling a product through display promotions; inspire the consumer’s eye and influence his or her decision to enter the store and make a purchase; to highlight the store’s aesthetic image; draw interest and increase a positive shopping experience for the consumers; and, be able to explain the product
being showcased, as well as educate the consumers on how and when to use said product to relate to the trend through guest service.

**Target Audience and Context of Use**

The target audience for this module are all adult ages, ranging from 18-retirement. The employees also range from having absolutely no college experience, to having a master’s degree. The average team member knows how to “push” product onto the sales floor, and how to “zone” the merchandise on the shelves and racks. To “push” means to know how to unpack new products and place them onto the shelves and racks. To “zone” means to clean up and keep the shelves and racks organized and neat for it to look desirable to the consumers.

The focus of this capstone will be to be able to push the products onto the sales floor and structuring it to make it look desirable on the shelves, racks, mannequins, and other focal points throughout the store. Since most of the incoming new team members will already know how to push and zone, the priority will be to learn how to design and structure the product layout into a display.

**Literature Survey**

The position for visual merchandising is new for Target as a company. Other companies, such as IKEA, Anthropology, and Macy’s, to name a few, already had this position for a few years now. However, in order for Target to remain relevant in the current trends in home décor and apparel styles, the company had to reinvent the visual aspect of their brand for their consumer’s shopping experience. Therefore, the company website has posted numerous job openings for this position throughout the country within the last year. The job description includes: “Demonstrated passion for: style trends in Home and Apparel, sharing your enthusiasm in a retail environment, and providing an amazing shopping experience for guests. Ability to
work independently, understand and interpret visual merchandising tools and direction, and develop and train others.” (Target Brands, 2016). Through this job description, the priorities are clearly stated as knowing how to style and highlight a product onto a focal point so that the consumer will be interested in making a purchase. The job description also takes note that the visual merchandiser needs to work independently and have previous knowledge of resources of style trends and fashion, hence, the learning theory of androgyny and adult learning.
Solution Description

Goals of the Project

The general goals of the website module are to interest the eye of the consumer with the products and trends at hand, preserve the brand of Target, and raise sales for the company.

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Domain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a display, endcap, and/or focal point that will captivate the eye of the consumer.</td>
<td>Given an endcap and/or focal point, the learner must generate a captivating display by the end of their shift.</td>
<td>Condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preserve and uphold the brand while incorporating new style trends and concepts.</td>
<td>Classify examples of the Target brand including new style trends and concepts with 100% accuracy.</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how the sales floor is laid out and how new merchandise can be incorporated.</td>
<td>Describe the sales floor layout while incorporating new merchandise with 100% accuracy.</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote sales through signing, labeling, and displays of merchandise.</td>
<td>With 100% accuracy, label, sign, create displays of merchandise when promoting a sale.</td>
<td>Performance Standard</td>
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Instructional Strategies and Justification

While the target audience encompasses an inclusive variety of education levels, all learners are adults and therefore have ownership of his or her own learning. The theory of andragogy is best suited for designing this module. “A main assumption of andragogy is that adults bring a store of life experience to the learning encounter an experience can serve as a resource for learning,” (Adult and Continuing Education (ACE), 2008, p.64). In other words, adults are capable of directing in the planning of his or her own learning (S. B. Merriam, Stein, Imel, & Owenby, 2001, p.5). Being a visual merchandiser involves not only lots of individual learning, but also relying on prior knowledge as resources for resolving intricate complications. In addition, by grounding the module in an adult learning theory, context-based adult learning is
also important to be addressed. “[L]earning in context is paying attention to the interaction and intersection among people, tools, and context within a learning situation,” (S. B. Merriam, Stein, Imel, & Owenby, 2001, p.44). The target audience will therefore shape his or her own learning through the tools, atmosphere, and ideologies that are being set in the learning situation at hand.

**Media Concepts**

The storyboard for the website module will be created through Microsoft PowerPoint. The website will be created and programmed using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and jQuery on Adobe Dreamweaver. The media will be created and edited through Adobe Photoshop. The website will be tested on multiple web browsers, such as Chrome, Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.

**Anticipated Challenges**

The challenges in producing this module will be using Adobe Dreamweaver and Photoshop for the multimedia content, such as the interactive website and images included on each webpage. Google searches, along with YouTube tutorials on how to resolve any encounter that may come my way relating to the software will be used while developing the module. The risk of not receiving reliable data when having peers run the module is also a factor. This is due to time constraints, conflicting work schedules, and holiday retail excitement in the workplace.
Methods and Procedures

Steps Completed and Preliminary Results

Currently, the website module is 50% complete. The Job Analysis, Learning Objectives and Goals, and defining media and graphics are all completed. The beginning tutorials of the module have already been developed and launched onto ITCDLand since this was also a term project for IST 541. The tutorials of “How to Read an Adjacency” and “How to Promote a Sale”, along with the quizzes have been published onto the website. The additional tutorials and quizzes are in the design phase and still need to be produced digitally onto the programming software, Adobe Dreamweaver.

Design and Development of Project

The content outline, storyboard, as well as programming and coding of the website still needs to be completed. The development procedure will be similar to the designing and coding from IST 541 when creating the interactive webpages. The storyboard will be designed using Microsoft PowerPoint. This will give the development process a plan on how the website will be laid out when coding and programing come into process.

Steps to Finish Project

- Design remaining tutorials
- Develop remaining tutorials
- Produce the usability test and evaluation test
- Run the usability and evaluation tests
- Make necessary changes to the module
- Publish module onto ITCDLand
- Write Capstone Report
**Resources**

Time: 100-200 hours

Money: $12 per month for subscribing to Adobe Dreamweaver, $8 for external USB flashdrive

Hardware: Available Microsoft Surface Pro Notebook

Software: Google Chrome, Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Dreamweaver

Space: To be stored on ITCDLand and a USB flashdrive

External Expertise: Consultation with visual merchandising experts if needed

Training: None

Technical Skills Required: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, basic jQuery

Resources to be Utilized to Learn HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and jQuery: Online resources such as YouTube, Khan Academy, and Code Academy.
**Timeline/Progress Report**

**Milestones Checklist**

☐ Finish designing “What is a Visual Merchandiser?” tutorial

☐ Finish designing “How to ‘Brand’” tutorial

☐ Add intro tutorial to Sales Floor Blueprint Activity

☐ Develop overall module assessment

☐ Add Drag and Drop activity to create and endcap

☐ Add quiz for “How to ‘Brand’” (identify the Target picture)

☐ Add quiz for “What is a Visual Merchandiser?” (multiple choice quiz)

☐ Run usability test

☐ Conduct developmental evaluation based on usability test and make necessary changes

☐ Finish capstone report

**Timeline**

Sept. 16-20: Revise capstone proposal

Sept. 21-27: Design “What is a Visual Merchandiser?” and “How to ‘Brand’” tutorials and quizzes

Sept. 28-Oct. 4: Design intro tutorial for Sales Floor Blueprint and overall module assessment

Oct. 5-11: Design Drag and Drop for creating an endcap activity and conduct usability test

Oct. 12-18: Conduct the evaluation based on the usability test and make necessary changes to the module

Oct. 19-25: Meet with adviser Jeanne Farrington and update her on Capstone Project Progress, upload link to iLearn
Oct. 26- Nov. 1: Complete developmental evaluation and finish making necessary changes to the module, revise final deliverables

Nov. 2-15: Finish website and start writing one-page summary and final report

Nov. 16-22: Complete all deliverables and prepare Capstone presentation files

Nov. 30-Dec. 6: Submit one-page summary, Capstone presentation, Capstone Project, ePortfolio, and Final Report

Dec. 16: Capstone Project Presentation
Evaluation/Usability Test

The evaluation for this website module will be focused on the usability since the target audience will have a basic foundation of minimal technological knowledge and practice. The website module thus far has an easy to use interface and features, including menu bar, quizzes, tutorials, and certificate print out. The usability test will be used to determine if there is any other way the learner would like to use the website module that will help ease his or her experience while taking it.

In regards to the visual effects of the module, usability test will ask if the color scheme works, if the menu bar is simple enough to use, and if the pictures and images are clear and vibrant enough for the module’s purpose. Due to the visual merchandising theme of the module, the visual effects and images that will be shown in the module are a top priority in ensuring a crystal clear portrait of what the objectives are teaching the learners.

Since there is such a variation of education within the different departments and learners that will be taking the module, the usability of the website should have a minimalistic, simple, and easy to use interface when taking the module. Therefore, the usability test will also ask the learners how the layout benefits or inhibits their learning. It will ask if he or she prefers more interactive quizzes, and if he or she wants more step by step visual and text described tutorials.

In addition to the usability test, the evaluation test will also determine if the information being provided to the learner is sufficient enough for an introduction to a visual merchandising position. Regardless if the learner will have the job title “Visual Merchandiser”, if a team member of Target is interested in creating a display and expanding his or her creativity within the company, the module should cater to a wide variety of learners. In other words, the website
module should lay out a foundation for the beginning steps of what a visual merchandiser needs to know in order to perform well on the job.

The evaluation test will ask if the various tutorials explain the concepts correctly, such as promoting a sale and reading an adjacency, for instance. And, the evaluation test will also ask if the quizzes at the end of the tutorials are sufficient enough to assess the learner and ensure that they have learned a new skill and mastered it by the time they take the overall assessment.
References


