

WorldSkills UK

Visual Merchandising

Technical Handbook

Overview of skill:

Visual merchandising is about creating eye catching displays for the windows and interiors of shops and department stores, designed to maximise sales.

A Visual Merchandiser is responsible for designing the window displays for a store, as well as ensuring that the interior of the store is laid out accurately so that the customer can navigate the store easily.

Having good products is only part of the key to a successful retail outlet. Drawing people in by using visual appeal is also important. The visual merchandiser creates a positive atmosphere for customers, creating a brand look that is creative, eye catching, and drives sales. They need to understand the target market for both products and outlets, have a good sense of design to implement a brief, and show careful attention to detail.

Competition Overview

This competition has been designed to reflect the practical skill set a visual merchandiser must employ, encompassing styling product, decal use, painting, prop making, graphics, and lighting.

Within the competition, all these components must be implemented together to produce a balanced and eye-catching display. Attention to detail and neatness in execution is also paramount.

The structure of the competition is outlined below:

Stage 1 Registration and preparation

To compete in the competition, you must register using the WorldSkills UK website. You will then receive a confirmation of whether you have successfully registered. Whilst you wait to get to the next stage of the competition, you should do your best to prepare for the competition by taking a look at the **pre-competition activity task** made freely available to you on [our website](#).

Stage 2 Passive stage

Shortly after registering, the competition journey will begin with what is called a passive stage. This will be an online task that the competitor will complete and

then return to WorldSkills UK for marking. This is a really important part of the competition journey as it gives the competitor an early taste of what knowledge is needed to be successful on the journey. Once everyone's scores have been totalled, competitors will be informed if they have passed on to the next round, called the national qualifiers.

Stage 3 National Qualifiers

For competitors who have managed to pass through the passive stage the next step is the national qualifiers. This is where the competitor will be allocated a physical local centre from where to compete and will give competitors the chance to demonstrate their skillset. This stage will be marked by WorldSkills UK expert judges. The top eight scores from the national qualifiers will then go through to the next round, the national finals.

Stage 4 National Finals

The top eight (8) competitors in the UK will be invited to compete in the UK National Final which is the pinnacle of the UK national competition cycle.

The finals are usually a large scale event, and a chance to show off your skills, meet a bunch of industry professionals and other competitors taking part, as well as bring your family along to see you compete. Throughout the finals you will be expected to be able to do two days' worth of competition activity.

Stage 5 WorldSkills UK International Competitions

Please note the 2021 competition will not be a selection year for the international competitions.

Beyond the national finals, there are a host of opportunities for competitors. Age-eligible competitors who show the highest skills, passion, and drive from the national finals will be given the opportunity to compete to train for the EuroSkills and WorldSkills international competitions.

Those who are not eligible for international competitions may join the Champions programme, which allows continued involvement, including the opportunity to work with WorldSkills UK and visit schools, colleges, and events to inspire the next generations.

Alternatively, if training is of interest to you, you could consider supporting WorldSkills UK with organising and training, and even helping to run the National Finals.

Careers related to visual merchandising

Visual merchandising leads to a wide range of career paths, from working within retail and designing displays, to getting your hands stuck in interior design work as well as working in exhibitions.

For a career in visual merchandising you will need excellent creative skills, using your initiative to come up with new ways to do things. As well, excellent customer service skills and communication is required for dealing with customers and the team. You are also likely to take a leadership role in order to teach sales staff how to display goods and so will be influential in guiding their learning and development.

To read more about the career paths that you can go into as a visual merchandiser, [visit our webpage](#). As well, you can read about how the national and international competitions helped [Jasmine to make proactive steps with her career](#).

Judges top tips: what are the 5 key elements of visual merchandising?

Throughout the competition it is essential that you remember the 5 key elements of visual merchandising. This is what will help you to succeed in the competition. These elements are listed and outlined below:

- **colour:** the soul. The colour palette is the essence of the display
- **landscaping:** the ups and downs. The elevation of products is referred to as landscaping
- **texture:** the touch and feel. Contrast in texture can enhance a display
- **communication:** the storyteller
- **decor:** the finishing touches.

5 Key Elements of Visual Merchandising

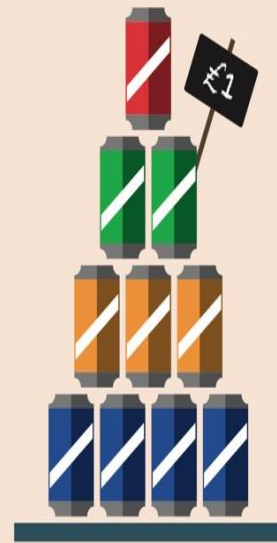
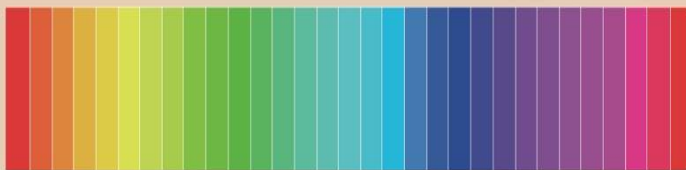
“Something caught my eye” - this is one of the top reasons for a customer to make a purchase. Effective visual merchandising can turn the passive viewer into an active buyer.

1. Colour, The Soul

Choose colours for your display that

COMPLIMENT

the merchandise you are selling, whether that be warm or cool colours.



Colour is the easiest way to quickly impact your visual merchandising



Energy



Reliability



Health



Happiness



Friendliness



Elegance

2.Landscaping, The Ups & Downs



Landscaping is the elevation of products at various heights. Landscaping leads a customer's eye through a display. It is an effective way to highlight a featured product.

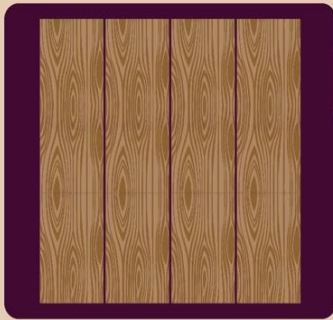
3.Communication, The Storyteller

Highlight new items

Signs have about five seconds to engage customers.
For optimal impact, choose simple language with clear fonts to avoid any visual clutter and/or confusion.

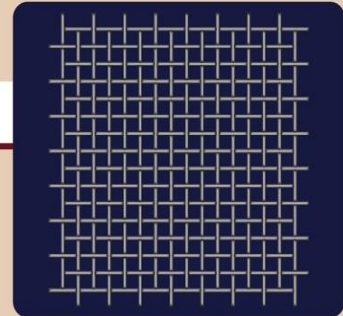


4. Texture, Touch & Feel

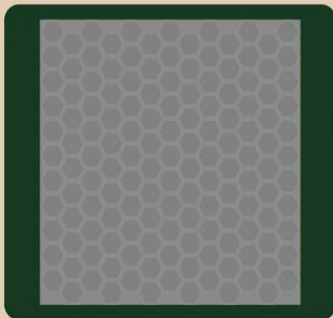


Wood: Locality & Farm Fresh

Wire: Modern & Industrial



Metal: Sleek & Durable



The most successful displays combine textural concepts.

Opposites can work well together:

- Smooth Vs Rough
- Natural Vs Synthetic materials

5. Decor, The Finishing Touches

Supports the theme.

Décor is the final touch on a display, which helps to enhance the overall theme.



An insight into competition tasks

The below outlines the pre-competition activity that is also available as a separate attachment on [our website](#). The pre-competition provides you an example of the project briefs you might expect when competing in the competition as well as the tasks that would be required of you.

Please note: the separate attachment will have the images mentioned in the brief below.

Pre-Competition Activity Project Brief

- **project overview:** included features /optional features
- **project example:** test project
- **theme:** 'Playful Graphics'
- **season:** late Summer 2018
- **customer:** 20 year old art student
- **target market:** high street fashion
- **props and materials:** please see images in practice brief.

Colour samples are 5lts of paint, x2 chairs, x3 broom handles, x 5 hula hoops, x 5 colour duct tape, x 5 colour carabiners, dot and cross paper 10mt (L) x 60cm (W), black vinyl 5mt (L) x 60cm (W), climbing rope 15mt, reel of wire, 2mt (L) x 1.5mt (W) white PVC.

- **tools:** basic tools: staple gun, glue gun, saw, drill, scissors, knives, measuring equipment, masking tape, fishing line.
- **window design:** Open 3 sides (no glass), back panel 2.5mt (H) including base and fascia and 1.2mt (W) & (D). Ceiling grid and 1 track of spotlights.

Deliverables

- 1 Mood/design board with images (basic core words can be used)
- 1 CAD visual of window (You do not have to dress the tailors dummy, but could add reference to styling of product in the mood board)

- 100 word rationale, explaining the design idea and display components
- Info document with name, mobile no, email, date of birth, address, college/work contact name no and email. Saved as a PDF, no more than 10 Mg.

A guide to marks

Outline of how marks are awarded/gained:

All project briefs will be supplied with a mark summary form. The mark summary form will show only the number of marks assigned to each aspect, not the breakdown of marks (e.g. Work management & organisation: 20 marks maximum).

All marks for Objective criteria are “all or nothing”, e.g., if a dimension is specified at 100 ± 2 , full marks will be awarded from 98mm to 102mm. Anything outside of this will be awarded zero marks.

Judgement:

Judgement marks are more subjective, for aspects such as:

A. Paint mixed accurately:

(A sample will be given to each competitor, mixed from the colours provided. They must match it as close as they can).

- 0 Not a close match
- 1 A close match
- 2 Almost an exact match
- 3 Perfect / Exact match

Judges will work to a judgement handbook with examples of each criterion. Each judge will reveal a value from zero to three, and an average will be taken from the scores.

Equipment

During training and delivery of the national finals, lots of tooling and equipment will be provided by WorldSkills UK and various competition sponsors.

Provided equipment to produce the test project is specified here:

- staple gun
- glue gun
- saw
- drill
- scissors
- knives
- measuring equipment
- masking tape
- brushes
- hammer
- screwdrivers
- pillars.

This equipment can vary depending on the brief's specialist requirements.

Resources

The resources available during the competitions will vary depending on the briefs theme, but an example of what they could be are:

- MDF sheets (varying sizes and thickness)
- foamboard
- paint
- paracord
- wire
- coloured vinyl rolls.

Training

Self-directed training:

All competitors will need to practice to make it to the national finals. Dedication is key to confident performance in a competition. Practicing with the pre-competition activity pack, made available in its entirety [on our website](#) is a good first step.

National Final

What to expect:

The national finals are huge: the largest skills event in the UK, taking place in a top location in the UK.

The finals are a chance to show off your skills, meet a bunch of industry professionals and other competitors taking part, as well as bring your family along to see you compete. Throughout the finals you will be expected to be able to do two days' worth of competition activity.

Competitors are expected to wear the appropriate H&S equipment (e.g. safety glasses, ear protectors, gloves) as well as appropriate clothing while competing.

The competition stand will be prepared with all the equipment necessary to compete.

There will be one set of basic tools per stand (this equipment can vary depending on the briefs specialist requirements):

- staple gun
- glue gun
- saw
- drill
- scissors
- knives
- measuring equipment
- masking tape
- brushes
- hammer

- screwdrivers
- pillars.

Below is an example of what the timetable for the finals could look like:

Familiarisation day – Wednesday

Judges & Competitors arrive (no accompanying staff allowed on stand), Health & safety, ground rules, they will be provided with demonstration on how access the equipment and have the opportunity to ask questions.

The competition brief will also be introduced, and the first task will be provided to the teams.

Thursday

8.30am Judges & Competitors arrive on stand. Competition start through till 17.30.

Friday

8.30am Judges & Competitors arrive on stand. Competition start through till 17.30.

Saturday

8am Judges & Competitors arrive on stand, competitions start through till 11a

Conclusion

We hope this resource has provided some insight and guidance as to what you can expect when competing at WorldSkills UK.

If you have any enquires please get in touch with us via [email](#).

Alternatively, you are able to phone us on (0)800 612 0742.