**Question: What are the most used and effective marketing techniques utilised by Australian supermarkets and how are they utilised to increase profit?**

**Introduction**

Supermarkets use various marketing techniques to increase their profit1,2,3, some of these techniques are subtle while others are very obvious.4These techniques can manipulate our bodies5,6, minds7,8 and movement9 in order to increase store profit. The research conducted for this report analysed various sources in order to assess firstly the most used and then the most effective techniques in increasing profit. Preliminary research showed that the most used included: leader pricing10, referral networks11, colour12,13, store layout14,15 and music16,17,18. Of these, the most effective in increasing the profit included: colour19, music20 and store layout, which can be simplified to product location21, as product location dictates the layout of the store22. Hence the outcome will be comprised of 3 main sections, discussing the 3 techniques: colour, music and product location and how each of them are utilized by supermarkets to increase in store profit.

**Affect of music**

Music as a marketing technique is one of the most widely used as it is relatively inexpensive to set up and costs nothing to run.23The uses of music, however, is extremely extensive. Music is used to manipulate the foot traffic24,25, shop time26,27, mood28,29, perception of the store30 and increase productivity.31 Music is used to influence the foot traffic either to increase the customer turnover in order to prevent the store from overcrowding or it can be used to decrease customer turnover during non-busy parts of the day.32,33,34An example of how this is utilised in Woolworths stores is seen in figure 1.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Effect of tempo and genre on foot traffic in supermarkets during weekdays | | | | |
| Time | Genre | Tempo | Foot traffic level | Effect |
| 8-12 morning | Easy listening | Medium | Relatively high | Medium tempo music causes turnover of customers to increase. Preventing overcrowding while still allowing an adequate shop time |
| 12-3 mid day | Classical/ indie | Slow | Very low | As this time is the least busy, the slow tempo music causes customers to relax and take their time. This increases the chances of impulse purchases. |
| 3-5 afternoon | Modern top 100 supplemented with classical | High | Very high | This is the busiest time of the day, fast tempo increases customer turnover preventing store from overcrowding. The supplement of classical music is used to prevent teens from loitering in and around store, to prevent shoplifting. |
| 5-8:30 pm | Easy listening | Medium | Relatively high | Medium tempo music causes turnover of customers to increase. Preventing overcrowding while still allowing an adequate shop time |
| 8:30-9 pm | Modern top 100 | High | Low | High tempo music is used to hurry customers out of the store in order for the staff to prepare to shut the store at 9pm |
| After store shuts | Modern rock | High | None | Choice of genre and tempo causes increased productivity in night produce staff. Causing a 15% increase in the number of boxes unpacked per min rate |

Figure 135

As seen in figure 1 music clearly affects the foot traffic and shop time, this can be seen especially between 3 and 5pm where fast tempo music is placed to reduce shop time and foot traffic to prevent overcrowding. Slow tempo music leads to an increased shop time and an increase in impulse purchases. Mod of customers is also affected by music. Slow tempo music caused customers to relax and move around the store slowly creating more opportunities for impulse purchases. The genre of music can also influence the way the store is perceived. Such as when classical music is played the store is perceived as being sophisticated, classy and upper class. This leads to an increase in expensive products being purchased.36

Dr. Julie Schwartzbard head neurologist in Aventura states in her article on the factors affecting concentration, that music is a great way to increase concentration.36 Therefore music played in supermarkets can potentially increase the concentration of employees, which would in turn lead to less mistakes and increased productivity37,38. This is backed up by an interview with Vijay Paugael, a marketing analysist at Woolworths.39 When music isn’t playing instore throughout the day the profit for the day decreases by roughly 7%.40,41 On a normal weekday Woolworths stores on average make a total profit of roughly $5,500 per day42 with music playing. If one store didn’t play music for 1 year the loss in profit would be $140,525. Woolworths Co in 2018 had a total revenue of $56.726 billion. With Woolworths playing music in every store43 the company prevented a loss of $3.97 billion dollars just by playing music in stores in 2018.

**Affect of product location**

Product location as a marketing technique is the most used in supermarkets, as all products require a location. Product location can be broken down into three main sections; sector layout, vertical positioning, horizontal positioning.

Sector layout

In supermarkets, the store is generally separated into sectors that include: fruit and vegetables, bakery, butchery, cheese section, refrigerated products, long life products and milk.44,45 The way these sectors are laid out allows owners to subtly prompt consumers to create impulse purchases and, in general, increase their spending.46,47When entering a supermarket the first sector to come into contact with is the fruit and vegetables sector48,49. This sector has been strategically located there. The first reason is that produce is best viewed under natural light50,51, another is that seeing produce when first entering changes consumers perception of the store causing them to perceive the store as fresh and healthy, which promotes increased purchasing of healthy items.52 Next sector is the bakery sector. This sector is located near or next to the fruit and vegetable sector. The bakery is located here so that when you enter the store you can immediately smell the aroma of fresh bread53. Gordon Proctor, a professor of salivary biology at King's College London, says smelling food sends our salivary glands into overdrive and this makes customers hungry.54 Shopping when hungry causes customers to spend more.55,56,57The butcher section is located towards the back of the store as meat and fish are best viewed under artificial light.58,59 Milk has its own sector at the very back corner of the store, the furthest spot from the entrance. The milk sector is located strategically there to increase impulse purchases as customers have to walk past all the promotional items on their way to the milk sector.60,61,62

Vertical positioning

When products are arranged in a vertical display from top to bottom, this is known as vertical positioning.63 The vertical position significantly increases store profit. The vertical position of the shelves are split into 3 main sections: eye, hands and feet.64 Supermarkets place their most expensive products at eye level, where the products can be easily seen.65,66,67 Big brand manufactures pay a shelf allowance of up to millions for their products to be placed at eye level in high traffic aisles.68,69 As customers progress below the eye level section, the products gradually become cheaper and harder to see.70,71 With the essential and bulk products located on the bottom of the shelves as people need these products and will look for them.72

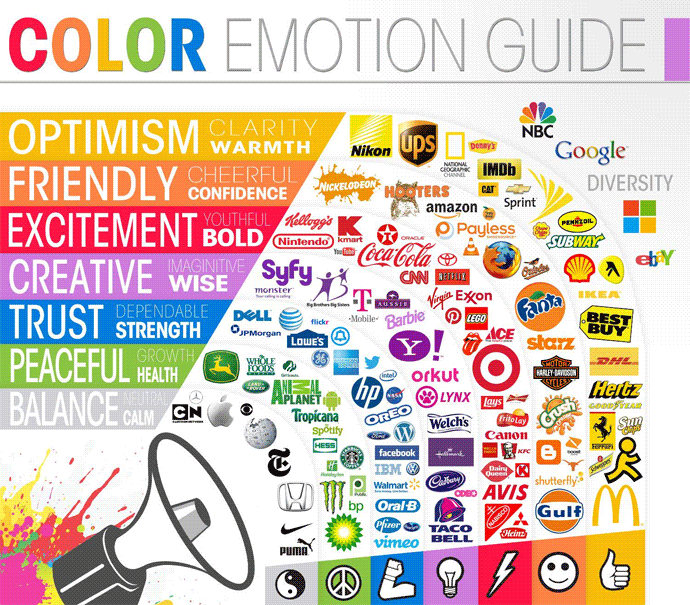
Horizontal positioning

When products are arranged in a horizontal display from left to right , this is known as horizontal positioning.73,74The horizontal positioning of products also increases store profit, but it isn’t as effective as vertical positioning.75,76,77  The more mundane products that are essential, like rice, pasta, flour, sugar are located in the middle of the aisles as people are still willing to go to the middle to get a product they need.78 Whereas towards the edges of the aisles are the more tempting products that customers wouldn’t normally purchase but because they have to go to the middle to get the mundane products these products catch their attention and promote impulse purchasing.79 At the end of each of the aisles, facing outwards are gondolas. These are the most profitable sections in the whole store.80,81,82 These gondolas generally contain colourful products of a non-essential nature that are on sale, in order to tempt impulse purchases of those passing by.83,84 Customers are 30% more likely to purchase a product from the gondolas than from down one of the aisles.85 Finally, while customers walk to the checkout and have their items scanned, they are tempted by various promotional items. These items include chocolate bars, cold drinks and magazines.86,87,88Proffessor Christopher Donkins a professor of psychology at the university of NSW in an interview stated that psychologically, once customers have finished shopping and they are waiting at the checkout, similar hormones are released that those released when you accomplish a task. These hormones make customers ‘feel good’ and in turn result in an increased purchasing as a way of treating themself.89

**Effect of colour**

Colour is used as a marketing technique in all supermarkets, as all products have colour. Colour can be broken down into 3 main categories: colour of products, colour of interior of store and finally colour of store logo.

Colour of store logo

Figure 2 – source 90

Store logos are extremely important and getting the design right can significantly increase awareness of a store leading to an increased profit.91 Depending on what a store is selling and what the ideals of the store are affects what colours they use in their logo.92,93 For example Woolworths logo is of a Greenapple. As seen in figure 2 the colour green evokes the emotions of peace, growth and health.94 This fits extremely well with the Woolworth’s slogan “Australia’s fresh food people” as fresh food is often associated with the colour green, thus promoting a connection between fresh food and Woolworths.61

Colour of products

Harvard Professor Gerald Zaltman in his article ‘*Essential insights into the mind of the market’* states that 95% of purchasing decisions are subconscious. Zaltman lists a few main factors that affect these subconscious decisions: colour and shape of logo, homepage, or product packaging.95 Two other online articles support this claim with the articles clearly stating that 90% of snap judgements of products are based on colour alone.96,97 All manufactures want their products to bee seen and bought. Prudent use of colours on product packaging allows products to draw attention to themselves. 98 Products that customers are drawn to are seen more often and are therefore more likely to be purchased. Products with colourful and vibrant packaging such as chips and confectionary are generally placed on gondolas as they attract attention and thus promote impulse purchases.99

Colour of interior of store

The interior colours of the walls and celling are generally painted a dull creamy colour.100 The dull creamy colour seen in figure 2 shows that this colour promotes balance, neutrality and clam. This colour has been specifically chosen as not to draw attention away from the products.101

**Conclusion**

The most used and effective in-store marketing techniques utilised by the Australian Supermarket industry and the way in which they have been utilised to increase profit was discovered through a comprehensive collection and meticulous analysis of a vast variety of both primary and secondary sources. From this, it was found that the 3 most effective techniques were: colour, music and product location. Music is relatively inexpensive to set up, genre and tempo of music is utilise throughout different times of the day to affect foot traffic and shop time. Colour requires almost no cost and is used to evoke the desired emotions in customers and to draw attention to products or on sale items. Product location requires no cost. Location of products dictates where you walk around the store allowing stores to make you walk past multiple promotional items to influence impulse purchases. Thus, the most effective techniques are music, colour and product location. These techniques increase profit due to their relatively inexpensive set up cost, wide range of uses and malleability to different situations.

Word count (1958)

**End notes**

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1. Interview done face to face over a 3 week period ending on the 5th of April Interview with Vijay Pugaell: Woolworths night produce manager and marketing analysist