



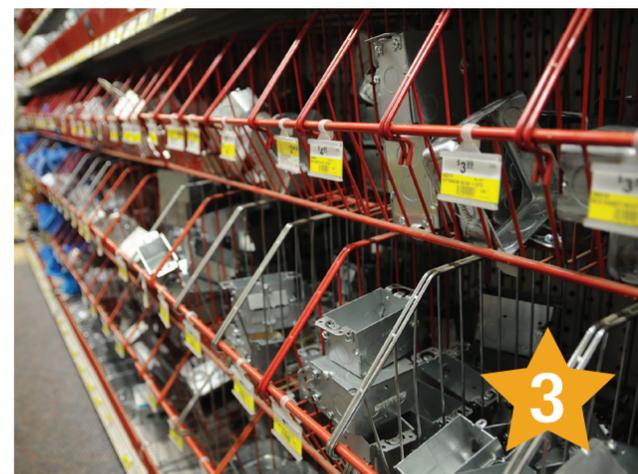
## A Look at Best-in-Class Merchandising Across the Store

**F**ind the best-merchandised category in your store, and you might see it's also one of the most profitable. While many factors, such as employee training and inventory selection, influence the profitability of a particular category, merchandising plays an important role as well. Good merchandising practices can maximize your use of shelf space, showcase add-on items, explain product usage or expose customers to higher-margin items. In all of these examples, retailers who find a way to impress their customers with clean, creative merchandising are usually rewarded with sales and repeat business.

But sometimes even the best retailers need fresh ideas, so the staff at *Hardware Retailing* has been looking for inspiration. In this two-part series, we'll show you examples of good merchandise techniques across each of the six core categories. In part one, we'll show you electrical, plumbing and lawn and garden. Next month, we'll showcase hardware and fasteners, paint and tools. While the following pages contain some great examples, for even more photos of innovative merchandising techniques, visit [TheRedT.com/all-stars](http://TheRedT.com/all-stars). As you look through these examples, you'll no doubt find ways to take your own categories into the big leagues.

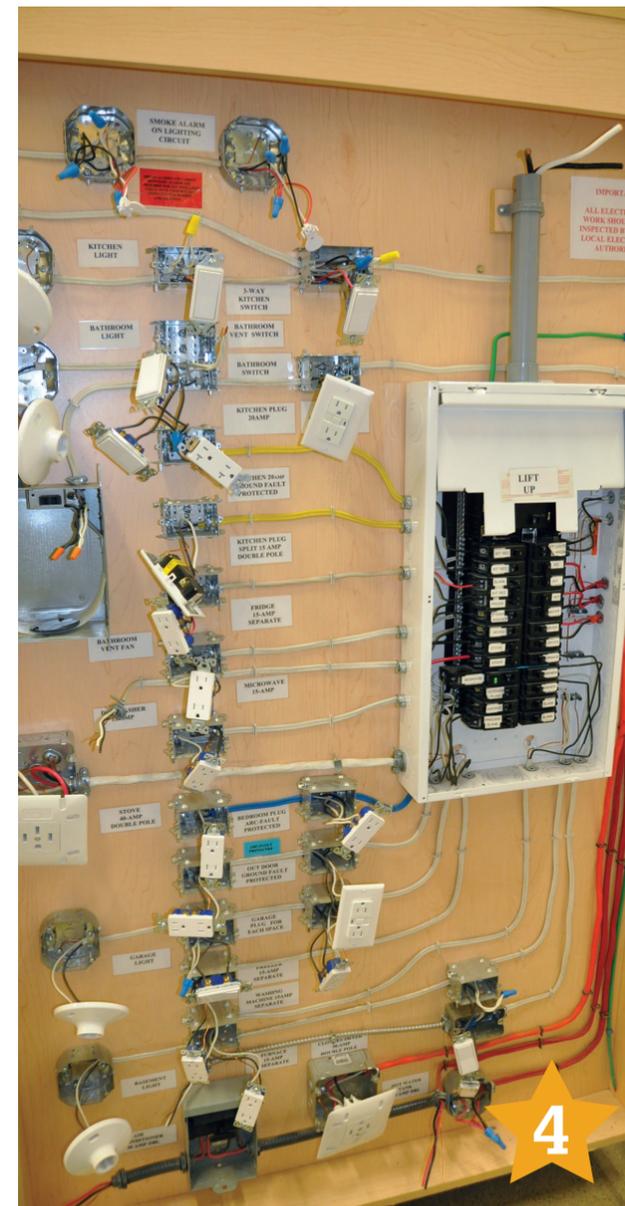


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**1** At Rapid True Value in Kingston, Jamaica, the lighting cloud highlights the variety of fixtures in the store. “It adds an extra dimension and decor to the store while at the same time dividing up the expansive ceiling,” says Patrick Chambers, chief category manager for the company. “It is highly visible from the outside, so our customers are drawn to it.”

**2** At Denver True Value in Denver, Colorado, a sample product is wired to the front of the bin. This makes it easy for customers to see what is in the bin. Since many of these items are bagged, it means customers can get a visual look at the item’s size, and may save them from trying to take it out of the bag before they buy it.



**3** Good merchandising doesn’t have to be glamorous, but it must be easy to shop. At Mayer Paint and Hardware in Rochester, New York, electrical bins demonstrate some of the essentials of merchandising electrical repair items: clearly marked, fully stocked and organized.

**4** This endcap at Saskatoon Co-op, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, serves a dual purpose. It’s used as a training aid for employees new to the department. It also helps those employees explain basic electrical projects to shoppers. Each type of switch or receptacle is clearly labeled, and wires are exposed so customers can see how to make the connections.



**5** Employees at Klingbeil Lumber Co. in Medford, Wisconsin, have mastered hardware wit. Chalkboards atop endcaps throughout the store make it easy to add drawings and humor to displays. While this is a good tactic for grabbing shoppers’ attention, endcaps must also be well merchandised. A bulk display that is fronted and full of a high-demand item makes this an effective endcap.



**1** The plumbing display at Pojoaque True Value in Santa Fe, New Mexico, shows fixtures out of the box. “Customers want to touch and feel the product and see what the finish looks like,” store manager Anthony Urbina says. “The product signage is key to selling the product as well.” Below each fixture is signage with the price, key features and warranty information. Don’t forget this often-missed element of this type of display, as it makes it easier for customers to shop and compare.

**2** Bins with plumbing fittings must stay full and organized, as customers want to have the confidence you have enough pieces for their project. At Klingbeil Lumber, pipe cement is merchandised nearby, as this is one of the most common add-on sales associated with PVC pipe.

**3** The toilet pyramid at Budget Home Supply in Longmont, Colorado, gets customers to stop and look. It also lets them know there is a wide variety of styles and brand names available in the store’s 30,000-square-foot showroom. It also gives them a way to visually distinguish between the different toilet features.

**4** In the plumbing department at the Saskatoon Co-op, bath vanities are shown out of the box and assembled. The genius of these displays is they are moveable. Wheels on the wooden carts mean they can be moved to a different location on the salesfloor, or to the backroom where employees can swap out the cabinets without getting in the way of customers.

**5** Lengths of pipe can easily get messy, causing a safety hazard if they stick out into the aisle. A messy display also makes it difficult to find the correct size. At Klingbeil Lumber, a box neatly organizes cut lengths of pipe. These appeal to do-it-yourselfers who might only need a short length of pipe.

# Core Category All-Stars Lawn and Garden

**1** Hanging spreaders at Gordon's Ace Hardware in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago turns the ceiling into valuable merchandising space. "Hanging the spreaders was a good way to save space on a bulky item and remind customers that we have them," owner Jeremy Melnick says. "In the first year, the store exceeded expectations in sales."

**2** Display wheelbarrows assembled and ready to roll. At A & R Home Center in Washington, Indiana, they are outside on top of basic plastic shelving. This simple display shows them off and makes it easy to see the different options.

**3** Neat rows of bagged goods flanked by garden tools make this display at Rollier's Hardware in Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania, a model for all to follow. A wide selection of garden gloves are merchandised directly in front of the tools. Since bagged goods can move quickly during the spring season, employees need to check them throughout the day so they stay organized.

**4** A wooden arbor anchors the wild bird category at Northwoods Hardware Hank in Spooner, Wisconsin. "Most customers will want one of the bird feeders hanging on the display instead of purchasing one on the shelf. We expanded the display not long after putting it in due to its popularity," says co-owner Tami Davidson.

**5** Color and creativity is what helps sell yard art. Displays with a variety of unique items can help pull customers into the category. "These are displays that change for the seasons," says Randy Collins, owner of B & B Do it Center in Carmarillo, California. "We try to keep things new and fresh as product comes in so the customer has a different experience throughout the year." ➔

