

STORE WITHIN A STORE

Positioning your water gardening department as a store within a store has many benefits.

By Curt Nuenighoff



Strategically displaying products, educational information and POP materials will convey your intimate knowledge of customer needs. Whenever possible, take advantage of manufacturers' product displays, which inherently visually communicate a full water garden supply and pond fish food center. Sizable, well-stocked displays in independent retailer stores are a great means of providing ample shelving to keep products organized with a clean merchandising look to present a complete line of water garden products, including food, water treatments, pumps, clarifiers, biofilters and liners. Customers will easily find the products they need and will be pleased with their shopping experience.

Many successful retailers place signage and educational aids in visible, convenient locations. Prominent displays that feature category brand leaders also enhance the store's positioning and credibility. In-store signage, such as illustrative posters, ready-to-hang, two-sided signs or highly visible header signs on displays effectively leads customers right to water gardening store-within-a-store departments. Powerful signage serves as store navigation tools as well as sales aids. Providing step-by-step information for the water garden enthusiasts, such as a guide on feeding pond fish, will allow you to showcase key products you'd recommend and that they may need for a hassle-free hobby. In the store-within-a-store, you can maximize cross-selling opportunities and increase sales. Customers will be pleased to see all they need in one place and not have to return for any forgotten items.

INSIGHT AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Consumers are hungry for information and crave professional insight. Share your knowledge by disclosing the features and benefits of the products you offer. Educating customers is the key to keep them coming back for more. Position your store as the resource they turn to for everything from how-to advice to product information. Also, educate your staff on the products your store carries so they will be poised to give knowledgeable answers. Understanding the key features and benefits of your store's products as well as those of your competitors will make your sales team stronger.

For the inevitable times when there's not enough staff, let your merchandising do the selling through informative posters, shelf-talkers and banners. Strategically place POP materials so they are visible when and where cus-



Top: Flower Bin, Longmont, Colo.; bottom: Alsip Home & Nursery, Frankfort, Ill.

tomers make purchasing decisions. Have information handy before they've made a decision. For example, keep fish food guides or water garden guides available near the fish food and pond equipment, rather than exclusively displaying them near the cash register. When you are in need of educational tools that will demonstrate product features and benefits to your customers, contact your manufacturers for assistance. Some manufacturers produce instructional books on everything from water gardening plants to pond maintenance to nutrition and health tips for your fish.


Work with your manufacturers to create win-win sales strategies to help you sell products off the shelves. Through positioning yourself as the primary resource for your customers, you are essentially developing a brand or a store culture. As a result, customers will know to expect a knowledgeable staff, a well-merchandised store and premium products.

The brand you develop for your store will be what differentiates you among competitors and gives you the competitive edge. You'll recognize your store's successful brand when you acquire new repeat customers who make you their destination stop. For example, when customers need fish food and treatments, they purchase it from you. In accordance with your store brand, they expect quality brands with premium ingredients to keep their fish healthy and vibrant and their ponds clean.

DESTINATION STOP

Setting up each department as a one-stop shopping destination establishes your store as the resource for expertise and a complete line of supplies for successful water gardening. Anticipating customers' needs and providing the products proactively is key to gaining return customers.

Customers will look forward to spending time in your store to make regular purchases and to browse for new ideas. Emotionally connect with customers by adding value to their investment of time and money into their recreational hobby. Recognize their needs for value-added resources that provide quality information and products. It's critical to make the shopping experience enjoyable and sustain their excitement in their hobby and in your store.

Today's savvy customers need to feel confident with their purchases. They seek expert knowledge to guide them to make an educated decision. So position yourself as the water garden expert with the store-within-a-store merchandising concept. Well-merchandised and fully stocked fish food and pond product centers show that you've done your homework and have selected the best products to offer your customers that meet their specific needs. Developing a one-on-one relationship with them will ensure repeat business and profitability. 

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Creating a store-within-a-store makes you a destination stop customers look forward to visiting for an enjoyable shopping experience. The store-within-a-store business model will:

- Leave an impression on your customers
- Increase bottom line sales
- Ensure repeat business

What you'll need

- Good directional signage
- Eye-catching posters
- Proximity to related products
- Well-stocked shelves
- Easy to follow brochures
- Helpful, knowledgeable staff

Customer benefits

- Convenience
- Value-added how-to information
- Enjoyable, hassle-free shopping experience

Retailer benefits

- More attractive retail space
- Cross-selling opportunities
- Brand reinforcement
- Staff training opportunities



Pond Cleaner

CrystalClear Barley Pellets utilize barley degradation technology to help manage pond problems throughout all four seasons. Pellets are placed in an area of the pond where there is steady water flow so they can slowly degrade and emit a substance that assists in keeping your pond clean. Winston Company, Inc. (800) 331-9099. **Write in 1449**

Fish retail system

This affordable, efficient and versatile fish retailing system can house large quantities of fish for sale and can easily be disassembled if needed. It comes complete with a biological filtration system, UV light, pump and all of the plumbing accessories needed for assembly. Aquatic Gardens & Koi Co., Inc. (800) 822-5459. **Write in 1426**



Fountain

Vine Fountain is a handcrafted fountain carved from natural stone that creates water sounds. It is suitable for indoor and outdoor use and is approximately 12 inches tall. Each fountain is carved and will vary slightly in color and detail. The fountain can be shipped with or without a pump, and additional styles are also available. ThunderLake, LLC. (866) 443-1087. **Write in 1448**

Pumps

Surge and Power Head Pumps are offered from 65-1,340 GPH. Surge Pumps come with fountain heads, and both pumps are designed for retail. Alpine Corporation. (877) 710-0162. **Write in 1425** 