

HERO STRATEGY

# THE DISPLAY FORMULA CHECKLIST

*6 Questions That Reveal Why  
Your Displays Are Working —  
Or Quietly Costing You Sales*

# You Already Know How to Build a Beautiful Store. This Is What Makes It Sell.

You've been doing this long enough to trust your eye. You know what looks good. You know what feels right when you walk in.

But there's a difference between a store that looks beautiful and a store that guides customers toward buying — and most owners don't realize the gap exists until they start watching what customers actually do.

This checklist doesn't teach you taste.

It gives your instincts a repeatable system — so the displays that are already working keep working, and the ones that feel slightly off finally tell you why.

Five questions. Any display. Under five minutes.

# THE DISPLAY FORMULA CHECKLIST

5 Questions That Reveal Why Your Displays Are Working — Or Quietly Costing You Sales

*You already know how to build a beautiful display. You've been doing this for years. This checklist isn't about teaching you to see — it's about giving you language for what you're already sensing.*

Before you use this: Stand at the entrance of your store or in front of a display you've been second-guessing. Then answer these.

Question 1: Where does my eye go first?

If you have to think about it — your customer already left mentally.

A display that's working has one clear anchor. One thing the eye finds immediately and relaxes into. Everything else supports that moment.

- I can identify the Hero of this display in under 2 seconds
- The Hero is elevated, forward, or visually distinct from everything around it
- Nothing around it is competing at the same visual weight

*If you checked all three — your attention is working. If not, you don't have a display problem. You have a hierarchy problem. That's fixable in 10 minutes.*

Question 2: Does the space tell the brain what to do next?

Customers don't browse randomly. They follow signals. When signals are missing or competing, the brain does the only logical thing — it disengages and moves on. This is why people say "I love your store" and leave without buying.

- From the Hero, there is a natural next place for the eye to travel
- Each section has one focal point, not three
- The path through this area feels obvious without signage explaining it

It tells the customer:

*The stores that feel "easy to shop" aren't simpler. They're more intentional about sequence. You probably already do this in your best displays without realizing it.*

Question 3: Is there a moment of rest?

This is the one most shop owners skip — and it's quietly exhausting their customers.

Every high-performing space gives the brain a pause. Negative space, a single beautiful object, a moment where nothing is asking for attention. That rest is not wasted space. It's what makes the next thing feel important.

- There is at least one visual pause in this area
- Not everything is asking for attention at the same volume
- The space has rhythm — loud, quiet, loud — rather than constant noise

*If your store feels like it has too much product, it usually isn't the quantity. It's the absence of rest. You don't need to remove things. You need to create breathing room around the right things.*

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## Question 4: Does support know its job?

Supporting pieces are where most displays quietly collapse. A supporting piece that's too interesting becomes competition. A supporting piece that's too invisible fails to frame the Hero.

- Every non-Hero item in this display makes the Hero look better
- Nothing is pulling focus away from the primary item
- Supporting pieces are connected — by color, texture, theme, or story

*You're not choosing products for a display. You're casting a supporting role. The best supporting piece is the one the customer doesn't consciously notice — but would feel the absence of.*

## Question 5: Would I stop here if I didn't work here?

This is the one your brain will resist answering honestly. You're too close to it. You built it. You love it. But your customer has no context, no attachment, and exactly 3 seconds of available attention before their eye moves on.

- This display would stop me mid-stride if I saw it somewhere else
- There is one thing here that creates genuine curiosity or desire
- The overall feeling is clear, not cluttered — even if it's abundant

*If you hesitated on any of these — that hesitation is the answer. Your instincts are already telling you what needs to shift. This checklist just gave them language.*

## QUESTION 6: Does Your Store Give Them a Reason to Stay Curious?

A store you can see entirely from the entrance has already given the brain permission to leave.

Think about that for a second.

When a customer walks in and their eye can travel the full length of your space in one sweep — the brain registers it, catalogs it, and quietly decides it already knows what's here. Not because they've seen everything. Because they think they have.

Discovery doesn't happen in open, fully visible spaces.

It happens around corners. Behind something taller. Past the display that blocked the view just enough to make them wonder what's next.

- A customer standing at my entrance cannot see everything at once
- There is at least one sight blocker — a tall fixture, a layered display, an angled piece — that creates a visual boundary and pulls attention forward
- Each area of my store reveals itself gradually rather than all at once
- Moving through my space feels like finding things, not scanning them

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If your store is fully visible from the door, you don't have a product problem or a merchandising problem. You have an architecture problem. And it doesn't require renovation — it requires one tall fixture, one angled table, one display placed with intention to block the view and create a reason to keep moving.

The second thing — and this one changes how customers decide to buy:

Your products are not the product.

The dinner party is the product. The entryway moment is the product. The Sunday morning with the right candle and the right mug in the right light is the product.

When you line plates on a shelf, a customer evaluates the plate. They think about price, about whether they need plates, about whether the color works.

When you build a scene — plates mixed with linens, a serving piece, something that implies a table being set for people they love — the customer stops evaluating the object and starts imagining the life.

That is a completely different decision happening in their brain. And it is significantly easier to say yes to.

- My displays sell a moment, not just an object
- Products are grouped by how they'd live together in someone's home — not by category or vendor
- A customer can look at this display and picture exactly where it lives and what it's for
- At least one display in my store makes someone feel something before they read a single price tag

You're not a store that sells things. You're a store that sells the version of someone's life where those things exist. The display is just the evidence that version is possible.

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## WHAT THIS MEANS TOGETHER

*Controlled discovery keeps them moving.*

*Contextual merchandising keeps them wanting.*

*When both are working, customers don't just shop your store.*

*They experience it.*

*And an experience is something they come back for.*

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

If you checked everything — your instincts are already working.

If you found gaps — you're not doing it wrong. You're doing it without a repeatable formula.

That's the only difference.

This is the system I've used for 20 years inside a \$600,000 independent gift store. It works in tight spaces, full spaces, seasonal resets, and stores that refuse to be minimalist — because they shouldn't have to be.

## → Get the Full Formula

The Experience Clarity Guide — \$27

*Built from 20 years inside a \$600,000 independent gift store — because it should be.*

Sincerely,

*Nicolle*