

FRONT-END OVERHAUL

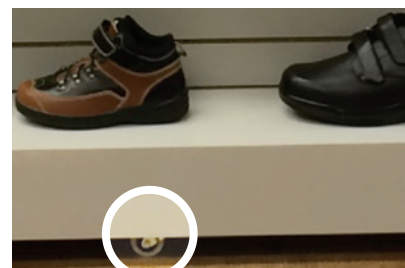


Creating Room in All the Right Places (Part 1)

by Gabe Trahan

All stores have at least one or more silent but powerful bosses who are deaf to your needs. They are poles, windows, doors, walls, restrooms, drive-up windows, gondolas, and wall fixtures. They can make aisles narrow, entrances uninviting, shopping difficult, and merchandising floor space shrink. Where they are located is where they stay; they alone shape your store. Like it or not, you will have to build around them. It's time to get creative and fight back!

Here is an inexpensive way of creating merchandising room in a narrow space. Pictured to the right is an 8-foot long, 54-inch high, 2-foot wide, two-sided, slatwall fixture made on location. The frame and base is composed of two-by-fours, and the display area is three sheets of 8-foot slatwall with 1-1/2 sheets per side. Wheels have been attached to the base for easy moving. Four-inch pine boards were used for trimming the top and ends of the display. The best part about creating this new fixture? The owner got to say how long and wide it was! If you create your own similar fixture, you could make it 16 feet by 7 inches. You could even build it tight up against that miserable pole you have been swearing at for the last 10 years.



Photos courtesy of Kleins Medical in Cuyaboga Falls, Ohio.

Rounding up a fixture to a 4-foot section is so yesterday. A unit like this is versatile enough to display a leg and foot care center of compression hosiery, foot care items, diabetic shoes, and socks. It would make an attractive brace center or a mobility center with canes, crutches, folded walkers, and folded rollators. You could also make it a bath safety center by displaying boxed bath safety items on the base shelves with pegged items hanging above. If you need more room to hold product, you could simply make the base wide enough to meet your needs.

This is a low-cost and attractive solution for narrow display areas. Remember, stores were designed to hold fixtures, and fixtures are designed to hold product — it's time to design stores to hold customers! And if that means creating your own fixture, then so be it. Look for Part 2 in the March issue. ■

Gabe Trahan is NCPA's senior director of store operations and marketing. Trahan uses 40 years of front-end merchandising experience to help NCPA members increase store traffic and improve profits. Visit www.ncpanet.org/feo and follow him on Twitter @NCPAGabe for additional tips.