

21 Questions to Ask to Be a Better Buyer

It helps to know the answers to these 21 questions before making a decision to introduce new products to your front-end mix. Here's what you should ask the vendor:

1. How long has this item been "hot"?
2. How soon before the new and improved product comes out?
3. What is the highest and lowest retail you have seen on your product?
4. How price sensitive is your product line?
5. What are the peak and low selling times for your line?
6. Who sells the most of your product and how do they do it?
7. Describe the typical retail customer for your product.
8. How much space do I need to best merchandise these items?
9. What do you suggest as a starting order?
10. Do you offer a sampling program? If so, is there a cost?
11. If making a sign, what would I list as the top three benefits of your product?
12. Do you offer in-store point of purchase signage? Training videos?
13. What is the estimated freight cost on opening orders and reorders?
14. What is your minimum reorder size?
15. Is the cost of the rack or display free or offset by product at wholesale or retail cost?
16. Do you offer a buyback or return program?
17. What percentage of co-op advertising funds do you offer?
18. Can consumers purchase your product(s) online from you? If so, at what retail?
19. Does your website have a "find a retailer near you" link? If so, how soon can our store be added?
20. In which chains and/or big box stores is your product available?
21. Who is your biggest competitor?



-- Gabe Trahan, NCPA Senior Director of Store Operations and Marketing
NCPA's Front-End Overhaul