Brush Up on Your Oral Care Section

Oral hygiene takes up a lot of room and makes you very little money. The profit on some name brand toothpastes can be as low as 7 percent. That said, as long as the majority of your customers have teeth, you will need to offer at least 4 feet of oral care products. If you have a small OTC section, you will need at least one shelf of toothpaste, three peg hooks of floss, three types of toothbrushes, and nearly one shelf of denture products. You will also have to offer relief from teething, mouth & canker sore pain, and dry mouth. **The recommended department size for most stores is 8 feet.** The oral hygiene category is best placed near the skin care, deodorant, and, at times, the eye and ear section.

If your fixture is not at least 54 inches tall, you should plan on eliminating one shelf worth of product. Private label has little to no strength in the oral hygiene department. If you are looking to eliminate items, start with private label toothpaste and mouthwash. Denture cleaners show some signs of hope in private label sales, but only a glimmer, so order accordingly.

**Tip:** If your fixture is 54 inches high and your shelf spacing is too tight or the top shelf is resting on your peg hooks, then consider moving the large bottles of mouthwash and mouth rinses to the top shelf and relocate the top shelf protector to the bottom base shelf. This will allow you to move all of the other shelves down and will give you more clearance between product and shelving.

The oral hygiene category has many items that are displayed on a peg hook; choose hooks that are the same style and size (6 inches is a good size). Make sure that there is a hanging tag for reordering product behind every item.

**Caution:** Whitening strips may fly off your shelf, but not necessarily as a sale. If theft becomes a problem, try placing an empty box on the shelf with a sign that reads, “Ask Staff for Whitening Strip Products” – or just don’t carry them.

-- Gabe Trahan, NCPA Senior Director of Store Operations and Marketing