Everything You Wanted to Know About Fixtures  
(But Were Afraid to Ask)

Ordering fixtures can be a daunting task for store owners and front-end managers. Here are some tips to help take the guess work out of what types of fixtures to order and how to install them properly.

General Advice
✓ Do not use homemade or handmade shelving...ever. When possible, avoid custom-made fixtures.
✓ Do not be misled into buying slatwall. Slatwall may be inexpensive, but it is very limited in its use and is only good for displaying diabetic shoes and sports braces.
✓ Some manufacturers will offer a "low shoe" (also known as a "low foot") for your fixtures. Choose the low profile to gain a few extra inches of merchandising space.
✓ Vendors: Streater, Madix, Lozier, and Handy offer both Rx and OTC shelving. UniWeb is an excellent choice for the Rx area.

Order the Right Size
✓ Gondolas should never be wider than 30 inches. That means the base of each side is approximately 13 inches and the center rail is 4 inches.
✓ Gondolas should never be higher than 60 inches and no lower than 54 inches.
✓ Wall fixtures can have a base that is 16 inches or 13 inches and should be no taller than 84 inches and no lower than 72 inches.
✓ Fixtures sections can be purchased in just about any length; the most preferred is 3 feet and 4 feet.
✓ Note: a 12-foot fixture made of 3-foot sections will cost a third more than the same size section composed of 4-foot sections.
✓ The best length of gondolas is no longer than 24 feet and no smaller than 6 feet. The optimum size is 20 feet.

Shipping & Costs
✓ A large portion of a fixture's cost is the shelves. Review OTC planograms as a guide for how many shelves you will need. For example, your foot care section may call for three shelves, whereas your eye and ear category may call for six shelves.
✓ Always ask for an estimate of the freight cost. Ask for prices on a dedicated truck and the cheapest way to have items delivered to your store. A dedicated truck that can deliver all of your pieces on the same day will offer shorter shipping times, much less chance for damage, and fewer lost pieces. A non-dedicated truck delivery will be less expensive, but it will take a bit more time and your order delivery may be split into a number of different days and times.
✓ It is best to ask your fixture vendor to ship the fixture order only when it is complete; otherwise, you may be unloading a different truck every few days.
Have the fixture vendor’s 1-800 phone number on hand. Count every shipping container/box as it comes off the truck. Do not let the delivery driver rush you.
When offloading from the truck tailgate, avoid setting fixture containers on the ground. Doing so will avoid damaging the piece.
Consider purchasing countertops locally. Countertops do not ship well and are expensive to transport.

**Installation**
- If building a new store, consider strapping your walls with a wood strip before you apply sheet rock. This will make wall shelving installation a snap.
- You can order knockouts for electrical outlets in fixture kick-plates (also known as toe plates); this is a must-have if you plan on vacuuming the store floor.
- If you have light-colored flooring, avoid white fixtures, especially for the OTC section.
- There are two types of shelving: DL and TL. DL shelves practically slide into position; TL shelves need to be tipped-up to be placed in a gondola and are difficult to merchandise. Budget for DLs.
- Unless your wall fixtures are going up against a window, you do not need to purchase peg or solid backing for the fixture. Peg board is best for gondolas and wall fixtures.
- Depending on the vendor, plan on a large amount of plastic or cardboard to dispose of...mounds of it! Consider renting a commercial dumpster just for the leftover cardboard.

(For tips on moving a fixture, [review my old One-Pager Tip.](#))

**Budget for the Future**
- If you already own a store and your shelving is looking shopworn or, worse yet, rusted, do not paint it, especially the pegboard. Instead, budget to purchase a new section each year. Consider purchasing the same type of shelving that you know you have; this way, you can reuse any shelves that are in good condition. Shelving is like buying a shaving razor from Gillette: the razor is an okay price; it’s the blades that will get you. The fixture is an okay price; it’s the shelving that will get you in the end. Plan accordingly!
- Purchase a new run each year and in few years you will have a new looking store.

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

*Front-End Overhaul*