

## Finding Room for New Categories

A challenge for every merchandiser is finding room for a new category. The first step is to look at the sizes of the categories you already have. You may find that many categories started with a size that was simply chosen to fill the fixture. A typical 24-foot fixture would have 12 feet of pain relief products and 12 feet of antacids and laxatives. In many cases, only 8 feet of each category would have been necessary.

The categories listed below are not suggested sizes for every store, but instead a measure of whether or not you need to examine the sizes you have now. Check the categories listed below; are your OTC categories larger than what you see listed? If so, you may want to run some reports, check your outdated product incidences for this category, and confirm you have the right size for that category or need to downsize (or, in some rare cases, increase).

**Notes:** Cough & cold at 12 feet would include lozenges, but not humidifiers, vaporizers, thermometers, and facial tissues. Vitamins at 8 feet would include 4 feet of major advertised brands including Centrum, One-A-Day, Flintstones, Citracal, ICaps, and Caltrate, along with a single brand of vitamins that focus on specialty needs and single letter vitamins (A to Z). Stores that choose to offer different qualities of vitamin lines may have a vitamin/supplement and herb section as large as 16 feet that produces sales; choose wisely.

Pain Relief 8ft	Eye Care 3ft	
Digestive Health 8ft	Foot Care 4ft	
Cold & Allergy 12ft	Oral Hygiene 8ft	
Vitamins 8ft	Feminine Hygiene 8ft	
Hair Care 8ft	Deodorant 3ft	
Skin Care 8ft	Men's Grooming 3ft	
First Aid 8ft	Incontinence 8ft	
Braces 8ft	Family Planning 3ft	

Another place where oversized categories can be found is on wall sections. Planograms for gondolas are made for 54-inch fixtures and fit perfectly on either 54-inch or 60-inch fixtures. Planograms also come in 72-inch fixture sets. Check to see if you are using a 72-inch planogram to fill the wall space or if there was a need for the extra product in the first place.

Now, review a few other categories that typically are not in planogram: school supplies, dollar goods, greeting cards, gifts, and books and magazines. All categories in your store must make you money, attract customers, or enhance your image. If any of the categories listed here do at least two of the requirements, then there is little need to check the size of the department. If the department only fills one or none of the requirements, then you must research the value and/or need for the category.

If you have found categories that need downsizing, you still have lots of work to do. Creating 4 feet or 8 feet in a personal care section may require a reset on most of your OTC items. Only introduce a new category where it makes sense, not where there is an open spot.

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