

Six Steps to Success for Merchandising Vitamins

There are a number of theories out there about how to merchandise vitamins. For 24-plus years in merchandising management I found myself constantly on the search for the best vitamin set. Finally, after working in the pharmacy wholesale sector, I discovered a theory that made sense. Better yet, when I put it into practice it made sales! The winning theory is this: **make the vitamins easy to find and the customers are more apt to buy them.**

Here are six simple steps that use this theory to help you merchandise your vitamins and increase sales.

- Step 1:** Find a quality vitamin line that your pharmacist believes in and is comfortable recommending. Top quality vitamins have stronger brand loyalty than lower quality offerings.
- Step 2:** Offer at least two qualities of vitamins. Good and Best, or if you prefer go with three, Good – Better – Best. There **must be a distinct difference** in each of the two or three lines. Do not offer Not Bad – Good – Kind of Good.

Here is how to test if your vitamin categories are too close in quality. Check the price on vitamin C 500 mg, 100 count. There should be more than a 50 cent difference between Good and Best. If there isn't, then you are most likely carrying a cloned item, Good and Kind of Good. Vitamins that are similar in both quality and price do not add to sales, they just cannibalize the sales of each other. If you are going to cannibalize sales, then at least offer a better product with a higher ring at the register.

- Step 3:** Merchandise your **full line** of vitamins by manufacturer. By full line I am referring to a vitamin company that offers not only specialty vitamins and or multivitamins, but also a full line of single-letter vitamins. An example of a single-letter vitamin line is Vitamins, A, B, C, D, E, etc.
- Step 4:** Organize your full line of vitamins this way: the top shelf of each of your full line sections should be multivitamins, followed by bone and joint health (calcium, glucosamine, etc.), heart health (omegas, fish oil, coenzymes, red yeast rice, etc.), then single-letter vitamins alphabetically, followed by minerals alphabetically, herbal supplements alphabetically, and finally children's vitamins. Repeat this order for each manufacturer of your full line vitamins.
- Step 5:** Major brands, such as Centrum, One A Day, etc., should be in their own section with your preferred private label cross merchandised to the right of the brand. Private label vitamins should be double faced (two bottles facing forward) and at least two deep.
- Step 6:** Make sure to offer gluten-free, sugar-free, chewable, and sublingual vitamin products, and place these items where they are easy to find.

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