

2.6: Scrambled Merchandising

Learning Objectives

- Define scrambled merchandising

Scrambled merchandising refers to a retail tactic in which a retailer broadens their assortment to include items that are generally outside their focus or are usually sold in a different retail format. It might be easiest to think about scrambled merchandising by considering it in practice. For example, think about how the traditional grocery store has evolved to a supermarket format that sells magazines, books, toys, seasonal decorations, housewares, hardware, and so on. In none of these cases does the supermarket carry a wide variety of items in the specific departments compared to specialty retailers. However, they carry enough to have a presence in the category to benefit the shopper through contact efficiency.

When done well, scrambled merchandising adds to the shopping experience rather than distracting from it. Consider the example of Kohl's department stores. They offer limited food items to complement their kitchenware offerings. This works because the items are complementary to one another.

The risk in this strategy comes when unexpected items are included in the assortment that confuse shoppers. When this occurs, it can detract from the shopper's experience and tarnish the retailer's brand image. Furthermore, if the new products aren't appreciated or shopped, they can risk high inventory, leading to markdowns and write-offs. Thus, scrambled merchandising should be approached cautiously and leveraged only as a complement to the current assortment.

Practice Questions

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/9147>

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