

FREE VISUAL MERCHANDISING TEMPLATE

New Store VM Readiness Checklist

Use this 60-point checklist to verify store shell readiness, fixtures, zoning, opening assortment, merchandising, windows, mannequins, pricing, signage, digital content, live evidence, opening blockers, corrective actions, and final VM approval.

Store / location

Opening date

VM reviewer

Store manager

1. VM scope, store format, opening plan, approvals, and ownership

- 1** Confirm the store name, location, format, opening date, VM setup date, reviewer, store manager, and zones included in the readiness review.

NEW STORE VM

NAME

Enter

DATE / TIME

Enter

APPROVAL

Sign

● Execution tip: Start with the final approved store pack and opening calendar so VM teams work to the right store format, assortment, campaign, and deadline.

- 2** Verify the latest approved store concept, floor plan, zoning plan, fixture layout, planograms, campaign brief, and VM guidelines are available to the setup team.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

CRITICAL

● Execution tip: Start with the final approved store pack and opening calendar so VM teams work to the right store format, assortment, campaign, and deadline.

- 3** Confirm the opening assortment, launch priorities, hero categories, promotional stories, seasonal focus, and customer journey are clearly defined.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Start with the final approved store pack and opening calendar so VM teams work to the right store format, assortment, campaign, and deadline.

- 4** Review store-specific exceptions for floor area, fixture dimensions, local assortment, accessibility, security, landlord restrictions, or regulatory requirements.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Start with the final approved store pack and opening calendar so VM teams work to the right store format, assortment, campaign, and deadline.

- 5** Confirm all VM milestones, installation dependencies, vendor visits, product deliveries, campaign asset arrivals, and approval deadlines are visible before opening.

NEW STORE VM

Record

Current

Owner

Evidence

Action

CRITICAL

● Execution tip: Start with the final approved store pack and opening calendar so VM teams work to the right store format, assortment, campaign, and deadline.

- 6** Assign ownership for floor zoning, fixtures, products, mannequins, windows, signage, pricing, digital displays, evidence capture, corrective actions, and final sign-off.

NEW STORE VM

Record

Current

Owner

Evidence

Action

● Execution tip: Start with the final approved store pack and opening calendar so VM teams work to the right store format, assortment, campaign, and deadline.

2. Store shell, lighting, surfaces, utilities, and installation readiness

- 7** Confirm floors, walls, ceilings, windows, columns, doors, mirrors, fitting rooms, counters, and customer-facing surfaces are complete, clean, and free from construction damage.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Log construction and infrastructure blockers early so facilities and project teams can clear the store for safe VM setup.

- 8** Verify display lighting, window lighting, track lights, spotlights, electrical points, power supplies, and control systems are operational in all VM zones.

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Log construction and infrastructure blockers early so facilities and project teams can clear the store for safe VM setup.

- 9** Check unfinished snag items, exposed wiring, paint defects, leaks, dust, construction debris, or contractor activity will not interfere with merchandise setup.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Log construction and infrastructure blockers early so facilities and project teams can clear the store for safe VM setup.

- 10** Confirm entrances, aisles, customer routes, fitting-room access, accessible paths, emergency exits, and service areas are unobstructed before VM installation.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Log construction and infrastructure blockers early so facilities and project teams can clear the store for safe VM setup.

- 11** Verify mounting points, wall systems, ceiling suspension points, floor anchors, digital-screen connections, and other VM infrastructure are complete and safe to use.

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Log construction and infrastructure blockers early so facilities and project teams can clear the store for safe VM setup.

- 12** Record every infrastructure or construction blocker that could delay VM setup and assign it to facilities, project, contractor, landlord, or store ownership.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Log construction and infrastructure blockers early so facilities and project teams can clear the store for safe VM setup.

3. Fixtures, display hardware, floor plan, zoning, and customer flow

- 13** Match installed gondolas, tables, wall bays, rails, shelves, podiums, mannequins, accessory units, display cubes, and other fixtures with the approved fixture plan.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Walk the floor as a customer would and verify fixture placement supports navigation, sightlines, capacity, and safe movement.

- 14** Confirm fixture dimensions, quantities, heights, spacing, orientation, and positions are correct for the store format and merchandise capacity.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

ACTUAL

Enter

REQUIRED

Enter

VARIANCE

Enter

● Execution tip: Walk the floor as a customer would and verify fixture placement supports navigation, sightlines, capacity, and safe movement.

- 15** Verify department, category, collection, gender, product, or lifestyle zones follow the approved floor zoning and are easy for customers to understand.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Walk the floor as a customer would and verify fixture placement supports navigation, sightlines, capacity, and safe movement.

- 16** Check main sightlines, decompression areas, navigation paths, focal points, cross-merchandising opportunities, and high-traffic zones support the intended customer journey.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Walk the floor as a customer would and verify fixture placement supports navigation, sightlines, capacity, and safe movement.

- 17** Confirm fixtures are stable, level, safely assembled, undamaged, and do not create sharp-edge, tip-over, collision, trip, or accessibility risks.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Walk the floor as a customer would and verify fixture placement supports navigation, sightlines, capacity, and safe movement.

- 18** Record any missing, incorrect, damaged, undersized, oversized, or badly positioned fixture and define the temporary display plan if replacement cannot happen before opening.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Walk the floor as a customer would and verify fixture placement supports navigation, sightlines, capacity, and safe movement.

4. Opening assortment, inventory arrival, size and color depth, and stock readiness

- 19** Verify the approved opening assortment has arrived for every required department, category, collection, product family, and launch story.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Identify critical stock gaps before styling starts so hero stories are built around products that can be supported at opening.

- 20** Check hero products, advertised items, new launches, seasonal products, opening offers, and high-priority SKUs are physically available before merchandising begins.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready Partial Not ready N/A

● Execution tip: Identify critical stock gaps before styling starts so hero stories are built around products that can be supported at opening.

- 21** Confirm required size, color, flavor, style, pack, or variant depth is sufficient to build complete opening displays without visible gaps.

NEW STORE VM

Ready Partial Not ready N/A

● Execution tip: Identify critical stock gaps before styling starts so hero stories are built around products that can be supported at opening.

- 22** Compare received inventory with allocation, purchase, transfer, or opening-stock records and investigate missing, short, damaged, or incorrectly routed products.

NEW STORE VM

Ready Partial Not ready N/A

● Execution tip: Identify critical stock gaps before styling starts so hero stories are built around products that can be supported at opening.

- 23** Confirm backroom stock is organized, labelled, and accessible so the VM and replenishment teams can quickly complete opening displays and refill gaps.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready Partial Not ready N/A

● Execution tip: Identify critical stock gaps before styling starts so hero stories are built around products that can be supported at opening.

- 24** Escalate critical product shortages that weaken a hero display, campaign story, opening offer, or customer promise and document the approved substitution or contingency.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Identify critical stock gaps before styling starts so hero stories are built around products that can be supported at opening.

5. Merchandising execution, product placement, density, and planogram compliance

- 25** Place products according to the approved planogram, VM guide, fixture map, product hierarchy, adjacency, collection, or category logic for the store.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Use the approved merchandising logic consistently and avoid filling gaps with unauthorized substitutions.

- 26** Verify product density, shelf capacity, hanging quantities, folded stacks, facings, size curves, color flow, and spacing match the approved opening standard.

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Use the approved merchandising logic consistently and avoid filling gaps with unauthorized substitutions.

- 27** Confirm hero products, bestsellers, high-margin items, new launches, promotional products, and priority stories receive the intended visibility and location.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Use the approved merchandising logic consistently and avoid filling gaps with unauthorized substitutions.

- 28** Check products are front-facing, neatly aligned, correctly oriented, steamed or prepared where required, and free from packaging or presentation defects.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Use the approved merchandising logic consistently and avoid filling gaps with unauthorized substitutions.

- 29** Verify cross-merchandising and outfit stories are commercially relevant, available for sale, correctly priced, and consistent with the approved brand direction.

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Use the approved merchandising logic consistently and avoid filling gaps with unauthorized substitutions.

- 30** Remove unauthorized substitutions, mixed categories, excess stock, empty fixtures, duplicate stories, or improvised displays that weaken the opening presentation.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Use the approved merchandising logic consistently and avoid filling gaps with unauthorized substitutions.

6. Windows, mannequins, focal displays, props, and campaign storytelling

- 31** Confirm window schemes use the approved campaign concept, product story, backdrop, props, graphics, lighting, and composition for the opening period.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Photograph windows and focal displays from customer viewing angles so remote reviewers can judge the full composition.

- 32** Inspect mannequins for correct models, condition, stability, pose, styling, garment fit, accessories, footwear, tags, and approved grouping.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Photograph windows and focal displays from customer viewing angles so remote reviewers can judge the full composition.

- 33** Verify focal tables, feature walls, podiums, launch bays, entrance stories, and high-visibility displays communicate the intended campaign hierarchy.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Photograph windows and focal displays from customer viewing angles so remote reviewers can judge the full composition.

- 34** Check props, risers, plinths, frames, display tools, acrylics, hardware, and decorative elements are complete, clean, safe, and positioned as approved.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Photograph windows and focal displays from customer viewing angles so remote reviewers can judge the full composition.

- 35** Confirm hero products used in windows and focal displays are available for customers to purchase and have replenishment stock where required.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Photograph windows and focal displays from customer viewing angles so remote reviewers can judge the full composition.

- 36** Capture wide-angle and close-up evidence of windows, mannequins, entrance stories, and priority displays for remote VM review and approval.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Photograph windows and focal displays from customer viewing angles so remote reviewers can judge the full composition.

7. Pricing, signage, navigation, POSM, digital displays, and brand communication

- 37** Verify every displayed product has the correct shelf label, price ticket, tag, electronic label, or approved price communication before store opening.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Validate prices and campaign messages at the fixture and at POS before opening.

- 38** Confirm promotional prices, opening offers, discounts, member offers, bundles, terms, dates, and POS prices match the approved commercial setup.

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Validate prices and campaign messages at the fixture and at POS before opening.

- 39** Install department, category, directional, service, fitting-room, checkout, promotional, and regulatory signage in the correct locations.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Validate prices and campaign messages at the fixture and at POS before opening.

- 40** Check posters, shelf strips, wobblers, standees, tent cards, decals, campaign graphics, and other POSM use the current approved artwork and version.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Validate prices and campaign messages at the fixture and at POS before opening.

- 41** Verify digital screens, menu boards, kiosks, LED displays, and interactive content are live with the correct campaign, store, language, price, and scheduling.

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Validate prices and campaign messages at the fixture and at POS before opening.

- 42** Remove outdated, duplicated, handwritten, incorrect, unfinished, or conflicting signs and escalate any customer-facing price or offer discrepancy before opening.

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action

● Execution tip: Validate prices and campaign messages at the fixture and at POS before opening.

8. Cleanliness, product condition, safety, accessibility, and final visual standards

- 43** Inspect fixtures, shelves, mirrors, windows, props, graphics, digital screens, mannequins, products, and display accessories for dust, fingerprints, residue, damage, or installation marks.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Complete the final clean after installation, then recheck safety, accessibility, product condition, and customer routes.

- 44** Remove damaged, stained, defective, incomplete, expired, recalled, unsafe, or unsaleable products from customer-facing displays.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Complete the final clean after installation, then recheck safety, accessibility, product condition, and customer routes.

- 45** Confirm aisles, fitting rooms, counters, entrances, exits, accessible routes, fire equipment, and customer circulation remain clear after all VM setup is complete.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Complete the final clean after installation, then recheck safety, accessibility, product condition, and customer routes.

- 46** Check heavy, fragile, sharp, elevated, electrical, glass, freestanding, hanging, or child-accessible display elements are secure and safe.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Complete the final clean after installation, then recheck safety, accessibility, product condition, and customer routes.

- 47** Verify security tags, cables, alarm devices, product restraints, locked cabinets, and high-value display controls protect merchandise without weakening presentation.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Complete the final clean after installation, then recheck safety, accessibility, product condition, and customer routes.

- 48** Complete a final recovery so all fixtures are full, aligned, clean, balanced, customer-ready, and consistent with the approved opening photographs or reference.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Complete the final clean after installation, then recheck safety, accessibility, product condition, and customer routes.

9. Readiness evidence, VM review, opening blockers, corrective actions, and verification

- 49** Capture timestamped wide-angle photos of every required VM zone plus close-up evidence for key fixtures, prices, products, signs, and identified defects.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Capture new after-correction evidence before closing an action. Opening blockers should never close from comments alone.

- 50** Score readiness across fixtures, zoning, assortment, merchandising, windows, mannequins, signage, pricing, digital displays, cleanliness, safety, and customer flow.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Capture new after-correction evidence before closing an action. Opening blockers should never close from comments alone.

- 51** Classify failures as opening blocker, major, minor, or observation using the approved launch-readiness rules and escalate blockers immediately.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Capture new after-correction evidence before closing an action. Opening blockers should never close from comments alone.

- 52** Assign every failed check to a named owner with priority, due time, required proof, temporary display plan, and escalation route.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Capture new after-correction evidence before closing an action. Opening blockers should never close from comments alone.

- 53** Verify corrected VM execution using new evidence and repeat the affected readiness check before closing the action.

NEW STORE VM

CRITICAL

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Capture new after-correction evidence before closing an action. Opening blockers should never close from comments alone.

- 54** Keep critical readiness items open until objective evidence confirms the store can open without compromising brand presentation, customer experience, safety, or commercial execution.

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Needs action

Blocker

LIVE PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Capture new after-correction evidence before closing an action. Opening blockers should never close from comments alone.

10. Final approval, store handover, launch-day recovery, and post-opening stabilization

- 55 Complete the final VM walkthrough with the store manager and required VM, retail, project, marketing, or regional approvers before opening.**

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

Record	Current	Owner	Evidence	Action
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● Execution tip: Handover must cover the first days of recovery and replenishment so the opening presentation can be sustained.

- 56 Record unresolved non-blocking items, temporary displays, missing assets, expected delivery dates, owners, deadlines, and the agreed opening-day workaround.**

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Handover must cover the first days of recovery and replenishment so the opening presentation can be sustained.

- 57 Confirm the store team understands daily recovery, replenishment, mannequin upkeep, window care, signage checks, campaign maintenance, and escalation responsibilities.**

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Handover must cover the first days of recovery and replenishment so the opening presentation can be sustained.

- 58 Recheck priority VM zones after opening-day customer traffic, replenishment, product sales, operational activity, and any launch events that may disturb presentation.**

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Handover must cover the first days of recovery and replenishment so the opening presentation can be sustained.

- 59 Schedule the first post-opening VM review to assess product availability, display sustainability, customer flow, campaign condition, recurring gaps, and required adjustments.**

NEW STORE VM

Ready

Partial

Not ready

N/A

● Execution tip: Handover must cover the first days of recovery and replenishment so the opening presentation can be sustained.

- 60 Record the final readiness score, opening blockers closed, store manager, VM reviewer, approver, opening date, time, handover status, and sign-off.**

CRITICAL

NEW STORE VM

NAME

Enter

DATE / TIME

Enter

APPROVAL

Sign

● Execution tip: Handover must cover the first days of recovery and replenishment so the opening presentation can be sustained.

RUN THIS CHECKLIST DIGITALLY

Turn opening blockers into verified VM readiness

Use Taqtics to schedule new-store VM reviews, capture live evidence, escalate opening blockers, assign actions, verify corrections, approve readiness, and compare launch execution across every location.