

FREE VISUAL MERCHANDISING AUDIT TEMPLATE

Visual Merchandising Audit Checklist

Use this 60-point checklist to audit campaign execution across storefronts, windows, zoning, fixtures, mannequins, planograms, signage, pricing, availability, lighting, maintenance, evidence, corrective action, and final VM validation.

Store / location

Audit date

Campaign / season

Auditor / VM owner

1. Audit setup, campaign brief, store format, scope, and ownership

- 1** Confirm the store, audit date, auditor, store format, department or category, campaign or season, launch date, and visual-merchandising owner.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

NAME

Enter

DATE / TIME

Enter

SIGN-OFF

Sign

● Execution tip: Start from the latest approved campaign and VM references. Version control is essential because a well-executed old guideline is still a failed current rollout.

- 2** Verify the latest approved VM guideline, planogram, campaign deck, styling reference, fixture map, product list, and promotional artwork are available for the audit.

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Area / Reference

Current

Photo

Owner

Action

● Execution tip: Start from the latest approved campaign and VM references. Version control is essential because a well-executed old guideline is still a failed current rollout.

- 3** Check the store is using the current approved version and that outdated campaign files, printed references, and local workarounds have been removed from use.

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Start from the latest approved campaign and VM references. Version control is essential because a well-executed old guideline is still a failed current rollout.

- 4** Define the audit scope across storefront, windows, entrance, departments, fixtures, shelves, mannequins, promotional zones, checkout, and digital displays as applicable.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Area / Reference

Current

Photo

Owner

Action

● Execution tip: Start from the latest approved campaign and VM references. Version control is essential because a well-executed old guideline is still a failed current rollout.

- 5** Identify critical execution points such as hero windows, launch tables, priority categories, new collections, campaign signage, pricing communication, and high-traffic zones.

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Start from the latest approved campaign and VM references. Version control is essential because a well-executed old guideline is still a failed current rollout.

- 6** Assign ownership for display corrections, missing stock, fixture issues, signage replacement, pricing gaps, maintenance, evidence submission, and final VM validation.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Area / Reference

Current

Photo

Owner

Action

● Execution tip: Start from the latest approved campaign and VM references. Version control is essential because a well-executed old guideline is still a failed current rollout.

2. Storefront, window display, entrance zone, and first visual impression

- 7 Verify the storefront and window display match the approved campaign concept, product story, color direction, composition, and current promotional message.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Review the storefront from the customer's approach before entering. The first few seconds reveal whether the campaign story is clear and visually compelling.

- 8 Check window products, props, graphics, mannequins, risers, lighting, decals, and other display elements are complete, correctly positioned, and free from obvious damage.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Review the storefront from the customer's approach before entering. The first few seconds reveal whether the campaign story is clear and visually compelling.

- 9 Confirm the entrance zone communicates the correct current campaign or customer message without visual clutter, outdated material, or competing promotions.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Review the storefront from the customer's approach before entering. The first few seconds reveal whether the campaign story is clear and visually compelling.

- 10 Assess whether the main focal point is clear from outside the store and whether the window creates a strong visual hierarchy instead of presenting too many competing elements.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Review the storefront from the customer's approach before entering. The first few seconds reveal whether the campaign story is clear and visually compelling.

- 11 Check glass, frames, flooring, props, signage, lighting, doors, and entrance display elements are clean, aligned, and maintained to customer-facing standards.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Review the storefront from the customer's approach before entering. The first few seconds reveal whether the campaign story is clear and visually compelling.

- 12 Record missing products, wrong campaign artwork, weak focal points, blocked sightlines, damaged props, poor lighting, outdated displays, or other first-impression gaps.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Review the storefront from the customer's approach before entering. The first few seconds reveal whether the campaign story is clear and visually compelling.

3. Store zoning, layout, customer flow, focal points, and visual hierarchy

- 13 Verify departments, categories, collections, and promotional zones are positioned according to the approved layout, zoning, adjacency, or floor-plan direction.**

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Area / Reference	Current	Photo	Owner	Action

● Execution tip: Walk the store along the normal customer journey. Zoning and focal-point issues are easier to spot from movement than from standing at one fixed position.

- 14 Check customer pathways remain open and intuitive and that fixtures, promotional units, cartons, baskets, or temporary displays do not create avoidable obstruction.**

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

ACTUAL	Enter	REFERENCE	Enter	STATUS	Record
--------	-------	-----------	-------	--------	--------

● Execution tip: Walk the store along the normal customer journey. Zoning and focal-point issues are easier to spot from movement than from standing at one fixed position.

- 15 Confirm key focal points, feature tables, endcaps, wall bays, launch zones, or destination categories are visible from the intended customer approach.**

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

ACTUAL	Enter	REFERENCE	Enter	STATUS	Record
--------	-------	-----------	-------	--------	--------

● Execution tip: Walk the store along the normal customer journey. Zoning and focal-point issues are easier to spot from movement than from standing at one fixed position.

- 16 Assess whether visual hierarchy guides attention from hero displays to secondary stories and product selection without excessive clutter or competing messages.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Walk the store along the normal customer journey. Zoning and focal-point issues are easier to spot from movement than from standing at one fixed position.

- 17 Verify key categories have enough visual space and are not compressed, hidden, or diluted by unrelated products or locally added fixtures.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Walk the store along the normal customer journey. Zoning and focal-point issues are easier to spot from movement than from standing at one fixed position.

- 18 Record incorrect zoning, poor adjacency, blocked flow, weak focal points, clutter, over-merchandising, or layout changes that reduce campaign impact.**

CRITICAL

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Area / Reference	Current	Photo	Owner	Action

● Execution tip: Walk the store along the normal customer journey. Zoning and focal-point issues are easier to spot from movement than from standing at one fixed position.

4. Fixtures, shelves, racks, tables, facing, density, and product presentation

- 19** Check fixtures, shelves, rails, tables, gondolas, racks, cabinets, or display units are the correct type, location, orientation, and height for the approved VM setup.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Check both presentation quality and commercial usability. Fixtures should look consistent while still making the range easy to browse and shop.

- 20** Verify products are faced, folded, hung, stacked, aligned, or arranged consistently according to the approved merchandising standard for the category.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Check both presentation quality and commercial usability. Fixtures should look consistent while still making the range easy to browse and shop.

- 21** Confirm product density is balanced and does not appear under-filled, overcrowded, mixed, or visually inconsistent with the intended presentation.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Check both presentation quality and commercial usability. Fixtures should look consistent while still making the range easy to browse and shop.

- 22** Check size runs, color runs, product sequencing, bestseller positioning, key SKU placement, and range blocking follow the approved category logic where applicable.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Check both presentation quality and commercial usability. Fixtures should look consistent while still making the range easy to browse and shop.

- 23** Inspect shelves, fixtures, hangers, acrylics, risers, trays, hooks, pegs, and display accessories for cleanliness, alignment, damage, and completeness.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Check both presentation quality and commercial usability. Fixtures should look consistent while still making the range easy to browse and shop.

- 24** Record empty gaps, overstocked fixtures, mixed categories, poor facing, incorrect sequencing, missing display accessories, damaged fixtures, or inconsistent presentation.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Check both presentation quality and commercial usability. Fixtures should look consistent while still making the range easy to browse and shop.

5. Mannequin styling, outfit coordination, product stories, and presentation standards

- 25 Verify mannequin count, location, pose, grouping, direction, and outfit assignment match the approved styling or campaign reference.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Compare mannequin styling directly with the approved reference and confirm featured products can actually be purchased from the store.

- 26 Check apparel, footwear, accessories, layering, color coordination, styling details, and product combinations follow the intended product story.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Compare mannequin styling directly with the approved reference and confirm featured products can actually be purchased from the store.

- 27 Confirm mannequin garments fit correctly, are steamed or crease-free, secured neatly, and do not show visible pins, tags, clips, excess fabric, or unfinished styling.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Compare mannequin styling directly with the approved reference and confirm featured products can actually be purchased from the store.

- 28 Verify products styled on mannequins are available for customers to shop or have an approved replacement when a featured item is unavailable.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Compare mannequin styling directly with the approved reference and confirm featured products can actually be purchased from the store.

- 29 Inspect mannequins, bases, wigs, props, platforms, accessories, and surrounding areas for cleanliness, damage, stability, and correct orientation.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Compare mannequin styling directly with the approved reference and confirm featured products can actually be purchased from the store.

- 30 Record incorrect outfits, missing accessories, poor garment fit, unavailable featured products, damaged mannequins, weak styling, or inconsistent brand presentation.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Compare mannequin styling directly with the approved reference and confirm featured products can actually be purchased from the store.

6. Planogram, category placement, shelf position, assortment, and compliance

- 31** Verify the audited category follows the approved planogram or product-placement reference for shelf, bay, rack, counter, or fixture position.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Use the planogram reference side by side with the live fixture. Small placement changes can materially alter shelf share, product priority, and category visibility.

- 32** Check priority products, hero SKUs, new launches, promotional items, and required assortment are placed in the specified positions and quantities.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

ACTUAL

Enter

REFERENCE

Enter

STATUS

Record

● Execution tip: Use the planogram reference side by side with the live fixture. Small placement changes can materially alter shelf share, product priority, and category visibility.

- 33** Confirm product facings, shelf share, vertical or horizontal blocking, adjacency, shelf height, and category sequence match the approved plan where applicable.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

ACTUAL

Enter

REFERENCE

Enter

STATUS

Record

● Execution tip: Use the planogram reference side by side with the live fixture. Small placement changes can materially alter shelf share, product priority, and category visibility.

- 34** Verify local substitutions, additional products, reduced facings, or layout changes have authorized approval and do not disrupt the intended category presentation.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Use the planogram reference side by side with the live fixture. Small placement changes can materially alter shelf share, product priority, and category visibility.

- 35** Check gaps caused by out-of-stock products are handled according to the approved VM rule rather than filled with unrelated items or left poorly presented.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Use the planogram reference side by side with the live fixture. Small placement changes can materially alter shelf share, product priority, and category visibility.

- 36** Record planogram deviations, missing hero SKUs, wrong shelf position, incorrect facings, unapproved substitutions, assortment gaps, or category-placement errors.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Use the planogram reference side by side with the live fixture. Small placement changes can materially alter shelf share, product priority, and category visibility.

7. Promotional signage, POSM, campaign graphics, digital screens, and communication

- 37** Verify all required campaign signage, promotional graphics, shelf talkers, wobblers, posters, tent cards, decals, banners, or POSM are present in the approved locations.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Promotional communication should be current, consistent, and easy to understand. Remove expired or competing messages before adding more POSM.

- 38** Check campaign artwork, offer message, product image, dates, language, branding, legal text where applicable, and promotional details match the current approved version.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Promotional communication should be current, consistent, and easy to understand. Remove expired or competing messages before adding more POSM.

- 39** Confirm old, expired, duplicate, damaged, handwritten, locally altered, or conflicting promotional material has been removed.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Promotional communication should be current, consistent, and easy to understand. Remove expired or competing messages before adding more POSM.

- 40** Inspect sign holders, frames, stands, clips, adhesive, digital screens, media players, cables, and mounting points for clean and professional presentation.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Promotional communication should be current, consistent, and easy to understand. Remove expired or competing messages before adding more POSM.

- 41** Verify digital screens display the correct current content without blank screens, error messages, wrong aspect ratio, outdated media, or visible technical faults.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Promotional communication should be current, consistent, and easy to understand. Remove expired or competing messages before adding more POSM.

- 42** Record missing signage, wrong artwork, expired promotions, damaged POSM, conflicting messages, screen failures, poor placement, or communication clutter.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Promotional communication should be current, consistent, and easy to understand. Remove expired or competing messages before adding more POSM.

8. Pricing, labels, product availability, replenishment, and customer shopping readiness

- 43 Verify displayed products have the required price, shelf label, ticket, tag, menu or product information and that visible pricing matches the active system or approved promotion where applicable.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Area / Reference	Current	Photo	Owner	Action

- Execution tip: Treat price accuracy and product availability as part of visual execution. A beautiful display fails commercially if the customer cannot identify the price or buy the featured product.

- 44 Check price labels are aligned with the correct product and are readable, clean, current, and positioned consistently without covering important product information.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

ACTUAL	Enter	REFERENCE	Enter	STATUS	Record
--------	-------	-----------	-------	--------	--------

- Execution tip: Treat price accuracy and product availability as part of visual execution. A beautiful display fails commercially if the customer cannot identify the price or buy the featured product.

- 45 Confirm hero products, advertised items, mannequin looks, launch products, and featured SKUs have sufficient customer-facing availability or an approved alternative plan.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

ACTUAL	Enter	REFERENCE	Enter	STATUS	Record
--------	-------	-----------	-------	--------	--------

- Execution tip: Treat price accuracy and product availability as part of visual execution. A beautiful display fails commercially if the customer cannot identify the price or buy the featured product.

- 46 Check replenishment gaps are addressed quickly and that back-room stock is moved to the selling floor according to priority and presentation standards.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Compliant	Partial	Gap	N/A
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- Execution tip: Treat price accuracy and product availability as part of visual execution. A beautiful display fails commercially if the customer cannot identify the price or buy the featured product.

- 47 Verify out-of-stock communication, substitution, placeholder, or gap-management methods follow the approved brand or category rule.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant	Partial	Gap	N/A
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- Execution tip: Treat price accuracy and product availability as part of visual execution. A beautiful display fails commercially if the customer cannot identify the price or buy the featured product.

- 48 Record missing or incorrect prices, mismatched labels, unavailable featured products, empty displays, weak replenishment, or customer-facing stock gaps.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Area / Reference	Current	Photo	Owner	Action

- Execution tip: Treat price accuracy and product availability as part of visual execution. A beautiful display fails commercially if the customer cannot identify the price or buy the featured product.

9. Lighting, cleanliness, maintenance, fixtures, digital hardware, and presentation quality

- 49 Verify feature lighting, window lighting, shelf lighting, spotlights, ambient lighting, and illuminated signage support the intended display and are operational.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Inspect lighting and maintenance from the customer viewpoint. A single failed light or damaged fixture can weaken an otherwise correct display.

- 50 Check lighting direction and intensity highlight the correct products and do not create dark zones, glare, blown-out displays, or inconsistent visual emphasis.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

ACTUAL

Enter

REFERENCE

Enter

STATUS

Record

● Execution tip: Inspect lighting and maintenance from the customer viewpoint. A single failed light or damaged fixture can weaken an otherwise correct display.

- 51 Inspect visible surfaces, mirrors, acrylics, shelves, floors, fixtures, display props, mannequins, screens, signage, and promotional units for cleanliness.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

ACTUAL

Enter

REFERENCE

Enter

STATUS

Record

● Execution tip: Inspect lighting and maintenance from the customer viewpoint. A single failed light or damaged fixture can weaken an otherwise correct display.

- 52 Check broken fixtures, loose shelves, damaged hooks, chipped furniture, unstable displays, exposed wiring, defective screens, failed lights, or other maintenance issues are reported.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Inspect lighting and maintenance from the customer viewpoint. A single failed light or damaged fixture can weaken an otherwise correct display.

- 53 Confirm maintenance or temporary repair work does not leave customer-facing areas looking incomplete, unsafe, cluttered, or inconsistent with the brand.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Inspect lighting and maintenance from the customer viewpoint. A single failed light or damaged fixture can weaken an otherwise correct display.

- 54 Record failed lighting, dirty display elements, damaged fixtures, maintenance delays, visible cables, unstable units, or presentation defects requiring corrective action.**

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Inspect lighting and maintenance from the customer viewpoint. A single failed light or damaged fixture can weaken an otherwise correct display.

10. Evidence, scoring, deviations, corrective actions, validation, and final sign-off

- 55** Capture clear visual evidence for key VM zones and failed checks, including storefront, window, focal displays, planograms, mannequins, signage, pricing, and maintenance issues as required.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Close VM actions with updated visual evidence. Before-and-after photos make validation faster and create a reusable reference for future rollouts.

- 56** Score each audit section consistently against the approved VM criteria and distinguish minor presentation gaps from critical campaign or customer-facing failures.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Close VM actions with updated visual evidence. Before-and-after photos make validation faster and create a reusable reference for future rollouts.

- 57** Record every deviation with the exact location, reference standard, observed condition, customer or campaign impact, and immediate correction completed where possible.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Close VM actions with updated visual evidence. Before-and-after photos make validation faster and create a reusable reference for future rollouts.

- 58** Assign each failed check to a named store, VM, maintenance, pricing, inventory, or operations owner with priority, due date, evidence requirement, and escalation route.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Close VM actions with updated visual evidence. Before-and-after photos make validation faster and create a reusable reference for future rollouts.

- 59** Verify corrective actions using updated photos, repeat checks, VM approval, repaired fixtures, replenishment evidence, corrected signage, or other objective proof before closure.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Partial

Gap

N/A

● Execution tip: Close VM actions with updated visual evidence. Before-and-after photos make validation faster and create a reusable reference for future rollouts.

- 60** Record the final VM audit score, unresolved critical gaps, action status, next review date, auditor, store manager, VM reviewer, approver, date, time, and sign-off.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

CRITICAL

Compliant

Needs action

Critical

PHOTO

Add

● Execution tip: Close VM actions with updated visual evidence. Before-and-after photos make validation faster and create a reusable reference for future rollouts.

RUN THIS AUDIT DIGITALLY

Turn VM deviations into verified visual corrections

Use Taqtics to schedule VM audits, compare stores against approved references, capture live photo evidence, assign corrective actions, validate closure, and track campaign execution across every location.