



Sales floor counters and customer service areas prove to be great spots for POPs. Photos from Aftermarket Advantage Inc.



One of the most cost-effective marketing tools in your showroom may be your point-of-purchase (POP) displays. A good POP stops and engages customers, provides useful information, and creates an interest in and/or desire for the promoted brand or product line. It can sell, upsell and cross-sell all at once.

“POP displays are very effective,” says Rick Nauman of ATS Design, Cerritos, Calif., maker of running boards, fender flares and rear spoilers. “They allow consumers and salespeople to become familiar with the products by seeing and touching ... something you can’t get from a brochure.”

### That tactile sell

Although it may be the digital age where more and more customers are shopping online, many customers researching online are still buying products in brick-and-mortar stores, according to research firm Nielsen. The top reason consumers cited for buying offline is “to touch and feel the product.” Yahoo has even coined a phrase for this shopping pattern: ROBO (Research Online, Buy Offline). That’s why a well-

# Show & Sell: Using POP displays to sell more

You can’t just rely on your brochure rack to help you rack up more add-on sales.

By Phil Sasso

designed POP with a strong sales message can be a real deal-closer by allowing customers to interact with a product.

“Good POP will contain a hook that grabs the consumer’s attention while offering an easily identified benefit,” says Brian Coyne of Aftermarket Advantage Inc., Grass Valley, Calif., a store fixture and showroom design firm. “Placement of the POP device should be near the product being featured, or at least in the same merchandising category. It’s got to be a quality piece that augments and enhances the live product, or acts as a ‘silent salesman’ in that category’s neighborhood.”

Says Randy Goble, national marketing manager of Truck Accessories Group LLC (TAG), maker of the Leer, Century, Pace Edwards and Raider brands of truck caps, tonneaus and retractable truck bed covers: “We actually do [working] miniature displays of our product. Consumers can open it up and close it, and look at it and touch it and feel it. Those are real effective because it’s a good sales tool.”

Since some TAG products are made to order, the company’s POPs help the restyling shop salesperson take orders more effectively by presenting color, configuration and other details. It also helps the customer visualize the exact product he wants for his make and model of vehicle.

Things like POP placement are important. But, sometimes the key to a successful POP is as simple as just putting it up and using it, says Goble.

A POP display that’s buried under stacks of literature or hidden in a corner is doing a huge disservice to a restyling shop by taking up space but not pulling its selling weight. Put your POPs in well-trafficked areas. If a display is not selling product, try moving it to a new location in the shop. If it still isn’t doing anything but taking up space, consider doing away with it altogether.

### Positioning POP for profits

“Placement is a key factor,” says Coyne. “If you are introducing a new and unproven product that requires some chat with cus-

tomers, by all means, try to put it at the register or service counter. ... But in my opinion, the best way to use quality POP is within arm’s reach of the live product that it advertises.”

“POPs are always effective near the

inventory when available,” agrees Deb Holdampf, vice president of sales and marketing at Stampede Products, Camanche, Iowa, maker of products like hood protectors, deflectors, and fender flares. “Counters are good, as well, as long as they are accessi-

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ble and the transactions are lengthy enough for them to be noticed.

Obviously not every POP can be at the register or service counter. Other key locations are near an entrance/exit or the end of a main aisle to allow customers to interact with the POP without blocking a traffic path.

“Spread out large appealing POPs throughout the showroom,” advises Nauman. “This will allow customers to get around the entire showroom instead of being in one section.”

“Showroom traffic is dictated by fixture layout and merchandising patterns,” notes Coyne. “POPs can optimize the quality of this traffic by slowing it down so that customers will pay more attention to sales messages.”

Those POP sales messages also can be a useful cross-selling tool. A well-designed POP will entice customers to explore a product brand or category that they didn't originally come in looking for. This can create profitable add-on sales that you wouldn't have otherwise made.

“Most customers are already in the store for a reason,” says Holdampf. “Properly designed and placed displays can introduce customers to items they were unaware of or have never considered.”

It's important to remember that POPs

cannot take the place of good-old-fashioned customer service and salesmanship. The purpose of good POP is to encourage dialog. That's not as easy in a traditional self-service retail environment where the product is sitting on a shelf.

“When products are out on racks ... the conversation stops,” says Goble. “You're not going to be engaging the customer.” The goal is to use the POP in a way that opens a conversation.

Whether it's used for upselling or cross-selling, the consensus is that the cornerstone of a successful POP is good design and a strong sales message.

“Professional design and well-crafted messaging are key to the effectiveness of POPs,” says Laura Kvistad, St. Paul, Minn.-based 3M Automotive Division's senior communications administrator.

Adds Coyne: “The trend is to go upscale and comprehensive with the latest POP. And by that I mean displays that look like they belong on a well-merchandised sales floor, and that they offer a recognizable contribution to your marketing efforts.”

ATS' Nauman says, “I feel more companies will be going with interactive POPs, allowing customers to spend more time understanding the products.”

Quality design and construction often come with a price tag attached.



3M offers complete POP kits and materials that help educate not just the clientele but the sales staff, as well.

Manufacturers can't afford to give away every POP. Many of the most effective ones are very expensive to develop and produce. And with the advent of digital technology like interactive video and touchscreen to the restyling showroom you can expect that trend to grow (see "The future of restyling POP" sidebar on page 34). But think of a POP as an investment, not an expense.

"Free display most often has replicas of product," explains Holdampf. "Fee-based includes starter kits or actual product mock-ups installed to tell the product story."

Says Coyne "Most of the best POP has a price tag. Many manufacturers offer quality displays for free when you buy a certain mix of product; some offer the POP at their cost. You should contact your distributor, or call the factory direct to find out what's available, and what fits your niche."



Hood protector samples and catalog displays can be set on countertops, or on or beside appropriate products. Photos from Stampede Products.

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### The showroom away from your showroom

Today, many restyling shops are partnering with dealerships to create a win-win sales opportunity. A POP in a dealership can help promote your specialty products services while helping dealerships maximize profits. But dealer showroom real estate is extremely valuable so be sensitive to not take up too much room.

“Meet with the GM [general manager] or the parts manager at the dealership,” says Nauman. “Show them the quality of the goods and services you’re providing. You want to utilize what they already have in the showroom — such as a slatwall — to keep it from being overcrowded.”

The key to a successful dealer relationship is being tuned-in to the dealers’ needs and making it as easy as possible for their salespeople and staff to close a deal for you. The National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) predicts an 11% increase in sales in new vehicles in 2011 over 2010 sales. But as promising as that



Working display samples, as well as full-size on-vehicle presentations with nearby literature provide a “show and tell” for customers.

## The future of restyling POP

From at least one restyling accessory manufacturer’s point of view traditional POPs can be fraught with issues that make them less-than-ideal selling tools.

“Miniatures are expensive,” says Joel Ayres, vice president of sales and marketing for Takit Inc., Eagle Point, Ore., maker of the Bedslide. “And, quite honestly, the ones we have out there now are outdated. We’ve improved the product, changed it, whatever. Now you have all these miniature displays out there that really are of no value.”

Takit had previously invested a lot of money on displays that quickly became obsolete when new product improvements were introduced. Ayres explains that in Takit’s situation miniatures also did not function as well as the actual product — like not gliding as easily. And because of the small scale, a miniature failed to fully demonstrate the product’s features and benefits like its durability and weight bearing.

To overcome that, Ayres has begun working with his marketing firm to develop an interactive video POP that will allow customers to see the product working in real-world situations that parallel their lifestyles. For example it will show different uses for the Bedslide for everyone from soccer moms to construction workers.

Though the actual system is still in development, Ayres foresees the restyler paying a fee for the initial digital POP display and the company providing ongoing DVD or digital updates for free. Takit will still be doing the traditional free posters, literature and other promotional items.

“Our plan is to do our entire program where there is a buy-in,” says Ayres. Takit will be funding part of the program, the retailer part. Ayres says the retailer will be able to recoup his investment in one sale.

Ayres expects the new Takit / Bedslide POP to launch prior to the SEMA Show.



Takit formerly used traditional miniaturized POP demo displays. But product enhancements or new features quickly rendered these expensive displays obsolete.

sounds, keep in mind that the average dealer made about 15% less in new-car sales in 2010 than it made back in 2005. So, now more than ever, dealerships want to sell your restyling products and services to boost per-sale profits.

Other space-saving promotional techniques include “static cling stickers and magnets ... placed right on the vehicles in the showroom,” suggests 3M’s Kvistad. Using new digital printing techniques many suppliers, like 3M, are beginning to offer displays that can be customized by vehicle make and model to suit the specific dealership.

“This is especially helpful for a product such as paint protection film, which is virtually invisible,” says Kvistad. “A customizable poster is smart because it reflects [the makes and models of] vehicles the dealership is selling and is attractive to the dealership.

“We offer a variety of selling tools, from banners to tabletop displays, allowing dealerships to choose the most effective tools for areas where customers gather,” Kvistad continues. “[Some] POPs can be used on a salesperson’s desk, in the waiting room or in the F&I (finance and insurance) office. It can also be appropriate to place POPs near the product that is being promoted, such as on a vehicle’s hood.”

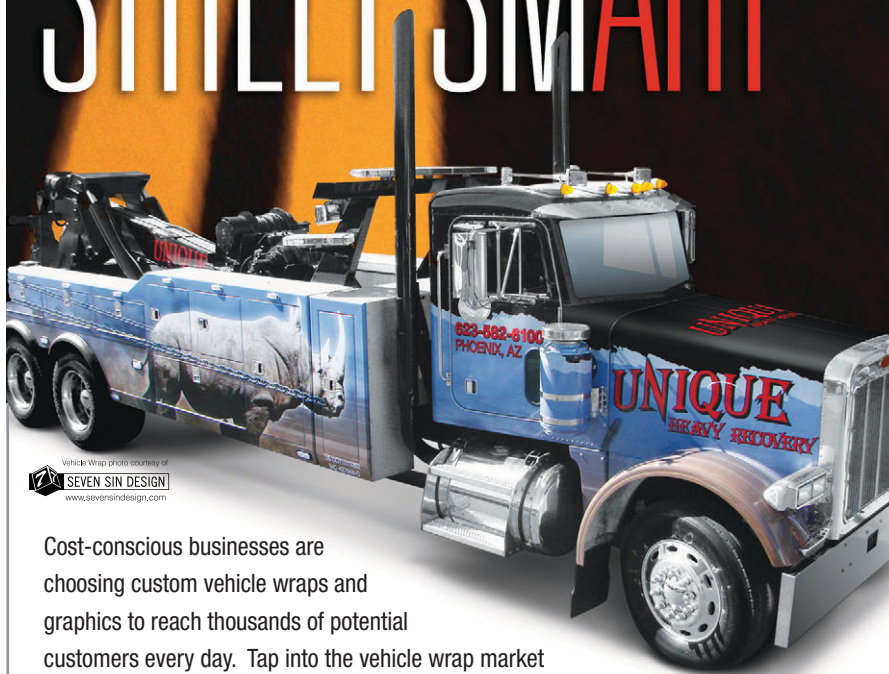
Notes Holdampf: “Waiting areas, especially those associated with finance and final sale activities are good.”

Each dealership is different. Try walking through the dealership and looking around before your initial meeting to find underutilized floor or wall space that you might suggest for your POP.

Good POP, placed in the right place can make a big difference in your sales. Whether it be in your showroom or a dealer showroom good POP is good marketing.

*Phil Sasso is president of Sasso Marketing (sassomarketing.com), an automotive after-market advertising, public relations and Internet services agency. He’s also a speaker and strategist. Sign up for his free weekly marketing tip e-mail at phil.sasso.com.* ☺

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