
- Advertisement -

Show store training seminars greatly improve produce manager skills

July 5, 2017

The day I walked into one of our produce departments and saw a produce manager carelessly dumping bananas onto a display directly out of the box was the day I knew we needed to improve on training. It was time for a produce show store seminar.

A show store seminar is setting up the entire produce department of a selected store according to the company merchandising and operating program. All produce managers are then invited to the



seminar.

Show store seminars

are a great way to teach and train produce managers how their department should be presented.

The main purpose of the show store seminar is to teach and train produce managers how a department should be presented for business. The seminar is to show produce managers the proper methods in merchandising and operating the produce department under the company standards. It is a training aid to educate and develop their workmanship for uniformity in each store. As they tour the department with produce management, they see and hear everything first-hand.

The show store seminar process is simple.

- Plan two parts of the show store seminar — a morning session at the store and an afternoon session at a hotel meeting room. Include a lunch and snack break.
- Start at the entrance of the department. The presenter (usually the produce director or field merchandiser) points out the front of the department merchandising appearance for overall visual sales impact.
- Entering the department, the presenter points out each key display and explains every detail as to how it is built to encourage customer attraction and purchasing power.
- After touring the produce sales floor, everyone then moves to the department back room preparation area. Here is where operating and processing takes place. Receiving, sorting, storage, trimming, crisping, packaging and all other operating functions are reviewed prior to the product being moved to the sales floor for stocking onto displays.
- It is important to stop and discuss the “profit sections” when walking the produce managers through the department — the cut-fruit section, potatoes, onions, vegetable wall, etc. Draw attention to the influence each high-profit category can have.
- After the morning show store session, have everyone move to the hotel meeting room for lunch, then proceed with the afternoon session ending no later than 4 p.m.
- Start the sit-down meeting after lunch by asking each produce manager what they learned at the show store and what one or two areas they were most impressed with. Also ask what particular components they will take back to their individual store to put into immediate operation. Guide them on the number of items so they do not feel too overwhelmed all at once. Produce show store seminars are an educational building process that takes a few steps at a time to accomplish.
- This training method should be an ongoing program twice each year. Schedule one in the spring preparing for the summer selling season and one in the fall covering up-coming holidays. Always get a jump on planning ahead.

Starting a show store:

- Obviously, we start by committing to it — and that especially includes senior management.
- Second step is to start planning it.
- Have a meeting to explain and lay out a foundation with all involved.
- Choose a store.
- Set a date and time for the show store.
- Make a list as to who will do what. Jot down names and assignments.
- Send out a professional invitation to each produce manager along with a seminar agenda.
- Assign the selected store’s produce manager and staff to merchandise the department according to how each produce section should be set.
- Schedule sufficient employees to do cleaning, dusting, setting up displays, posting signs, sprucing up areas and any other incidentals.
- After the produce department is all set to go, walk the entire department with the produce

manager and staff to check everything the visiting produce managers will be expected to observe and do.

- Last and most important — remember that everything you show the produce managers is exactly what you are telling them to do when they return to their stores. Let no stone be unturned.

Make sure to instruct the produce managers to take notes while touring the department during the show store process. Anyone not taking notes or talking in the rear is a sign of non-interest in the company's programs. This is a team effort and all should be expected to learn and participate.

[Print](#)