

Brand Merchandising & Business Performance



The environmental and ethical impacts from your enterprise have never been a more powerful predictor of future growth and profits.

That's because new generations are displacing Boomers and Gen X as decisioning and purchasing powers. Younger Millennials and the emergent Gen Z use their career and purchasing choices to “influence their communities and the environment, and to confirm how they see themselves in the world.”

This truth is magnified in post-pandemic consumer sentiment. And it is rewriting value models, brand strategies, and balance sheets across the Fortune 1000. “Companies with high ratings for ESG performance (Environmental, Social & Governance) generate operating margins 3.7x higher, on average, than those of lower ESG performers.” Further, “86% of c-suite executives confirm today’s top talent prefers working for employers that demonstrate commitment to social issues compared to ones that don’t.”

What does this have to do with brand merchandising?
Everything.



Environmental & ethical impacts predict future growth & profits.



“Millennials & Gen Z **“shun companies and employers** whose actions conflict with their personal values.” ([Accenture](#))



Over 50% of investors incorporate ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) into their fund selection process in some form.” ([HEM](#))



“90% of bankruptcies in the S&P 500 from 2005 to 2015 occurred in companies **with poor ESG scores** in the preceding five years.” ([Pensions & Investments](#))



“86% of c-suite executives confirm that today’s top talent is **more inclined to work for companies that have a demonstrated commitment to social issues** compared to ones that don’t.” ([Covestro](#))



“Sustainability sits at the heart of new pathways to growth. Companies with **high ratings for ESG performance had operating margins 3.7x higher**, on average, than those of lower ESG performers.” ([Accenture](#))

The products and partners that help project your brand into minds and marketplaces must also honor your ethical and environmental brand promises. If your merchandise experiences and partners are not sustainable or ethical, then your brand perception won't be, either. The consequences can include lower business performance.

In contrast, by ensuring your brand merchandise and strategies are congruent with your ethical and environmental commitments, you protect the authenticity—and the effectiveness—of your brand. This investment in authenticity is also an investment in future performance and earnings.

The congruence of your brand merchandising with your ESG brand commitments is also more important now than ever before. Post-pandemic brand merchandise impressions carry substantially more contrast and power. Why? Today, stakeholder engagement relies more heavily on digital interactions than it did just 18 months ago. Tangible merchandise impressions contrast more vividly against this immense digital clutter. Because brand merchandising is more powerful, your choice of products and providers is significantly more strategic and impactful to your brand than before the pandemic.



“The number of corporations that committed to science-based (ESG) targets in 2020 equaled the previous five years combined...”—Lori Mabardi, Sr. Director of ESGR research at JLL. (GlobeSt.com)

Here's what strategic marketers should seek in a brand merchandising partner to control the brand authenticity perceptions that affect future business results.



SDG Integration

Fortune-ranked brands increasingly base ESG commitments on UN Sustainable Development Goals because they are well-defined, measurable, and science-based...and therefore authentic. If you're among them, it's only logical to have the same expectations of a brand services partner. Such alignment means your investment in the partnership is further investment in your own goals and brand authenticity.



Operational Control

Over 20,000 brand merchandise distributors compete in North America. Over 99% of them outsource 100% of decoration and distribution. If your supplier outsources nearly everything, how can they realistically control your merchandise experiences? Look for suppliers offering in-house decoration, warehousing, and fulfillment so you can exert optimal control over the merchandise experiences that affect the authenticity and performance of your brand.

When choosing brand merchandise and merchandising partners, you're really trying to create improved brand perceptions and business outcomes. That requires more than great looking products. It requires authentic brand experiences. By aligning your brand with a merchandiser that objectively supports the same ESG commitments, you are investing in more than just brand impressions. **You're investing in your own goals and future business performance!**



Zero-Waste-To-Landfill & Renewable Energy-Based Fulfillment

Look for a supplier with operations that are worthy of your sustainable brand promises. If they don't decorate and distribute your merchandise sustainably, how can they authentically support your sustainable brand?



Sustainable Packaging & Fulfillment

The packing box delivered to your stakeholder is the front end of brand experience. Why choose sustainable products, only to deliver them in unsustainable experiences? When materials are compact and ecologically responsible, the recipient authentically "feels" your commitment to sustainability. Those feelings associate to the gift inside, and by extension, your brand. Your merchandise experience will reinforce brand authenticity.



Dedicated Supply Chain & Compliance Infrastructure

Once a product is decorated with your logo, the experience it provides is your brand experience. What staff and methodologies ensure product manufacturers are operating ethically and sustainably? What liability insurance protects your brand if a product defect creates safety or PR issues? What staff ensure quality controls and compliance documentation govern your brand merchandise sourcing? Insist on excellent controls.



Shop custom, sustainable products on [StaplesPromo.com](https://www.staples.com/promo) or contact your Staples Promo Representative for more information.