

**madix**  
INNOVATION ON DISPLAY

[ E N D C A P S ]  
**EXPOSED**

THE BEST TIPS FOR THE  
MOST IMPRESSIONS

(AND SALES)

## Table of Contents

Exposure vs. Impression .....	4
The Transition Zone .....	5
Three Common Endcaps .....	6
Turning Heads .....	8
Achieving the Superlative .....	9
Example #1: The Modish Endcap .....	10
Example #2: The Entertaining Endcap .....	12
Example #3: The Mass Endcap .....	14
Example #4: The Specialty Endcap.....	16
Example #5: The Wire Endcap .....	18
Example #6: The Split Endcap .....	20
Example #7: The Triangular Endcap.....	22
Example #8: The Premiere Endcap .....	24
Example #9: The Dynamic Endcap .....	26
Example #10: The Everything Endcap .....	28
Conclusion.....	30



## Exposure vs. Impression

The easiest, fastest, and most reliable way to build incremental sales is via impulse merchandise, which is why many retailers dedicate significant resources to improving their front-end strategies with queuing systems and Point-of-Purchase displays, etc.

But just as important are the center-store and perimeter zones. While the front end boasts the highest traffic and exposure ratings, the most impressions happen along the main aisle and the perimeter paths that circle it. Merchandise exposure is important, but impressions convert browsers into buyers. To simultaneously ensure merchandise exposure while creating more impressions, retailers can utilize fixtures specifically designed for aisle displays, such as endcaps.

“Exposure is what you see and impression is what you *look at*.” - Herb Sorensen, *Inside the Mind of the Shopper: The Science of Retailing*

## The Transition Zone

Endcaps are end-of-aisle displays typically placed on the end of a gondola with the intent to promote impulse merchandise and encourage customers to make additional, unplanned purchases. The endcaps themselves can be freestanding units, independent of the gondola and more easily relocated to a different area of the store, or they can act as attached extensions (for stability and uniformity). Either way, endcaps are important not only because they create additional sales opportunities, but also because they establish transitions between the main aisle and branch aisles.

When a customer steps into a store, he or she experiences a moment of disorientation as the switch between “outside” to “inside” takes place, psychologically. This phenomenon is known as the “landing zone” effect. Customers experience a similar (albeit much more brief) sensation when exiting one aisle and entering another. Just as retailers can help lessen the landing zone’s impact at the store’s entrance, they can reduce the transition zone from aisle to aisle using endcaps. A good endcap will make the customer slow down and refocus so that they’re more open to merchandise impressions.

**“30% of all store sales come off end-aisle displays.” -  
Herb Sorensen, *Inside the Mind of the Shopper: The  
Science of Retailing***

## TRADITIONAL



Features a wall end panel, with space for shelves or pegboard/slatwall accessories (for hanging merchandise).

### Pros

- Slim profile
- Easily reconfigured, relocated, or removed

### Cons

- Limited exposure
- Less merchandising flexibility

## WING



Comprised of a wall end panel and two side panels for a more robust display; can be equipped with shelves or hanging accessories.

### Pros

- Three-dimensional display for greater merchandise exposure and flexibility
- More capacity
- Cross-merchandising capability

### Cons

- Protrudes into adjacent aisle space
- Requires more maintenance
- Harder to reconfigure, relocate, or remove

## THREE-WAY



Two wall end panels create an extended endcap display with more merchandising options.

### Pros

- Optimum merchandise exposure and flexibility
- Most capacity
- Cross-merchandising capability

### Cons

- Protrudes into main aisle space
- Requires more maintenance
- Harder to reconfigure, relocate, or remove



Standard Upper and Base Shelves



Radius Upper and Base Shelves



Bullnose Upper and Base Shelves

## Turning Heads

Endcaps also facilitate the shopper's natural inclination to face forward and walk forward unless actively searching for a particular item. Head turning, after all, requires effort. With most store layouts comprised of sharp angles rather curves, too much merchandise gets lost in the periphery.

Endcaps, however, are intentionally conspicuous. They protrude beyond the aisle, planting merchandise directly in the shopper's line of vision. (Three-way designs, in this regard, are particularly effective, as approaching shoppers can be targeted from all angles.) Endcap merchandise is pretty much guaranteed to receive exposure, and it can help draw attention to aisle merchandise that might have otherwise been overlooked. Once again, the trick is to make an *impression*.

"An endcap can boost an item's sales simply because as we stroll through a store's aisles, we approach it head-on, seeing it plainly and fully." - Paco Underhill, *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*



## Achieving the Superlative

Technically, there is no wrong way to merchandise an endcap, so long as an endcap is being utilized. But there are certainly good, better, and best practices to enhance endcap performance. The best merchandising scheme, the best fixture configuration, and the best maintenance routine will in turn leave the best impressions on customers—leading to the best impact on the bottom line.

## Example #1: The Modish Endcap

The best endcap doesn't have to be the most complex. This configuration features a clean layout with minimum front shelving and maximum graphic space for an eye-catching, open display. The side sections are designed to hold more merchandise and can be adjusted by adding or removing shelves according to available inventory or packaging-size restraints.



### TIPS

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1. Keep it simple – presenting too many options increases the risk of “selection angst,” discouraging the shopper from making a final decision and leading to a missed sales opportunity.
2. Display color is a major psychological influence on shoppers. For example, black carries a stylish connotation, which is why it is often used in salons, clothing stores, and “urban” beauty boutiques. Orange is typically associated with value; green implies eco-friendliness; blue, loyalty. Evaluate the endcap color scheme (graphics, merchandise, and the fixture finish), making sure it clearly conveys the intended message.



### **Creative Expression**

A graphic panel provides an unobtrusive solution for more signage while adding visual appeal for the fixture, but it can easily be replaced with traditional back panels like pegboard, slatwall, etc. for different merchandising applications.

### **The Right Height**

Shorter fixtures put merchandise at a more "shoppable" level and do not obstruct sightlines.

### **A Well-Rounded Presentation**

Bullnose shelves soften harsh edges to give the fixture a more modern, approachable appearance.

## Example #2: The Entertaining Endcap

Here's a configuration guaranteed to level up impulse-merchandise sales! Specialty shelves on the outer wings complement a standard shelving section in the front, providing the endcap with more targeted merchandising capabilities. And as the display grows stale, components can be traded out for other parts to create a whole new endcap.



### TIPS

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1. Clearly label pricing. Don't make customers hunt for this information. Otherwise, he or she is more likely to move on without adding the item to the shopping cart.
2. Dangling price tags can clutter up a display. Use tag strips and shelves with tag molding instead, or incorporate the pricing information into the signage/graphics.

### The Price is Right (Here)

Integrated tag molding hosts low-profile pricing strips that can be easily traded out as the display changes.



### A Typical Endcap with An Atypical Design

An average three-way endcap is transformed into something spectacular with graphic panels replacing what would normally be painted or laminate backs. Where sign channels are absent, graphic panels can be used to provide important information in a comprehensive, aesthetic format.

### Niche Merchandising

Media shelves provide a platform for cross-merchandising items like books, DVDs, or video games with cool companions (e.g. popcorn, snuggly blankets, action figures, etc.). Media shelves can also be used for general merchandise prone to tipping over or falling off the shelf.

## Example #3: The Mass Endcap

Turn inventory over much faster with an endcap designed to push a whole lot of a single item. The step-back design adds an illusion of fullness, so that as merchandise is shopped, the remaining stock can be pulled from the upper and lower levels, leading to fewer “holes.” Easily turn this configuration into a themed display, with cross-merchandising opportunities in the form of a sidecap.



### TIPS

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1. Ideal impulse merchandise is self-explanatory, familiar, and easy to pick up. The customer should be able to understand its purpose and function without assistance. When trying to establish a new or lesser-known product, use plenty of signage to help fill the information gap.
2. The best endcap works with no more than two to three SKUs, and it's still good practice to intersperse single-SKU displays throughout the store. Mass displays of a single SKU turn merchandise over more quickly, since much less decision-making is required.

### Quick Lift

This configuration allows forklift access, so the entire endcap can easily be moved to another area of the store, if desired.



### A Clear Sign

Shoppers may find signs on top of taller fixtures difficult to read when standing directly in front of the endcap. An angled sign channel makes the content more accessible to nearby shoppers while still targeting those who are further away.

### Bonus Benefits

Adding a freestanding rack can quickly add cross-merchandising compatibility. Racks, bins, and other accessories are smart investments, since they can be relocated and repurposed in other parts of the store within minutes.

## Example #4: The Specialty Endcap

Break up the monotony of traditional endcaps with something truly unique! A specialty endcap is perfect for when a display could use a touch of “something more.” Create a custom look designed to match both the merchandising application and the store environment.



### TIPS

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1. Endcaps should maintain “touchability.” Shelf spacing should be tight enough to create a full-looking display, but with enough room for customers to interact with the merchandise. Studies show that touch enhances perceived ownership, which in turn increases the recognized value of an object. If a customer picks up an item, he or she is more likely to buy it.
2. Rotate or change endcaps every two weeks—or at least once a month.

“You have a greater chance of making a sale if you let your customers touch or hold your product.” - Roger Dooley, *Brainfluence: 100 Ways to Persuade and Convince Consumers with Neuromarketing*





### **Upright, Not Uptight**

Rounded uprights versus the common rectangular ones are a contemporary and more attractive option for building open, inviting endcaps.

### **Perfect Illusion**

Build "tables" out of wood-laminate shelves for a more compact and stable alternative to freestanding tabletop displays.

## Example #5: The Wire Endcap

Wire grid is a popular choice for merchandising a variety of products in a limited amount of floor or wall space. Wire-grid fixtures are more flexible than solid-metal or wood fixtures, so they can be adapted to a number of retail applications.



### TIPS

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1. Signage can also be used to inform the shopper how one item might be used in correlation to another item (e.g. showing cloth napkins arranged with a plate set on a dining table, perhaps with other items the shopper might find along the adjacent aisle).
2. Wire grid may also help comply with local fire codes: In the event of a fire, sprinklers work more effectively on wire-grid units, since the water is not obstructed by solid panels.

### Attention to Detail

An alternative material for the shelves (such as wood or wood laminate) can take a basic, wire-grid endcap and give it a more upscale look.



### Multipurpose Message

Adding a signage canopy to a wire fixture adds color to an otherwise sheer unit and helps it stand out.

### A Complete Composition

Cross merchandising is more effective with this configuration, because while the unit is not entirely see through, the merchandise on each panel (inside and outer) is still at least partially visible to the shopper from all sides.

## Example #6: The Split Endcap

Who says all shelves were made to be equal? Get more freedom and flexibility out of a split-back endcap! Use mismatched shelving to accommodate varying product shapes; offset important merchandise for faster turnover; or boost the cross-merchandising capabilities of shelved items!



### TIPS

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1. When displaying multiple SKUs, try merchandising vertically in strips from the top to bottom shelf, with the most important SKU strip delegated to the middle section, for more uniform exposure per SKU. This way, each SKU receives equal exposure. Conversely, if trying to establish one SKU over another, merchandise horizontally, with the prominent SKU at eye level, and the lesser ones placed either above eye level or below knee level.
2. Incorporate contrast into the endcap's design. While monochrome color schemes have become a popular design trend, tone-on-tone undermines a display that is meant to POP!

### Industrial Appeal

Wire shelves provide ventilation to protect merchandise; plus, they exude a “raw” aesthetic and are therefore popular in auto, hardware, and other applications in which minimalism is often preferred.



### Multilevel Merchandising

Intermediate uprights break up the endcap's back panel to allow for flexible shelving sections. Merchandise as needed, rather than being restricted to a standard 3' or 4' block.

## Example #7: The Triangular Endcap

Put a different angle on the traditional endcap. Unlike a regular three-way configuration, a triangular shape transitions more smoothly from one side of the endcap to the other, simultaneously targeting traffic from multiple directions. Plus, the unique structure is sure to make shoppers pause.



### TIPS

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1. Highlight wants, not needs. Customers are usually in the store because they need something, so the best impulse merchandise targets cravings.
2. Activated fixtures, or fixtures that respond in some notable way to a customer's presence (i.e. fixtures that have integrated, motion-activated voice recordings), have been proven to be more engaging than stagnant displays. Easily animate an endcap by adding motion-activated lighting, so that when a customer is in the vicinity of the display, it lights up like a beacon.

*"Consumers will spend more time in front of a lighted display than they will in front of an unlighted display." - Marion Garaus & Claus Ebster, Store Design and Visual Merchandising: Creating Store Space that Encourages Buying*



### **An Illuminated Idea**

Shelf-lighting systems brighten a display and make stronger impressions on shoppers.

### **The Clear Advantage**

Glass or clear acrylic shelves and backs diminish the fixture's presence and put greater focus on the merchandise itself. They can also make in-store marketing messages more visible. When paired with shelf lighting, the clear material allows light to filter through the entire endcap, creating a fully illuminated display.

## Example #8: The Premiere Endcap

Direct customer traffic with endcaps that tease the merchandise located along the adjacent aisle. A configuration like this allows for a multi-SKU presentation without overwhelming the customer, since no immediate decision is required. Customers are instead encouraged to interact with the merchandise, to pick it up and examine it, leading to more successful impressions.



### TIPS

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1. Some merchandise categories perform better as impulse items than others. Apparel is the strongest category, followed closely by food (including candy, snacks, and drinks).
2. Shoppers tend to walk to the right, shop to the right, and reach to the right. Therefore, endcaps closer to the front-right of the store should be reserved for the VIP merchandise.

“Encouraging touch in a retail store, as Apple does for products like the iPhone, may increase the feelings of perceived ownership and influence the amount a customer is willing to pay for a product...” Joann Peck & Suzanne B. Shu, *The Effect of Mere Touch on Perceived Ownership*





### Luminosity

Illuminated graphics stand out more than traditional print material, especially in a dim store environment or on darker fixtures.

### Display Demo

Highlight a few sample products on the endcap, while displaying a broader selection down the adjacent aisle. Slim-profile shelves with integrated tag molding create a sleek, smart platform for showcasing the hottest trends.

## Example #9: The Dynamic Endcap

Lighting and graphics work together to create an endcap that is truly *en vogue*. This configuration features shelf lighting, gravity-feed roller shelves, and sign channels designed for fast and easy graphics changes, so that updating the endcap is never a chore!



### TIPS

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1. Because endcaps receive more exposure, they also require more maintenance than the average display. Keep endcaps looking fresh by following these simple recovery steps:
  - a. Align all product packaging so that it's facing outward toward the main aisle.
  - b. Pull all items to the front to eliminate gaps.
  - c. Fill any holes with extra stock.

*"80 percent of visual impressions are packaging." - Marion Garaus & Claus Ebster, Store Design and Visual Merchandising: Creating Store Space that Encourages Buying*



### Fast Recovery

Gravity-feed shelves on an endcap help automate the recovery process as merchandise is pulled. Roller shelves are even more effective, since they utilize dozens of tiny, plastic rollers to front merchandise more uniformly, with less risk of damage to the products' packaging.

## Example #10: The Everything Endcap

This three-way endcap is an amalgamation of different components that work together to form an end-to-end, cross-merchandising solution. It can easily be turned into a more orthodox display by adding shelving over the pegboard and merchandising the outer wings over the graphics panels.



### TIPS

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1. Space shelving and accessories (especially peghooks) adequately so that customers can pick up and touch merchandise without destroying the display.
2. When trying to build a brand or product, try merchandising it at eye level to the direct right of the more popular SKU. Most customers are right-handed, so their eye movement tends to follow their arm movement.



### **Cross Merchandising 2.0**

A split back fits two different panel types into the same 4' section, giving more merchandising variety to otherwise limited real estate.

### **Innovation on Display**

A small, vertically stripped section of shelves in the very middle of the endcap creates optimum exposure for VIP merchandise.

Fortunately, endcaps provide a lot of leeway for trial and error experimentation, as well as artistic freedom. When in doubt, there is nothing wrong with a simple and well organized display; planograms and display accessories can be adjusted along the way according to what's working for one particular store versus another.

Like a car, endcaps need routine maintenance for optimum performance. Keep endcaps clean, fresh, and updated by following the three R's: Restock, Recover, and Redesign.

Lastly, just remember: The only bad endcap is a nonexistent endcap. A good endcap creates exposure; a better one makes an impression. But the best endcap is one that does both to make a sale.

The fixture experts at Madix, Inc. are available to consult with retailers and brands who wish to explore fresh, creative ideas for endcap merchandising. For more information, please contact John Clontz, Director of Marketing and e-Business: [jclontz@madixinc.com](mailto:jclontz@madixinc.com) or (214) 515-5400.



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## You might also be interested in these Madix products:



Create the look of a perfectly stocked shelf instantly with @Front, Madix's new gravity-feed, roller-shelf system. @Front replaces traditional slip-mat and spring-pusher options, giving you a more efficient, user-friendly solution for auto facing, fronting, and filling your display.



Madix's Luxe line provides custom-looking display solutions at a more effective cost. This system features patented round uprights, providing the flexibility to build the unit in four different directions. Compatible with thousands of standard, cataloged parts, Luxe offers virtually endless configuration possibilities.



This versatile sign channel can be mounted using either fixed or adjustable brackets (directly to the upright, if so desired). With adjustable brackets, the graphic panel can be installed and tilted at either a 90° or 15° angle.



## BOPIS SOLUTIONS



“Buy Online, Pick Up in Store” (“BOPIS”) is an essential strategy for brick-and-mortar retailers looking to provide the convenience of online shopping—but at a much lower cost. BOPIS cuts shipping prices for both the retailer and the customer, while at the same time luring shoppers back into physical store locations.

## # maxi grid



Maxi-mize the display capabilities of your store! Maxi Grid allows retailers to routinely change shelving configurations without wasting time or valuable merchandising space. All parts and accessories are designed for easy installation, so you can create an all-new, custom look in a matter of minutes.

## MAXI SLICE



Maxi Slice’s upright system provides interesting merchandising opportunities by breaking up a common gondola into flexible sections. Give merchandise more ‘pop’ and cross-sell products by adding shelves and accessories in smaller sections.

## LEDge LIGHT GEN 3



LEDge Light is the first LED lighting product designed specifically for use on display shelves. Environmentally friendly LEDs produce light intensity similar to T5 fluorescent fixtures, while using only half the energy and lasting nearly three times as long without replacement or maintenance.

## LEDge LIGHT VERSA



Madix's LEDge Light Versa features spring-loaded connectors for quick and easy resets. No more rewiring power cables or repositioning electrical connections! Simply unhook and reattach the shelves to the uprights, and the lights automatically turn on.

## BEAM3 LED CANOPY LIGHT



Beam Light is the ideal LED alternative to fluorescent canopy lighting. Beam Light uses environmentally friendly LEDs that produce light intensity similar to a T8 fluorescent fixture, while using only a fraction of the energy and lasting nearly three times as long without replacement or maintenance.

## Lumicanopy



With the Lumicanopy's LED lighting, illuminated signage will never be affected by hot spots from light bulbs. It's a maintenance-free solution that lasts for years and contains no harmful substances.

## Lumiback Panels



The more brilliant alternative to boring back panels! Lumibacks replace traditional back-panel materials to enhance the merchandise or to provide backlighting for large-format, in-store graphics integrated with the fixture.



Vesta's optionally equipped shelf-lighting system and clear-acrylic shelves draw attention to merchandise by allowing light to fully penetrate the fixture's surfaces. Additional options include Base Drawers and Base Display Tables for a custom-looking display.

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## Related Reading

*10 Ways to Lift Center Store Sales*

Madix, Inc.

<http://www.madixinc.com/assets/pdf/white-paper/center-store-web.pdf>

*10 Ways to Lift Front-End Sales*

Madix, Inc.

<http://www.madixinc.com/assets/pdf/white-paper/052014-frontend-web.pdf>



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