

Part 1: 1-5 Geographic Locations and Population Density

Other marketers examine the *population composition of geographical regions* in the United States. Many elderly people live in locations where there are fewer children. Some areas of the U.S. tend to have older residents, families with fewer children, and a substantial White and Asian population. The West has more families with children and more U.S. Hispanics and Asians. Thus, the visual merchandising techniques and methods in these areas are very different, since married couples with young children tend to have different product and merchandising preferences as well as different values and attitudes (i.e., psychographics) about purchasing these products and services.

A migration of the U.S. population from the Northeast and Midwest to the Sunbelt or the South and West is also occurring. Further, immigrants tend to settle more frequently in the Southern or Western U.S. These populations are younger and have children or are planning to have children in the near future. The migration of this population will call for different types of products, marketing techniques and visual presentations.

Additionally, the *population density* or number of target consumers being targeted per square mile in the geographical region is most important. The larger the concentration of target consumers in one location the more likely the retailer and visual merchandiser will have the capability of reaching those consumers.

In summary, the retailer and visual merchandiser must understand the target consumer in order to build a store image that attracts a specific target consumer segment and motivates consumers in that segment to come into the store and make a purchase. The responsibility of creating this image is a tremendous undertaking for the visual merchandiser. The visual merchandiser not only must consider the overall consumer population and shifts which evolve in that population, but also s/he must identify the demographics, psychographics, and life stages and lifestyles of that consumer. This information becomes the basis for the visual merchandiser to utilize when deciding which merchandise presentation techniques and display presentations will entice that consumer to come into the store, browse, and then make a purchase.



The visual message is very important in building a concise store image and disseminating the market message to a specific target consumer. For example, a consumer who visits an upscale specialty store has mental expectations of the store décor; the merchandise quality, price, and fashion level; and the customer service level in that store. If the store does not meet those expectations or presents moderately priced merchandise instead of trendy, high fashion product that the consumer desires, the consumer becomes confused and is annoyed. On the other hand, the consumer who purchases the moderately priced product is not attracted to the upscale specialty store because the physical cues do not differentiate it or position it as selling product that she can wear or afford. The store's image and visual presentation must effectively communicate an explicit message to the target consumer.