


VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

FIDM's Just for Educators Career Facts & Figures



Definition:

FIDM Visual Communications Chair Lyn Tobman describes her curriculum as “...a program that offers its students a diversified, creative business background in visual presentation, exhibit/trade show design, retail and special event display and store planning, with an emphasis on the fashion and entertainment industries. Students benefit from exposure to practical and theoretical visual merchandising techniques. Courses include presentation design, color theory, concept visualization, merchandise trend analysis, and computer graphics.”



“The mission of the Entertainment Set Design & Decoration program is to provide a quality professional education that will meet the needs of students entering the entertainment industry. The applied learner-centered program involves the students in creative problem-solving, best business practices, hands-on experience, special effects, set design, set decorating and model building. The curriculum stresses the importance of teamwork and effective communication.”

FashionClub.com (www.fashionclub.com) states that, “ Visual Communications is a field that combines creative talents with a savvy sense of what makes products sell. A Visual Designer creates exciting themes and displays for store windows, in-store displays, trade shows, galleries, and special events.

“Visual Merchandisers do presentations for store windows, design trade show booths and exhibit spaces, and style the mannequins and exciting props that make merchandise come to life. It is a field that deals in three-dimensional design. A Visual Merchandiser is a jack-of-all-trades...not only do they create concepts, they also use their skills as carpenters, electricians, painters and any other crafts needed to create a dynamic setting to display merchandise.”

Professional Skills, Proficiencies, and Competencies Necessary:

1. **Written Communication** – letters, memos, reports, presentations
2. **Analytical Ability** – conceptual, math, design, complex problem solving, fashion and home products merchandising
3. **Computing Ability** – software and hardware technology applications and trends, especially Photoshop and Illustrator
4. **Oral Communication** – active learning, active listening, critical thinking, public speaking
5. **Social Skills** – teamwork, motivation, negotiation, persuasion, networking
6. **Systems Skills** - judgment and decision making, visioning, multi-tasking, merchandising, concept design, branding,

7. **Resource Management Skills** - management of materials, people, and time
8. **Technical Skills** – quick sketching, event planning, brand product placement
9. **Business Practices** – knowledge of visual display techniques such as signage, lighting, props and materials, carpentry, understanding the freelance world
10. **Information Literacy/Research Skills** - focused on historic trends, current materials and concepts, fashion and entertainment trends and forecasts

Visual Communications Career Options:

Students Opportunities

Entry Level (up to 3 years)

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Sales Associate

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Field Merchandiser

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Visual Trimmer

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Merchandiser Coordinator

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Merchandiser

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Customer Service

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Department Specialist

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Costume House Associate

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Showroom Assistant

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Special Events Assistant

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Prop Designer

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Space Planner

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Sales Associate

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Trimmer

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Visual Display Assistant



Mid Level (4+ years)

Assistant Visual Manager

Personal Shopper

Visual District/Cluster Manager

Manager, Merchandise Presentation

Regional Visual Coordinator

Assistant Set Director

Prop Designer

Set Stylist

Fashion Show Coordinator

Special Events Coordinator

Wedding Coordinator

Exhibit Designer

Senior Level (10+years)

Window Director, Visual Merchandising

Store Planner

Vice President of Visual Merchandising

Director of Visual Merchandising

Art Director Stylist

Stylist: Photo, Product, Wardrobe, Film

Art Director

Visual Merchandiser



Annual Starting Salaries:

0-3 years = \$19 to \$50k+

4+ years = \$25 to \$80k

10+ years = \$55 to \$150+k

Entertainment Industries That Employ Visual Merchandisers:

The The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics *Career Guide to Industries* (www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgso31.htm) states, “...this industry includes about 115,000 establishments, ranging from art museums to fitness centers. The diverse range of activities offered by this industry can be categorized into three broad groups—live performances or events; historical, cultural, or educational exhibits; and recreation or leisure-time activities.”

- **Live Performances or events**
 - o Professional sporting events
 - o Sports facilities
 - o Commercial sports clubs
 - o Live theatrical and musical performances

- **Historical, cultural, or educational exhibits**
 - o Museums, zoos, botanical gardens
 - o Historical sites
 - o Nature parks

- **Recreation or leisure activities**
 - o Amusement parks
 - o Arcades
 - o Casinos and other gaming establishments
 - o Amusement and theme parks



Projected California Growth:

The California Employment Development Department Occupational Projections of Employment (www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov) estimate that between 2004-2014, the projected employment in the state for Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers is 14,600, or a 19.7% increase in positions.

Professional Associations for Further Information:

Institute of Store Planners - www.ispo.org

International Association of Lighting Designers - www.iald.org

National Association of Display Industries Inc. - www.nadi-global.com

National Association of Visual Merchandisers - www.visualmerch.com

National Retail Federation - www.nrf.com

Shop & Display Equipment Association - www.shopdisplay.org



Student Competitions – FIDM:

National Scholarship Competition: Six [6] one-year scholarships to attend FIDM/The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising. Scholarships are available to High School students. The deadline is April 30th of each year.

- Fashion Designer of Tomorrow
- Fashion Merchandising Executive of Tomorrow
- Graphic Designer of Tomorrow
- Interior Designer of Tomorrow
- Visual Designer of Tomorrow
- Digital Media Artist of Tomorrow

See **For Your Students** for additional student scholarship opportunities.
educators.fidm.edu/educators/student-services/fidm-scholarships.html