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# The Recharge Effect



PETER-TOLIN BAKER

VISUAL MERCHANDISING SPECIALIST

P-T B DESIGN SERVICES

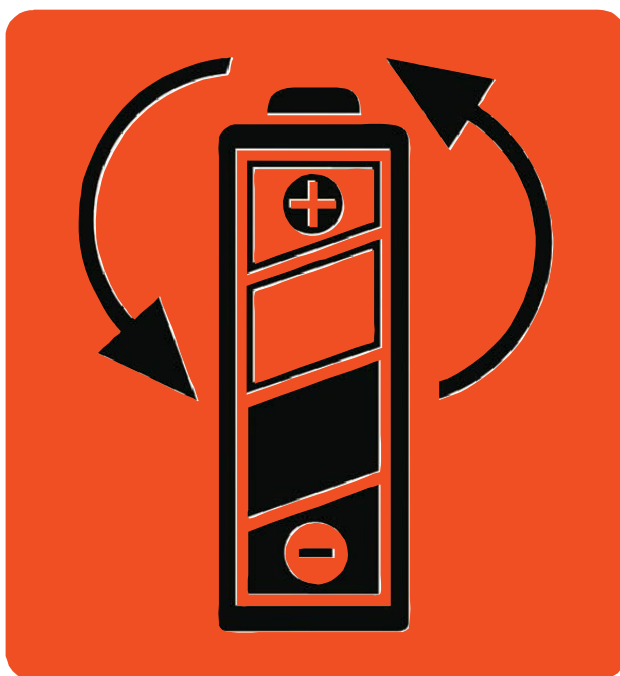
ptb@ptbdesignservices.com

I RECENTLY REPLACED MY outdated 3G BlackBerry for a new 4G Samsung Galaxy smartphone. Aside from the fact that it seems to be smarter than me at times, it required a bit of a learning curve in knowing how long I can go between charging the battery—that constant threat we all now incessantly face of ending up without enough juice to see us through a busy day between various meetings and projects. How often do you misplace your charger while needing to get critical information sent or a file updated on a smartphone or laptop, as the battery charger icon rapidly counts down the draining charge level before it suddenly shuts off and you are left staring at a blank screen?

The message here: take the time now to properly recharge and be prepared for the exciting New Year ahead. With the holiday season rapidly fading from memory, and with the slight pause or “sleep mode” of winter retail before the burst of spring, it is a great time to recharge your visual life.

As retail designers and visual merchandisers, it is part of our job to constantly keep things recharged and fresh in our retail environments. Recharging is synonymous with much of what we do on a regular basis with our store interiors and visual presentations, including the other “R”s: renew, recreate, repair, recondition, revitalize, renovate, remodel and replenish.

Fashion and retail environments have always been a vanguard of change and new technology,



and visual merchandising is a vital component to keeping things fresh and energized to enhance the customer’s experience and motivation to purchase new goods and services.

But, recharging our professional work does not just happen or come easily. It requires careful planning and motivation, as well as scheduling appropriate time and budgets to ensure any plan is fully charged and ready to be executed. Looking at the year ahead, this may include being well prepared for a store renovation or refurbishment. For others, it could be replenishing outdated display fixtures or reconditioning and repairing existing mannequins for a fresh new look. Is there a new style of

display collateral or integration of new technology that you know will help improve sales or refresh a tired section of your stores?

For others, it may be more about revitalizing your visual merchandising team. What can you do to help your team regain their energy and strength after a busy holiday season in order to work more efficiently? From a professional development point of view, consider how you might become more “plugged in” and benefit from participating in industry-related events or organizations. Will you or your team attend GlobalShop this year, or perhaps a retail design forum? Could it be simply recharging your inspiration by way of scheduling some time for market research—getting out and seeing what new stores and promotional installations are in your own local retail landscape?

Whether it is related to fixtures, store interiors or personnel, the post-holiday season is the right time to plan ahead and ensure that you and your team are recharged for the tasks at hand.

How do you plan to recharge and regain your visual merchandising energy and strength for the year ahead?

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**BASED IN NEW YORK, PETER-TOLIN BAKER IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH RETAIL DESIGN AND VISUAL MERCHANDISING VIA P-T B DESIGN SERVICES (OWNER), THE FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (ADJUNCT PROFESSOR), RETAIL DESIGN INSTITUTE NY CHAPTER (BOARD PRESIDENT), AND AS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO DESIGN:RETAIL.**