Bob Bell can’t imagine not having an operating layout in his store.

“To me, they go hand in hand,” says the owner of New England Hobby Supply Inc. in Manchester, CT.

Customers stop to see the action on the store’s O-Scale layout.

From a business standpoint, he thinks it’s imperative to provide customers with opportunities to see model trains running on the tracks. Using this concept, Bob has proven that operating layouts draw people consistently. It’s been working for him for three decades.

“You tend to get known,” says Bob. His store has become synonymous with operating layouts. People come to see the trains.

He made sure he had a layout in his store in the very beginning. Choosing an area where the layout would go was a top concern when he opened his business 30 years ago. He started out with an HO layout in the 1500 square-foot store. Today, his store is just across the street from its original location and has 25,000 square-feet devoted to hobbyists’ interests. Within that space are five operating layouts.

Many of the layouts in his store were built by and are maintained and operated by model railroad clubs. New England Hobby and Supply Inc. provided the materials for the layouts.

On the first and third Sunday of each month, all of the layouts at his store run continuously. They advertise this ongoing event in the store’s phone book ad, they put out brochures and more and more people are finding out about the store and its layouts by word of mouth.

Silk City Model Railroad Club HO-Scale layout.

“It’s the best form of advertising for us,” he says.

His store features a layout in each of the following scales: Z, N, HO, O and G. The O scale layout is the first thing customers see when they enter the store. It’s an 18’x60’ layout created by the Connecticut Society of Ferroequinologists and Model Train Engineers.

As always, we encourage you to let us know about your retail successes so we can share your experiences with other dealers. Contact us with your sales tips at robyn@mth-railing.com or fax us at (410) 381-6122, Attn: Robyn Johnson.
ASC Program Boasts Tangible Benefits

_M.T.H.-Offered Program Grows Hobby Businesses_

When it comes to trying programs that claim to grow your business, you want to feel comfortable that ultimately, they will produce benefits you can see and feel.

By becoming an Authorized Service Center through the ASC Program, you will see customers coming to your store for repairs on M.T.H. products. You’ll also feel how the extra money generated by those repairs fattens your store’s pockets, allowing you to do more with your business.

As M.T.H. keeps working hard to make quality products, we suspect that more and more hobbyists will take notice. They’ll come to your store to buy our products and they’ll return to your store when those items need service.

Before you make the decision to apply, look through this abbreviated list of benefits that come with the Authorized Service Center title:

**Customer Loyalty** — You know how it is. We live in a “me-centered” society. Customers want to know what you can do for them. Offering repair service at your store makes it more convenient for them. Convenience is good.

**Impulse Sales** — Be sure to catch a customer’s eye with attractive displays when they come in for service. If you will have a central area where you accept items for service, you could focus on advertising new arrivals to your store in that area.

**Stellar Support** — We want to make sure you have everything you need to serve your customers well. We’ll give you special discounts on parts, prompt phone support and training. M.T.H. will also look for ways to reward our top Authorized Service Centers.

**Repair Profits** — Make profits on non-warranty repairs! There is a 50% discount on non-warranty parts, allowing you to keep more of the money you make.

**MSRP Sales** — Providing warranty repairs supports your sales at full MSRP.

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**Authorized Service Center Update**

_Register Online Today!_

Missed our summer training session? No problem. There’s still time to apply to become an M.T.H. Authorized Service Center.

You don’t even have to worry about stamps. Just go online to [www.mth-railking.com/dealers](http://www.mth-railking.com/dealers) to apply or to find out more information about the ASC Program. The next training session will be held in the fall of 2001. Don’t miss it!

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continued from page 1. **Layouts = Customer Traffic**

The G-Scale layout runs the perimeter of the store just above door level.

The O scale layout gets quite a bit of use even beyond the weekend schedule, says Bob. They often use it for in-store demonstrations. When Mike Wolf, M.T.H. president visited New England Hobby Supply in May, he used their O scale layout to demonstrate the DCS Remote Control System.

Bob says they’ve continued to add to the O scale layout and have even put in some interactive features so customers can get a hands-on experience while at the store.

One of the store’s layouts is in a room all to itself. It’s a 45’x120’ HO layout maintained by the Silk City Model Railroad Club. It boasts 10,000 feet of track and is quite popular with store customers.

Bob’s G scale layout is another attention-grabber. It runs the perimeter of the store just above door level.

As long as Bob’s in the business of selling model trains, he’ll have operating layouts in his store. It’s just good business. These trains draw people to the store and get their adrenaline pumping. At the mere mention of not having operating layouts in his store, Bob laughs.

How could you run a model train store without them?

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**CANCELLATIONS FROM M.T.H.’s 2001 VOLUME II CATALOG**

The following items from M.T.H.'s 2001 Volume II catalog have been cancelled:

**Tinplate Locomotive:**
- 400AE Articulated Steam Engine (Item No. 10-1165-1 and 10-1166-1)

**Railking Accessories:**
- Electric Substation (Item No. 30-9062)
- #800 Crossing Gate (Item No. 30-9118)

We regret these changes and apologize for any confusion this may cause the dealers and customers who ordered these items.
NYC 4-8-4 Niagara Steam Engine

A testament to the unduplicated style and motive power of the famed New York Central, the 4-8-4 Niagara steam engine was the water-level route version of the popular 4-8-4 Northern steam engine. It was fast, powerful and flexible – a winning combination for any mainline.

Niagaras were put through heavy road testing. Some traveled as many as 25,000 miles a month! These engines were the last of NYC’s steamers and represented the pinnacle of steam technology in their day. Order this hard-working Premier steamer, which features Proto-Sound® 2.0, today!

FORMING HABITS
Stocking Books and Magazines Keeps Customers Coming Back

For some railfans, there's nothing better than having a plethora of books about their favorite railroad or prototype at their fingertips. Do you sell them? What about newcomers to the model train world? Do you have any books to keep them motivated or teach them how to build a layout? Get them.

Remember to:
- Ask customers what magazines they want
- Listen to those requests
- Advertise that you sell the popular magazines

Additionally, some die-hard fans of a particular railroad or hobby-based magazine will not buy a subscription. They'd rather make a journey to buy the magazine. If you have it, they will come - with each new issue. With a monthly magazine, that customer could make at least twelve trips to your store a year! So, feed their mag habit. Just think of the opportunities for impulse sales!

Books and Magazines: Where, Why, How?
- Be sure to display books and magazines close to the checkout area. Why? Because while people are waiting in line, they can't help but look at the contents of a magazine rack or bookshelf.
- Display these items face out - no one wants to look at a magazine spine or book binding. Magazines and picture books, with their attractive covers, beg to be picked up. If they get picked up, they will sell themselves.
- The purchased item reminds the customer of your store and reinforces the wonder of trains. Magazine ads will remind them of the variety of products model railroading has to offer - products you sell in your store. Get the picture?

2001 SHOW SCHEDULE

July 13-15
NMRA
St. Louis, MO

August 3 & 4
LOTS National Convention
Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD

September 1-3
Rail Expo
Scranton, PA

September 6-9
RCHTA
Rosemont, IL

October 19 & 20
York Meet
York, PA

TCA Members Only

M.T.H. is looking forward to seeing all of you somewhere along the way this year! Call your M.T.H. representative for more information.
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