

# BRING THE VISION TO LIFE:

## WHY MOST DEALERS SHOULD BUILD AN OUTDOOR SHOWROOM

BY DAVE ANDERSON

In today's hearth and outdoor living market, customers want more than pictures in a catalog. They want to see, touch, and feel the products before they make a major investment. Brochures can showcase specs, and websites can provide dimensions, but neither creates the emotional impact of standing in front of a glowing fire table or leaning on the counter of a fully built outdoor kitchen.

For dealers, this reality presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is that outdoor projects can be difficult to sell when the only sales tool is a brochure. The opportunity is that by building an actual outdoor showroom, you create an immersive environment where customers can see their vision come to life—and you position your business for year-round growth.

### The Power of Experience

Customers don't just buy products—they buy *experiences*. When homeowners see flames dancing in a fire table, feel the warmth of an overhead heater, or smell a steak sizzling on a high-end grill, they're imagining themselves in that moment. That emotional connection is what closes sales.

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This is why car dealerships encourage test drives, why furniture stores stage full living rooms, and why outdoor dealers should create working outdoor showrooms. People buy with their senses, not just their spreadsheets. A fully functional display shortens the sales cycle and creates confidence that no catalog page can match.

## THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN OUTDOOR SHOWROOM

A great outdoor showroom isn't about quantity—it's about creating a complete, believable outdoor living environment. Here are the foundational pieces every dealer should consider:

- **Outdoor Fireplace as the Anchor:** Start with a centerpiece like the Urbana U44 Outdoor or a 60" Empire Aspen zero-clearance outdoor fireplace with gas logs. It creates an immediate sense of comfort and draws customers into the space. A working fireplace sets the tone and shows that outdoor living doesn't end when the sun goes down.
- **Overhead Heating for Comfort:** Add Infratech heaters overhead to demonstrate how an outdoor area can be extended into cooler evenings and shoulder seasons. Many homeowners don't realize how effective these heaters can be until they experience the warmth for themselves.
- **Fire Features for Visual Wow Factor:** Integrate products like Halo, Warming Trends burners, or American Fire Designs fire tables. These pieces create ambiance, add flexibility in design, and show customers how fire can be more than just functional—it can be art.
- **Outdoor Kitchen Structure:** Showcase a Graysen outdoor kitchen island or structure as the backbone of the space. When customers see a full kitchen layout in front of them, they realize they're not just buying a grill—they're investing in a lifestyle upgrade.
- **Appliances and Accessories:** Load the island with Fire Magic or AOG equipment—a top-tier grill, a griddle for versatility, a power burner, or a pizza oven—and storage solutions like doors and drawers. This completes the picture and gives customers a sense of what's possible in their own backyards.

By bringing these elements together, you create a space that feels real, usable, and aspirational. Instead of imagining what the project might look like, customers get to walk through it.

### The Outdoor Showroom Advantage

Brochures and websites have their place; they're great for showing product variety and specifications. But when it comes to selling complete projects, they fall short in the following ways.

- **Emotional Connection:** No image can replicate the feeling of standing in front of a fire feature.
- **Scale and Proportion:** Customers often struggle to visualize size from paper. In a showroom, they immediately understand how products will fit their space.
- **Design Confidence:** Seeing finishes, textures, and materials together reassures customers they're making the right choice.
- **Upselling Opportunities:** A customer who comes in for a grill might walk out wanting heaters, structures, and a fire table once they see the full setup.

Simply put, brochures *show* products, but showrooms *sell* projects.

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## Off-Season Opportunities

One of the biggest advantages of an outdoor showroom is how it drives revenue outside the peak fireplace season.

- **Year-Round Relevance:** Outdoor kitchens, heaters, and fire tables appeal in spring, summer, and fall. Even in winter, they keep the conversation going with builders and designers.
- **Staff Training:** Showrooms become live classrooms where staff can demonstrate, learn, and practice selling.
- **Events and Demos:** Dealers can host cooking demonstrations, open houses, or builder nights in the showroom, creating reasons for customers to visit even in slow months.
- **Marketing Content:** A functional outdoor display provides endless material for social media, advertising, and website photography. Customers love seeing real, local examples.

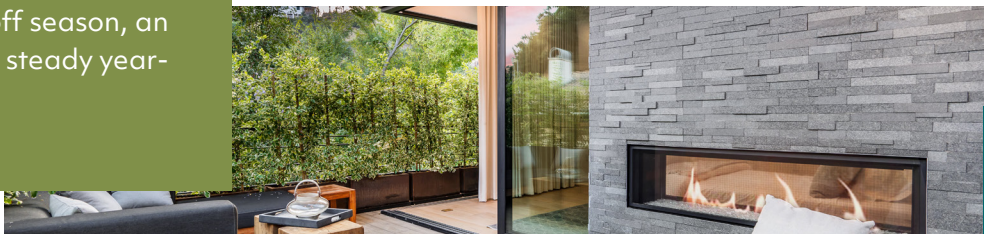
Instead of watching sales dip in the off season, an outdoor showroom keeps momentum steady year-round.

## A Dealer's Success Story

Consider a dealer who added an outdoor display featuring a fireplace, heaters, a fire table, and a full kitchen island. Before the display, most outdoor sales were limited to standalone grills or fire pits. Once the showroom was built, customers began buying complete packages. The difference was night and day.

One customer, who initially planned to purchase a single grill, ended up investing in a full outdoor kitchen after experiencing the showroom. "When I saw it all together, I knew that's what I wanted in my backyard," the homeowner said. "The pictures just didn't do it justice."

That one sale paid for a large portion of the showroom build—and the dealer went on to replicate the success with similar projects.



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## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Building an outdoor showroom is an investment, but a smart one. Here are a few keys to ensure success:

- **Keep It Functional:** Fire tables should be lit, heaters should be turned on, and grills should be ready to cook. Dead displays don't sell.
- **Design for Flow:** Arrange products the way customers might use them at home. This creates a natural walkthrough experience.
- **Update Regularly:** Rotate in new products and seasonal displays to keep the showroom fresh.
- **Host Events:** A showroom is more than a display—it's a stage. Use it for demos, tastings, or builder nights.

In short, the more intentional your showroom feels, the more confidence it creates—and confidence closes sales.

## Start Building Today

As outdoor living continues to grow, dealers can no longer rely on brochures and spec sheets alone. Customers want to experience products before they buy, and the best way to deliver that experience is through a fully built outdoor showroom.

Anchored by a fireplace, warmed with overhead heaters, accented with fire features, and completed with a fully loaded kitchen island, an outdoor showroom tells a story no brochure can. It transforms products into possibilities and possibilities into projects.

For dealers looking to capture business in the off season, build trust with homeowners, and stand apart from competitors, an outdoor showroom isn't just a display—it's an investment in future

growth. In this market, those who create spaces that customers can walk through will be the ones who walk away with the sale.

So if you want to maximize sales this spring, now is the time to start building your outdoor showroom area. Waiting until the season is already underway means missed opportunities. By sketching out your layout now, working with your distributor rep, and partnering with manufacturers on display programs, you'll be positioned to capture business as soon as the demand ramps up. The season will be here before you know it, and preparation today ensures you'll be ready to showcase, sell, and succeed when customers start planning their outdoor projects.

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