

Build a seed assortment around customer decisions

A seed assortment becomes easier to shop when each item helps a customer answer a recognisable question. Beginners may need a manageable first crop, while experienced gardeners may look for an unusual colour or a particular harvest use. For resellers, the challenge is to make these differences visible without creating an overcrowded shelf. A practical starting point is therefore a map of buying decisions rather than an alphabetical product list. The process below helps teams assign commercial roles, organise precise product information, plan display space and use the first season to improve future decisions.

Give each seed a clear commercial role

Divide the proposed range into dependable core lines, useful alternatives and small experiments. These are roles within the business, not claims about the seed itself. A familiar crop can anchor the assortment, while a contrasting form gives shoppers a reason to compare. Each experiment should answer a defined question, such as whether customers want more container options or a wider choice of flower colours. Record the intended role beside every candidate before deciding quantities. If two entries serve the same shopper at the same price position without a clear, explainable distinction, they may compete for the same attention. An empty part of the matrix can also reveal a genuine gap in the range.

Keep product identity separate from sales language

Maintain botanical name, cultivar designation and supplier article reference in the purchasing file. Put customer-facing descriptions in a separate field so that a friendly shelf label does not replace the precise information needed for repeat ordering. Common names can refer to several species, and a mixture is a different proposition from a named single variety, even when display photographs look similar. Useful comparison fields include intended garden use, documented plant habit, colour and whether the article is a mixture. Leave a field blank when evidence is unavailable. An unresolved cell is a prompt to ask a question; an assumption can lead to inaccurate labels that are difficult to correct after packing.

Plan the shopping space before completing the order

Allocate display positions before filling the order sheet. A compact range with a clear sequence can be more helpful than a crowded rack of nearly interchangeable names. In an online shop, the equivalent task is to plan filters and category placement. Test whether shoppers can locate the appropriate section using everyday language and compare individual entries without opening every product page. Estimate demand from your own sales history where available. For a new line, establish a trial quantity and review date instead of presenting a forecast as certainty. Include packaging work, storage capacity and the time required to produce accurate descriptions, because these constraints determine how much of the assortment the team can support properly.

Use the first season as evidence

Record the questions customers ask, the items they compare and the reasons staff suggest an alternative. These observations provide context that a sales total alone cannot. A slow-moving line might be described poorly, placed in the wrong category or genuinely unsuitable for the audience, and each possibility requires a different response. At review time, keep the original purchasing matrix beside the sales results. Retain items that fulfil their intended role, revise confusing descriptions and remove experiments that produced little useful demand. A strong assortment is therefore a working selection that develops with evidence: every new item should earn its place by making a customer decision easier.

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