Kevin Brailsford  
Vice-President, Store Environment at Blockbuster, Inc

“Creating an appealing environment in our video stores is really a challenge. First, our merchandise all looks alike – small boxes with the Blockbuster blue logo. Then the arrangement of the merchandise is constrained to an alphabetical organization. We have experimented with setting up different themed boutiques in the store like a horror department. But we found that most customers either come in the store for a new release or want to wander around. They typically don’t have a specific movie genre in mind when they come to the store.

Our prime real estate in the store is the back wall, while the prime real estate for most retailers is the front of the store. Many of our customers go directly to where the new releases. One of my design objectives was to put up roadblocks that would divert customers from focusing on new releases to areas of the store where we rent older films and sell DVD’s. Now that we have arrangements with the film distributors to get more copies of the hot titles, refocusing the attention to our other offerings is less important.

I have always been attracted to retailing. I was a mall rat when I was a teenager. After college, I took a job at Diamonds department store and was intrigued with the way merchandising of a department can affect sales. The exciting part of retailing is the constant change. It seems like everyday there is a new challenge. For example, we are now addressing the shift in interest from renting to buying DVDs. Pricing was not an issue with rentals. Most customers don’t consider the rental price, but they are much more aware of price when buying DVDs. We are working on how to display price and organize titles by price points in the store.

While retailing is exciting, there is an extra layer added by working for Blockbuster. I am not just designing our stores to increase sales and rentals, I am merchandising movie stars.”