

Unit-3: Careers in Retailing

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of malls, supermarkets and other new retail formats is creating a need for professionally trained human resource. The malls are growing not only in metro cities but also in smaller towns. The total number of people employed in retail sectors is doubling almost every year. The career opportunities in the retail sector are very large. The various opportunities in retail industry are in the areas such as inventory management, supply chain management, sales and marketing, public relations, human resource management, etc. Some of the areas which are becoming very popular include- technology in retailing, supply chain management, business development, marketing, product development and research. Under such circumstances it is but natural that education and training is getting due importance and the demand of professionals in the retail qualifications are increasing considerably on a year to year basis.



Food and beverages, electronics and apparels are few of the segments in the retail industry that are experiencing higher growth. Some of the typical jobs available in the retail industry include the following:

- ☆ Store Manager
- ☆ Assistant Store Managers
- ☆ Sales Executives
- ☆ Retail Bagger
- ☆ Junior Merchandiser
- ☆ Visual Merchandisers
- ☆ Supply Chain Distributors
- ☆ Retail Buyers and Merchandisers
- ☆ Customer Service Associate
- ☆ Retail Sales Associate
- ☆ Merchandiser
- ☆ Marketing Executive
- ☆ Management Trainees

- ☆ Logistics and Warehouse Managers
- ☆ Inventory Monitoring Officer
- ☆ Department Managers

Some of the areas with employment potential in retail jobs are as follows:

- ☆ Warehouse
- ☆ Tours and Travels
- ☆ Shopping Malls
- ☆ Restaurants
- ☆ Provision Stores
- ☆ Multiplexes
- ☆ Insurance Companies
- ☆ Cafes
- ☆ Book Shops
- ☆ Airlines
- ☆ Advertising Agencies

This *unit deals with the entry level and managerial jobs available in an organized retail store* and describes the basic responsibilities and activities. It will help you to develop a perception about the nature of occupational activities in the retail sector and to match your interests and skills with the different career options.

SESSION-1

ENTRY LEVEL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Relevant Knowledge

A retailer owes his/her success to their frontline staff, which can also be said to be the face of the company. Trained professional are now being hired at various positions at an entry level in the Retail industry for the success of the retail organizations. Some of the entry level positions in the retail industry are discussed as below:

Customer Service Associate

To be a Customer Service Associate, one should have good knowledge about the products, the shop, the customers, etc. Knowledge and skills that a Customer Service Associate should possess include the following:

- ☆ Good communication skills



- ☆ In depth knowledge of store offerings.
- ☆ Knowledge of product features such as brand options, features and benefits of the products, use/application, shelf life/use by dates, care and handling, storage requirements, product/ingredient/material safety features, price and warranty, etc.
- ☆ Knowledge of current sales promotion schemes of the company and ability to communicate the same to the customers.
- ☆ Ability to describe merchandise and explain use, operation, and care of merchandise to customers.
- ☆ Ability to promote and sell i.e., selling skills.
- ☆ Knowledge about the merchandise and inventory to help customers find the desired merchandise which is not on display.
- ☆ Ability to watch out for security risks and thefts, and know how to prevent or handle these situations.
- ☆ Ability to understand product information, store policies and procedures
- ☆ Ability to guide the customers to the relevant sections of the store.
- ☆ Knowledge of policies regarding exchanges.

Store Demonstrator

Store Demonstrator in department stores, supermarkets and other retail businesses works for introducing products (which may be new to the market or on promotion) to customers to help increase sales. He/she demonstrates a wide range of different products including food and beverages, domestic appliances, kitchen gadgets, home care products, personal care & beauty products, tools, home improvement products and toys. The typical duties of a store demonstrator includes:

- ☆ Setting up a counter or canopy where a promotion takes place
- ☆ Arranging stock, posters and other publicity material to attract customers
- ☆ Demonstrating how to use a product
- ☆ Explaining the benefits of a product and answering questions about it.
- ☆ Handing leaflets, brochures, coupons and free samples
- ☆ Talking to individual passers-by, or using a microphone to catch the attention of groups of people
- ☆ Monitoring stock levels
- ☆ Keeping sales records

Retail Bagger

A Retail Bagger is responsible for packaging customer's purchases so that they can be transported safely and conveniently between the store and the customer's home. He/she needs to interact with customers using eye contact, a smile, and polite conversation. A retail store employs Retail Baggers solely for the purpose of improving their customers' purchase experience at the point of sale. Baggers bring friendliness and care to a retail store's shopping experience. **Main duties of a Bagger**

- ☆ Helping the cashier is the main duty of a bagger.
- ☆ Baggers usually work directly with cashiers at the same counter.
- ☆ The cashier prepares the bill and the Bagger packs the goods, ready to be handed over to the customer. Therefore store baggers must be fast and organized.
- ☆ The employee should confirm with customers that the products and supplies being packed, wrapped and billed exactly match their selections.

This will save both the trouble of return and exchange of goods due to incorrect packing.

- ☆ Furthermore a Bagger's duty also requires him to return any items left at the sales counter by customers to its proper place in the store.
- ☆ This helps the Bagger understand the store layout better and also increases his knowledge about products which is invaluable while guiding customers.

Junior Merchandiser

Merchandisers select and purchase goods for a company. These goods are then put for sale after reviewing data, customer opinion and price comparisons. Junior/Assistant merchandisers assist the lead merchandiser in creating and maintaining a successful business strategy.

The following are the main duties of a Junior Merchandiser

- ☆ Organize the display of products at the store.
- ☆ A Junior Merchandiser works with existing suppliers to achieve deadlines.
- ☆ Check the quality and shelf life of products,
- ☆ Place specific products in the correct display areas
- ☆ Rotation and display of stocks.
- ☆ Communicate effectively with Customers, Buyers, and internal team.
- ☆ Completing regular sales reporting, liaising with stores, forecasting and planning stock.
- ☆ A good sense of design, style and colour.
- ☆ Creativity and imagination.



- ☆ Knowledge of IT, for computer aided design work
- ☆ Attention to detail.
- ☆ Ability to work to deadlines.
- ☆ Stamina and fitness.
- ☆ Good communication skills.
- ☆ Ability to work well as part of a team and also alone.

Retail Sales Associate

Retail Sales Associates are responsible for providing an exceptional shopping experience for every customer and in assisting the Store Manager with the daily operations and objectives of the Store. This job requires a blend of good communication skills, strong communications, and immense dedication.

Duties and Responsibilities

- ☆ Follow standard operating procedures and complete all tasks as assigned by the Store Manager
- ☆ Maintain cleanliness of the store and replenish merchandise as it is sold
- ☆ Educate self on new product features and benefits if not part of sales training
- ☆ Acknowledge all customers and be attentive
- ☆ Interact with customers by assisting them in locating and demonstrating products
- ☆ Update customers about features and benefits where applicable, and by offering suggestions and alternatives
- ☆ Strategize with Store Manager to meet sales targets

SESSION-1

ENTRY LEVEL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Exercise

Case based problem

Scenario-1

You are a customer service associate and Mr. X comes to you and complains about the damaged toy which he bought from the store where you work. He discovered that the toy was damaged when he opened the pack at home. How would you handle the complaint of Mr. X? You will (tick the most appropriate answer from the options given below)

- 1) Offer to change the toy with another one, keeping in the company's exchange policy
- 2) Immediately arrange for the refund of the money

- 3) Ask Mr. X to meet the manager
- 4) Ignore the complaint and continue doing your work.

Scenario-2

You notice that your colleague is arguing with the customer and responding rudely to the queries of the customer. What will you do? You will (tick the most appropriate answer from the options given below)

- 1) Tell him that being rude is probably going to be bad for him in the long run
- 2) Tell him that such a behaviour will spoil the reputation of the retail store
- 3) Ask him to leave and handle the irate customer politely and set an example of how to deal with customers
- 4) Immediately report to the assistant store manager about the misbehavior of your colleague

SESSION-1

ENTRY LEVEL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Assessment

Fill in the Blanks

1. A retailer owes his/her success to their _____ staff.
2. A Customer Sales Associate should have the knowledge of current sales _____ schemes
3. A Customer Sales Associate should have good knowledge about the features of the _____.
4. A Customer Sales Associate should have the knowledge of store _____ and procedure regarding exchanges.
5. A Stock and Inventory Associate provides the support that makes merchandising and inventory _____ possible.
6. A Store Demonstrator demonstrates how to use a _____.
7. The job of a _____ requires a blend of skill, strong communications, and immense dedication.

SESSION-1

ENTRY LEVEL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Checklist of Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you've met all the requirements for assessment activity.

Part-A



- a) Differentiated between Customer Sales Associate and Stock and Inventory Associate.

Part-B

Discussed in class the following:

- a) What are the roles and functions of Customer Sales Associate?
b) What are the roles and functions of Stock Inventory Associate?

Performance standards

The performance standard covered by the assessment includes the following, but not limited to:

Performance standards	Yes	No
List 3 departments within a retail organisation		
List 2 jobs within a retail organisation		

SESSION-2

MANAGERIAL JOBS IN 'RETAIL OPERATIONS' AND 'CUSTOMER SERVICE'

Relevant Knowledge

Retail Sales and customer service are the part of front end operations in retail. There are a lot of people involved in the Retail Industry ranging from trolley pusher, sales assistant to the Director of Operations.

Managerial Jobs

Management level jobs most often involve the supervision of entry level and front line employees. Let us look at some of them to understand the typical role and responsibilities of the person at that position.



Store Manager

Store managers are responsible for the successful execution of all aspects of a retail store operation. Employee supervision, merchandising, marketing execution, inventory management, and budget control are the ways in which a store manager ensures the profitability of a retail outlet. The function of the store manager is to oversee the daily operations of a retail store. He/she works towards meeting sales targets and customer satisfaction standards by maximizing the customer's experience. He/she manages store operations to ensure maximum sales and profitability. He/she oversees key business activities such as store presentation, marketing execution, inventory management, loss prevention, payroll management, risk management, and daily operational cost control.

Assistant Store Manager

Assistant managers plan, organize, delegate, and work alongside the store manager to ensure that the store is operationally functional and efficient. The function of the assistant store manager is to support the manager in the daily operations of a retail store. The assistant store manager ensures that the store personnel are providing exceptional customer service. This includes answering questions and assisting with product selection, purchases, and returns. Assistant store managers help ensure the store is clean, well organized, and properly merchandised. It is also the assistant's responsibility to make sure all store policies, procedures, and controls are followed, as well as planning, organizing, and delegating work among staff.

Customer Services Manager

As a customer services manager, it would be your job to make sure that customers' needs and expectations are satisfied. You could be responsible for anything from managing a customer service team and dealing with enquiries in person, to developing customer service standards for a large company. The typical duties of a customer services manager include:

- ☆ Helping to develop or update customer service policies and procedures
- ☆ Managing or leading a team of customer services staff
- ☆ Handling enquiries from customers
- ☆ Handling complaints from customers
- ☆ Advising customers on the organisation's products.
- ☆ Investigating and solving customer problems escalated from other customer service staff
- ☆ Liaising with customers regarding an unexpected event, such as a security issue, a recall, or a customer being taken ill
- ☆ Authorising refunds or other compensation to customers
- ☆ Ensuring accurate records are kept of communications with customers
- ☆ Analysing key metrics to determine how well customers are being served
- ☆ Meeting with management to report on customer service and discuss improvements
- ☆ Preparing or writing information for customers
- ☆ Developing or improving feedback or complaints procedures
- ☆ Helping to recruit, train and appraise new staff
- ☆ Keeping up to date with the company's products
- ☆ Keeping up to date with developments in customer service best practice e.g. by reading journals, attending meetings and courses and any changes in relevant legislation.



Risk Manager

A risk manager will access the current market and project trends, and evaluates the retailer's monetary risk in terms of credit, market risk and operational risk in order to ensure that a retailer's investments are being monitored effectively.

Management Trainee

Management trainee receives the company-specific training and on-the-job experience, which they need to assume a position as a retail store manager. As a management trainee you learn supervisory and technical skills that are in alignment with the company's operational strategies. In this position you will work as an apprentice under store manager, and you will gain the knowledge and skills to become an assistant store manager.

SESSION-2

MANAGERIAL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Exercise

You are Store Manager of ABC Company. You have been asked by the owner of the store to quickly do something about developing rapport with the customers? What will you do to develop a quick rapport with customers? You will (tick the most appropriate answer from the options given below)

- 1) Send short messages on the mobile to attract customers to the retail store.
- 2) Ask your subordinates to stand outside the store and invite people to the store.
- 3) Train your subordinates in providing better customer service.
- 4) Develop a plan to attract customers to the store.

You are an Assistant Store Manager of XYZ Company and the Store Manager asks you to handle an employee who is always late in reporting to the duty. What will you do? (tick the most appropriate answer from the options given below)

- 1) Take necessary action to terminate the services of the employee.
- 2) Listen to the grievance of the employee and advice not to come late.
- 3) Listen to the grievance of the employee and try to solve his/her problem so that he/she is not late in future
- 4) Insult the employee before other employees by telling him/her that he/she is always late and this attitude will not be tolerated.

SESSION-2

MANAGERIAL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Assessment

1. Retail Sales and customer service are the part of _____ (front/back) end operations in retail.
2. The _____ of operations is the top most position at the store in the hierarchical chain of retail jobs.
3. Management level jobs most often involve the _____ of entry level and front line employees.
4. Employee supervision, merchandising, marketing execution, inventory management, and budget control are the ways in which a _____ manager ensures the profitability of a retail outlet.
5. The function of the _____ manager is to oversee the daily operations of a retail store.
6. The function of the _____ store manager is to support the manager in the daily operations of a retail store.
7. Helping to develop or update customer service policies and procedures is the responsibility of _____ Services Manager.
8. Management trainee receives the company-specific training and _____ experience to assume a position as a retail store manager.

SESSION-2

MANAGERIAL JOBS IN RETAIL OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Checklist of Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you've met all the requirements for assessment activity.

Part-A

- a) Differentiated between the role of store manager and assistant store manager.

Part-B

Discussed in class the following:

- a) What are the role and functions of a store manager?
- b) What are the role and functions of a customer services manager?

Performance standards

The performance standard covered by the assessment includes the following, but not limited to:

Performance standards	Yes	No
List 3 departments within a retail organisation		
List 2 jobs and their role and responsibilities within a retail organisation		

SESSION-3

JOBS IN MERCHANDISING

Relevant Knowledge

Another attractive opportunity is that of **merchandising**, which is mainly concerned with purchase of goods that are offered for sale in the store. This requires knowledge about supply chain, and understanding of accounting. Merchandising is not just about displaying products on windows. It has a major role during promotional activities of a product, or launch of a new brand. It helps to show to the customer new arrivals inside the store, the range of merchandise, the arrival of a new trend and the price of the product. It also helps in announcing the arrival of new seasonal and occasional products.

Visual merchandising starts with the store building and design. The store is designed to reflect the products that the store is going to sell. The displays should be attractive, educate and appeal to the visual sensory elements of the customers, creates desire and finally augments the selling process. Use of display posters, signage, brochures and leaflets are effective merchandising techniques, but the retailer should be aware of the policies and compliances with regard to size and materials.

Merchandising Manager

A Merchandising Manager is responsible for purchase and selection of the entire range of merchandise. The manager decides the pricing and coordinates with distribution/Supply Chain Management (SCM) department for timely delivery of merchandise.

Logistic Manager

The responsibility is of receiving and dispatching the goods with proper documents.

Visual Merchandisers

Visual Merchandisers give the brand a face, so they hold one of the very important positions in the industry. Being a part of concept and design they could also be a technical designer, product developer and store planner. They use the concepts and principles of visual merchandising in their stores to make the merchandise more attractive and desirable to a customer.

Retail Sales Merchandiser

A Retail Sales Merchandiser is the connector between a manufacturer who makes products and the retailer who sells those products. By providing execution, education, promotions, and reporting support, the retail sales merchandiser helps maximize sales and increase sales volume which benefits both the retailer and the manufacturer.

Rather than working for one particular retail company, a retail sales merchandiser is employed by a manufacturer of products to interface with a number of different retail outlets that carry the manufacturer's merchandise. After a sales contract has been created, it is the responsibility of the retail sales merchandiser to provide service and maintain a good working relationship with retailers. The goal of retail sales merchandisers is to help both the retailer and the manufacturer maximize sales and increase sales volume. This goal is accomplished through execution, education, and promotion.

As a retail sales merchandiser, you will be ensuring that a proper level of stock is maintained, and that the merchandise is displayed appropriately with proper signage and favorable shelf placement. This includes setup, Plano gram execution, stocking, fronting, facing, and rotating of the manufacturer's products.

Typical duties of a Retail Sales Merchandiser include:

- ★ monitoring stock movements and analyzing sales figures, forecast future sales and stock requirements
- ★ promoting special offers, publicity and sales.
- ★ reducing slower selling lines
- ★ forecasting future sales and profit margins, generally using computer modeling software.
- ★ planning budgets and presenting sales forecasts to managers
- ★ negotiating prices and orders with suppliers, and agreeing delivery terms
- ★ tracking the delivery of stock, ensuring goods arrive on time and meet quality standards
- ★ monitoring product sales activities and adjusting stock levels
- ★ setting prices and sales targets for individual stores
- ★ communicating special offers and marketing initiatives to retailers
- ★ helping visual merchandisers to plan store layouts to promote key lines
- ★ visiting suppliers and stores to see how products are selling
- ★ gathering information relating to customer reaction to products
- ★ accompanying buyers on visits to manufacturers to appreciate production processes.
- ★ identifying production and supply difficulties and dealing with them as and when they occur
- ★ controlling stock levels based on forecasts for the season



SESSION-3

JOB IN MERCHANDISING

Exercise

Activity-1

Imagine you are Visual Merchandiser of Banta-Santa Retail Store. The festival of “Diwali” is approaching and you have been asked by the Store Manager to prepare a visual display using cut outs of “Diyas” and “Crackers” to decorate the window of the store.

Plan the display, considering the theme i.e. Diwali and the budget. You may even sketch your display on paper. Gather your visual display tool box, the merchandise and make sure that all materials and tables are clean. Your visual display tool box may include the following:

1. Scissors,
2. Stapler
3. Two-Sided Tape
4. Pins
5. Hot glue sticks and glue gun
6. Tape Measure
7. Utility Knife/ Paper cutter
8. Hammer, Nails, Screwdriver, Screws
9. Notepad, Pencil, Permanent Marker
10. Paper Towels
11. Cello tape
12. Colour pen/pencils



Activity-2

Visit 5 retail stores near your home and compare how they have displayed their products. Based on your observation, answer the following questions:

1. How space is being used to display goods in different types of retail outlets.

	Space Utilization is			
Name of Store	Excellent	Good	Fair	Bad

2. Describe how 2 retail outlets have used display techniques to encourage customers to purchase goods.

Retail Outlet 1:

Retail Outlet 2:



SESSION-3

JOBS IN MERCHANDISING

Assessment

Fill in the Blanks

1. Merchandising is mainly concerned with _____ of goods that are offered for sale in the store.
2. Merchandising requires knowledge about _____ chain, and understanding of accounting.
3. Merchandising has a major role during _____ activities of a product, or launch of a new brand.
4. A Merchandising Manager is responsible for selection and _____ of the entire range of merchandise.
5. SCM stands for _____ Chain Management.
6. A _____ merchandiser make the merchandise more attractive and desirable to a customer.
7. A Retail Sales Merchandiser help _____ merchandisers to plan store layouts to promote key lines.
8. Logistic Manager is responsible for receiving and _____ the goods with proper documents.

SESSION 3

JOBS IN MERCHANDISING

Checklist of Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you've met all the requirements for assessment activity.

Part-A

- a) Differentiated between the role and responsibilities of a Visual Merchandiser and a Retail Sales Merchandiser.

Part-B

Discussed in class the following:

- a) What are the role and responsibilities of Merchandising Manager?
- b) What are the role and responsibilities of Visual Merchandiser?
- c) What are the role and responsibilities of Retail Sales Merchandiser?

Performance standards

The performance standard covered by the assessment includes the following, but not limited to:

Performance standards	Yes	No
List 3 role and responsibilities of a Visual Merchandiser		
List 5 role and responsibilities of Retail Sales Merchandiser		

SESSION-4

JOBS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Relevant Knowledge



You might have heard about manpower and manpower planning. Let us first try to understand the difference between the manpower planning and human resource management. Manpower planning, which is a traditional function of a human resources department involves use of procedure or tool for forecasting the number of workers a company will need in future years. The manpower plan represents a response by the personnel function to ensure that the necessary supply of people is forthcoming to allow the targets to be met. Human Resource Management (HRM) on the other hand is the

function within an organization that focuses on recruitment of, management of, and providing direction for the people who work in the organization. Human Resource Management can also be performed by line managers.

There are a whole range of functions which the Human Resource (HR) Department of the retail stores involved. The HR Department performs the functions related to staff planning and recruitment, liaison with other organizations, keeping the managerial level personnel updated with the changes in policies and laws, staff training and development, career development of employees, payroll, administration, providing records and details of the employees to other departments, staff retention, dealing with grievances, etc.

HR Manager

The HR Manager performs the functions related to recruitment and training of employees. He/she is responsible for the development of organizational policies, suggesting qualifications and skills sets for recruitment, hiring people, transferring employees, employee training, administration, welfare and compensation. The HR manager is involved in developing employment descriptions, preparing job advertisements, reading through Curriculum Vitae, devising application forms and then short listing, interviewing and selecting new members of staff. He/she is main interface between the employees and the owner of the retail store.

SESSION-4

JOBS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Exercise

1. Imagine you are a Human Resource Manager and an employee Mr. X comes to you with a complaint of bullying by another employee Mr. Y. He states that he is being harassed everyday and is not able to concentrate on his work. What will you do in such a situation? You will (tick the most appropriate option from the choices given below)
 - a) Advice Mr. X to leave the job and look for some other job.
 - b) Call Mr. Y and scold him in front of Mr. X and warn him of dire consequences.
 - c) Call Mr. Y and listen to his point of view and resolve the conflict between them.
 - d) Report the matter to higher authorities and seek the termination of services of Mr. Y.
2. Visit a Retail Store and talk to the HR Manager. Ask him questions related to his role in resolving conflicts between employees and describe the actions that he/she usually take for resolving the conflicts between employees.



SESSION-4

JOBS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Assessment

Fill in the Blanks

1. The Human Resource Department performs the functions related to _____ planning and recruitment
2. It is the responsibility of the _____ Department to deal with grievances of employees.
3. The Human Resource _____ performs the functions related to recruitment and training of employees.
4. The HR Manager suggests _____ and skills sets for recruitment of people.
5. The HR Manager is the main interface between them _____ and the owner of the retail store.

SESSION-4

JOBS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Checklist of Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you've met all the requirements for assessment activity.

Part-A

- a) Differentiated between manpower and human resource.

Part-B

Discussed in class the following:

- a) What are the role and responsibilities of a Human Resource Manager?

Performance standards

The performance standard covered by the assessment includes the following, but not limited to:

Performance standards	Yes	No
List 3 functions of a Human Resource Department		
List 5 role and responsibilities of a Human Resource Manager		