ASSISTANT BUYER / ASSISTANT MERCHANDISER (DEGREE)

ASSISTANT BUYER / ASSISTANT MERCHANDISER (DEGREE)

Reference Number: ST0668

Details of standard

Occupation summary

This occupation is typically found in the retail sector, across a range of different types of companies and employers such as those selling direct to the public / consumer and those selling to trade. It is also found across different types of retail operation, including those who trade from traditional stores, those who are exclusively on-line, and those who operate through a variety of channels.

The purpose of the occupation is to understand the brand and customer in order to source, select, maintain and deliver the right products to meet demand and business objectives. Using effective business forecasting, risk / opportunity analysis, creativity and business insight, they anticipate and shape customer demand and market trends.

The overarching purpose of buyers is to identify and source the right products and services, in line with the organisations strategic objectives, for the organisation to sell to customers.

The overarching purpose of the merchandiser is to maximise sales and profit by ensuring that the right products are available to customers in the right place at the right time and in the right quantities.

They achieve their objectives by developing and implementing buying / merchandising strategies to ensure current and future customer demand is researched, anticipated and satisfied. They anticipate and prepare for new markets through customer insight and research activities, and they contribute to company profit through efficient, effective and sustainable buying / merchandising.

In this occupation, individuals would normally interact with a wide range of internal and external colleagues, including but not limited to, their wider buying and merchandising team, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, distribution centres, stores, marketing, finance and IT departments. This is normally an office-based role, but may involve remote working, travel to stores, trade fairs, supplier meetings etc. There may also be a need for travel to other countries for supplier / factory meetings. There will usually be a significant leadership element to the role.

In this occupation, they will typically be responsible for the management of a team. They will be responsible for an assigned ‘assortment’ or product range. They will have budget responsibility, which varies significantly across different employers and departments, but could reach £100m+.
### Typical job titles
- Assistant Buyer
- Assistant Merchandiser
- Buyer
- Merchandiser

### Core occupation duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duty</th>
<th>KSBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 1</strong> Creatively manage a portfolio of products / services to</td>
<td>K1 K2 K3 K4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure that the critical path(s) for the assortment is (are)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>followed, taking appropriate corrective actions to resolve issues</td>
<td>S1 S2 S3 S4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as needed.</td>
<td>B1 B5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 2</strong> Apply detailed knowledge of UK and / or global markets</td>
<td>K5 K6 K7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to select and develop an appropriate product / service range.</td>
<td>S5 S6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 3</strong> Through effective leadership, develop and contribute to</td>
<td>K8 K9 K10 K11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>departmental buying / merchandising strategy to ensure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overarching organisation objectives are met and that products /</td>
<td>S7 S8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services meet the needs of the customer.</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 4</strong> Take account of emerging technological changes in design</td>
<td>K7 K12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and delivery as well as new markets to maximise market share</td>
<td>S9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and profitability.</td>
<td>B1 B5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 5</strong> Make informed managerial decisions that manage risk,</td>
<td>K13 K14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drive sales and profitability, taking into account the requirements</td>
<td>S6 S10 S11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of different customer / delivery channels.</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 6</strong> Drive sales and profitability through effective</td>
<td>K15 K16 K47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiations with suppliers on key deliverables such as: capacity,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cost price and flexibility, re-buys, cancellations, delivery dates,</td>
<td>S12 S50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead times, promotion support etc.</td>
<td>B4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 7</strong> Manage and collaborate with key internal stakeholder</td>
<td>K17 K18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functions to agree appropriate promotional strategies and other</td>
<td>S13 S14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities to maximise the success / profitability of the allocated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assortment.</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Duty 8 Deliver robust range building and planning for the assigned assortment, linking it in to the wider operation of the buying and merchandising function.

Duty 9 Lead, coach, manage, motivate and develop self and team members to achieve personal and business success.

Duty 10 Ensure all channels to market are considered and the most appropriate channel(s) is/are selected to maximise the sales and profit potential.

Option duties

Duty 11: Developing own brand products to meet current trends / customer requirements, linked to strategy and financial targets.

Option title/s
Assistant Buyer

KSBs
K23 K24 K25
S21 S22 S23 S24
B1

Duty 12: Ensure department is set up to maximise sales / profitability by using techniques such as pricing strategies, product trends, product design and appropriate routes to market.

Option title/s
Assistant Buyer

KSBs
K26 K27 K28
S25 S26
B3

Duty 13: Ensure they and their team deliver in an ethical, sustainable and legal way in the sourcing of product ranges, aligned to the overall strategy of the business.

Option title/s
Assistant Buyer

KSBs
K29 K32
S27
B3
**Duty 14:** Analyse and evaluate overall performance of the Buying function, against the original strategy and business plan, identifying lessons to learn for future business cycles.

**Option title/s**
Assistant Buyer

**Duty 15:** Ensure ranges are sourced to comply with relevant safety and quality standards. Oversee the process to identify and rectify any failures in safety and/or quality.

**Option title/s**
Assistant Buyer

**Duty 16:** Source and select 3rd party products to meet current trends/customer requirements, linked to strategy and financial targets.

**Option title/s**
Assistant Buyer

**Duty 17:** Uses analysis to develop range framework identifying commercial opportunities. Collaborate with the buying team to input into or create a plan to deliver a commercial assortment that maximises sales and margin.

**Option title/s**
Assistant Merchandiser

**Duty 18:** Ensure they and their team work in an ethical and legal way in the supply of product ranges, aligned to the overall strategy of the business.

**Option title/s**
Assistant Merchandiser

**Duty 19:** Trades effectively delivering to sales and profit targets whilst identifying and taking relevant actions, to account for market and performance factors.

**Option title/s**
Assistant Merchandiser

**Duty 20**: Analyse and evaluate overall performance of the merchandising function, against the original strategy and business plan, identifying lessons to learn for future business cycles in order to maximise sales

- **Option title/s**
  - Assistant Merchandiser

- **KSBs**

  **Knowledge**

  - **K1**: Understands the overall product portfolio and brand image that the company is promoting to the customer, and can purchase / merchandise the products accordingly.
  
  - **K2**: Understands how to identify current and future buying and loyalty behaviours of existing and potential customer groups, for core and third party products
  
  - **K3**: Understands the impact of the buying critical path on the effective operation of the buying function. Understands the concept and impact of new product development.
  
  - **K4**: Understands when a product / product range has reached the end of its lifecycle, and acts appropriately to ensure its removal from the product range.
  
  - **K5**: Understands the key factors that influence UK and global markets, including economic and political activity
  
  - **K6**: Understands how different business models, buying cycles, trading models and customer groups can affect the buying and merchandising process.
  
  - **K7**: Understands the impact of emerging technological changes, for example AI, in terms of how product is sourced, how buying and merchandising processes might be improved, and how they might impact on customers
  
  - **K8**: Understands what factors contribute to the strategic development of the buying and merchandising function, and how through their leadership, they can influence the development of the strategy
  
  - **K9**: Understands the key factors that influence the quality of a product and tolerance levels.
K10: Understands the strategic implications for product range development, and the appropriate courses of action available.

K11: Understands the importance of ensuring that at all stages of the buying and merchandising process, the product is fit for purpose and meets company standards.

K12: Understands impact of new and evolving purchasing options across different fulfilment channels.

K13: Understands the main influencers on sales and profit growth, and can lead the team to achieve them.

K14: Understands the key financial levers and ratios that affect profitability, and can manage the team to ensure that profit is maximized.

K15: Understands the key deliverables associated with the buying and merchandising function, such as cost return rates, re-buys, cancellations, debit agreements, delivery dates, lead times etc.

K16: Understands the importance of effective negotiation and managing an ongoing relationship, including with designers, manufacturers and suppliers.

K17: Understands the importance of effective partnerships with other functions and departments, such as Merchandising, Sales and Finance, and leads the team to ensure that the outcomes from the relationships are maximized.

K18: Knows when to make appropriate refer decisions to senior executives in order to obtain the correct level of authorisation.

K19: Understands why effective planning and forecasting are vital to delivering a robust range plan, such as aspects of customer demand and changes in buying patterns.

K20: Understands the importance of, and strategies to, lead, coach, motivate and develop members of the team.

K21: Understands the importance of leadership style and self-development, on the success of the business.

K22: Knows how to identify the customer's current and future needs and purchasing trends, including ethical and sustainable retailing.

K23: Understands how different channels of delivery, buying cycles, trading models and customer groups can affect the buying and merchandising process.

K24: Understand how to identify current and future buying and loyalty behaviours of existing and potential customer groups.

K25: Understands key Buying analysis criteria such as, competitor benchmarking, price comparison, and competitor analysis.

K26: Understands the roles that techniques such as business planning, pricing strategies, product design and product manufacture, often in a global context, have on the overall success of the business.

K27: Understands the need to develop and implement innovative and responsive processes and systems to customer's digital demands.

K28: Understands the requirements of delivering to the most appropriate route to market.
K29: Understands the potential problems that can arise from non-legal and ethical compliance and options for mitigation.

K30: Understands the concept and impact of new product development.

K31: Understands the importance of onboarding new suppliers to ensure full compliance with internal and external standards.

K32: Understand where additional corporate requirements are needed to enhance compliance practice.

K33: Understands the process that is required to ensure the rectification of any failures.

K34: Understands how to effectively utilise data in order to identify commercial opportunities for their organisation.

K35: Understands the importance of working together with other teams (especially buying).

K36: Understands the potential problems that can arise in merchandising and how they can be mitigated.

K37: Understands concepts such as ‘Modern Slavery’ and how they might impact on the business.

K38: Understands allocation strategies and ensure effective data inputting.

K39: Understands how to interrogate data in order to make effective trading decisions.

K40: Understand merchandising concepts such as ‘xturisation’, and the effective use of space.

K41: Understands the impact of effective forecasting on the operation of the merchandising function.

K42: Understands in depth, the purpose of the critical path.

K43: Understands supplier data, such as delivery intakes, packaging requirements etc.

K44: Understand differing requirements across all methods of delivery (eg instore and on line).

K45: Understands the principles of having the right stock in the right place at the right time, in order to satisfy customer demand.

K46: Understands the impact that they have as a leader on the business.

K47: Knows how to effectively build relationships with key external stakeholders.

Skills

S1 Apply understanding of customer and business operations to inform decisions on product / service portfolio management.

S2 Selects and merchandises products that enhance the company brand image and product portfolio.

S3 Anticipates the need for products and ensures that the buying process enables their effective delivery to the customer.
S4 Delivers and articulates supported recommendations regarding the introduction or withdrawal of a product / product range.

S5 Analyse and react to main influences on Buying and Merchandising plans, taking appropriate actions as a result.

S6 Leads the team to construct the key buying and merchandising objectives and plans for the specific product range to reach or exceed sales at forecasted levels.

S7 Makes appropriate managerial decisions to ensure the departmental approach to selecting products / services balances quality and commerciality.

S8 Uses management-based monitoring procedures throughout the buying / merchandising process, taking account of legal and other requirements to ensuring product compliance is maintained.

S9 Critically evaluate and advocate opportunities presented by new technologies taking account of how they will impact on the product range, fulfilment and consumer behaviour.

S10 Analyses appropriate cost / income influences on buying and merchandising plans to make informed decisions.

S11 Through their influence as a leader, looks to use digital opportunities to drive sales and profitability across all channels where appropriate.

S12 Demonstrates how to negotiate in a manner that obtains the optimum outcome for the business.

S13 Through their leadership and management of the team, demonstrates a strategic approach to the relationship with other departments.

S14 Anticipates potential problems and opportunities through the effective liaison at the appropriate level with other teams / functions.

S15 Critically reviews and revises plans and forecasts for the function, taking into account the latest trend analyses, to produce the range.

S16 Develops and implements a ‘People Plan’, that is effective in ensuring sufficient team capacity and capabilities to deliver on business objectives.

S17 Demonstrates an effective leadership style in achieving the key business objectives.

S18 Ensure continuous personal and team development to enhance delivery.

S19 By using data, analyse and predict the customer’s current and future needs and purchasing trends, including how the customer journey is impacted.

S20 Using critical research, construct a customer engagement plan identifying the effective and profitable channels to market.

S21 Assesses and implements the relevant approach required from a buying and merchandising strategy, to take account of differing types of delivery channel, product and customer.

S22 Using critical research, construct a customer engagement plan identifying the effective channels to market.

S23 Work in partnership with the customer engagement team to achieve better outcomes for both existing and new customer groups.
S24 Analyses the key buying criteria to help shape the planned product range

S25 Critically evaluates the current and future methods of digital delivery, and anticipates customer changes in respect of the use of digital and Artificial Intelligence

S26 Being able to implement techniques such as business planning, pricing strategies, product design and product manufacturing to maximise sales and profitably

S27 Ensures that the organisation’s ethical and legal policies and procedures are monitored and adhered to by the team and suppliers.

S28 Anticipates the need for products and to ensure that the buying process enables their effective delivery to the customer

S29 Can articulate a supported recommendation regarding the introduction or withdrawal of a product / product range.

S30 Ensures compliance with company operating standards in the sourcing of range.

S31 Can identify when problems are likely to occur, and manage action required to resolve them.

S32 Effectively analyses the key buying criteria to help shape the planned product range for 3rd party products

S33 Has the ability to ensure that the right product is available at the right time, in the right place.

S34 Produces and delivers accurate forecasts which demonstrate creative and ambitious suggestions for future strategy

S35 Demonstrates customer insight in preparing forecasts

S36 Demonstrates the activities needed to ensure that the forecast is underpinned by financial considerations and business strategy.

S37 Ensures that the organisation’s ethical and legal policies and procedures are adhered to.

S38 Ensures that all team members operate within current legal guidance.

S39 Operates to, and ensures relevance of company operating standards

S40 Makes commercial decisions based on product, category and departmental performance

S41 Maximises every trading opportunity in order to deliver sound commercial outcomes for the organisation

S42 Using IT skills, develop strong spreadsheet / pivot table creation knowledge to enhance and optimize reporting and analysis data, so as to improve sales and profitability.

S43 Anticipates the need for products and ensures that the buying process enables their effective delivery to the customer

S44 Prepare executive level reports on current and forecasted performance, and using advanced presentation skills, ensure the communication of the outcomes is delivered in the most effective and profitable way.

S45 Effectively liaises with other key stakeholders to ensure a joined-up approach across the business.

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/assistant-buyer-assistant-merchandiser-degree/
S46 Delivers to the critical path plan in order to ensure that delivery deadlines are met, and that intakes meet stock levels

S47 Delivers timely and accurate forecasts to ensure that customer needs are met.

S48 Communicates directly with suppliers to ensure receipt of stock

S49: Demonstrate effective problem solving and time management skills, and an expert written and verbal communication style

S50: Assess the impact that they have on key external relationships, and adjusts their style to ensure that they achieve maximum benefit for the business

**Behaviour**

B1: Acts as an ambassador for the buying and merchandising function and the business

B2: As a leader, is resilient, responsible, commercially aware and takes the initiative

B3: Seeks opportunities to develop themselves and the team

B4: Builds relationships across the whole function and beyond.

B5: Is creative in their approach to the role

**Qualifications**

**English and Maths qualifications**

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship’s English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

**Additional details**

**Occupational Level:** 6

**Duration (months):** 24

**Review**

This standard will be reviewed after three years.

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Postcode (optional)
### Version log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERSION</th>
<th>DATE UPDATED</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>PREVIOUS VERSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16/07/2019</td>
<td>Assessment plan and funding band first published</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13/02/2019</td>
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