BUYING AND MERCHANDISING ASSISTANT

Reference Number: ST0683

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.

Buying assistants will support new product selection and development and ensure that these new products are accurately added to the employer’s product portfolio in line with the supplier agreement. They will normally be responsible for the testing and delivery of product samples.

Merchandising assistants collate, distribute and analyse sales and performance reports, identifying trends, trading patterns and highlighting anomalies. They communicate and escalate findings appropriately, supported by a range of business solutions. They may also place supplier orders and maintain product availability across the business and for monitoring products to ensure on time delivery and availability to agreed locations.

Buying and merchandising assistants work collaboratively to contribute to the delivery of department/company sales and profit targets. They will normally report to a more senior member of the buying or merchandising team, this may vary with the size of the employer.

In this occupation, individuals would typically interact with a wide range of internal and external colleagues, including but not limited to, their wider buying and merchandising teams, 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.

Typical job titles

Typical job titles include buying assistant, merchandising assistant.

Core occupation duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duty</th>
<th>Criteria for measuring performance</th>
<th>KSBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duty 1 Monitor the critical path to ensure products are delivered on time.</td>
<td>Recommendations made for new and existing products to agreed timescales.</td>
<td>K1 K2 K3 K5 S3 S4 S6 S7 S8 S9 S10 S21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Duty 2** Engage with internal and external functions (such as marketing, PR, distribution, suppliers, supply chain, stores, online, sales teams, design teams, product technologists, customers) to deliver product ranges that meet business KPIs and customer needs.

Issues that affect other internal and external functions identified promptly and resolved

No KPIs missed through poor communication or failure to collaborate.

**Duty 3** Contribute to the continuous improvement of the buying and merchandising processes, responding to sector trends and new ways of working to drive sales and profit.

Recommendations for improvements made to senior team members.

**Duty 4** Coach and mentor new colleagues to drive development

Individual and team development recorded.

**Duty 5** Develop and maintain a stakeholder network, to facilitate negotiations to maximise opportunities

Professional relationships developed, issues identified and resolved promptly. KPIs met

**Duty 6** Receive and resolve queries and questions from stakeholders (suppliers, designers, packagers, customers) regarding products, process, services, critical path deliverables etc.

Internal and external functions briefed on critical path.

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**Option duties**

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/buying-and-merchandising-assistant/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 7:</strong> Manage the ordering, delivery, testing and showcasing of samples, to support the final selection of products</td>
<td>Appropriate samples were available for testing and showcasing activities.</td>
<td>K1 K2 K3 K5 K6 K8 K9 K12 K13 K14 K15 K17 K18 K19 K21 S1 S2 S3 S5 S7 S8 S10 S14 S15 S17 S18 B1 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Option title/s</strong></td>
<td>Buying Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 8:</strong> Action all the required processes throughout the product lifecycle, ensuring trading and pricing policies are adhered to, meeting the requirements of the current business strategy</td>
<td>Product portfolio updated and maintained with correct information.</td>
<td>K1 K2 K3 K5 K7 K8 K11 K17 K18 K19 S4 S6 S7 S8 S9 S10 S13 S14 S20 S21 B6</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Option title/s</strong></td>
<td>Buying Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 9:</strong> Input products into the database and carry out on-going maintenance. Coordinate the product content and imagery to support and maximise the sales of the product</td>
<td>All products represented accurately on product portfolio.</td>
<td>K1 K2 K5 K7 K12 K13 K17 K21 S3 S9 S10 S11 S12 S21 B1 B2 B4 B6</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Option title/s</strong></td>
<td>Buying Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 10:</strong> Monitor competitor activities and update prices accordingly in line with legislation and organisation policies</td>
<td>Product portfolio updated and maintained with correct information.</td>
<td>K2 K7 K11 K12 K18 S1 S3 S11 S13 S14 S15 S17 S21 B6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Option title/s</strong></td>
<td>Buying Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duty 11:</strong> Use competitor and market analysis to identify opportunities to improve/increase sales performance.</td>
<td>Data sourced and actions implemented to agreed timescales.</td>
<td>K2 K7 K11 K12 K18 K21 S1 S3 S11 S13 S14 S15 S17 S21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option title/s
Buying Assistant

Duty 12: Assist in the creation of future range building inputting into trend and competitor analysis

Accurate data inputted to inform strategic decisions.

Option title/s
Buying Assistant

Duty 13: Manage suppliers and key stakeholders (distribution/warehousing and depots, branches/ stores, online) to ensure stock levels are kept within agreed targets/timelines

Stakeholder's issues dealt with promptly and within targets/timescales

Option title/s
Merchandising Assistant

Duty 14: Place and manage orders for assigned products, in line with the agreed volume and specification.

Deliveries made on agreed dates in agreed volumes

Cancellations processed correctly.

Option title/s
Merchandising Assistant

Duty 15: Assist in producing short to mid-term product range forecasts for intake and delivery.

Correct data sources accessed and analysed.

Option title/s
Merchandising Assistant

Duty 16: Use current and past data to identify opportunities to improve sales and profit performance, providing reforecasts of stock, delivery dates and cancellations to minimise/maximise financial impact. Provide weekly trading analysis.

Data analysed and findings reported to senior team members to agreed timescales.
Option title/s
Merchandising Assistant

Duty 17: Assist in the creation of future range building by inputting financial targets and plans and data analysis.
Accurate data inputted to inform strategic decisions.

Option title/s
Merchandising Assistant

Duty 18: Provide orders and line level product forecasts to suppliers. Manage/maintain stock replenishment system to maximise availability and drive sales.
Stock system updated and maintained to agreed timescales.

KSBs
Knowledge

K1: How to develop an operational or strategic approach to buying and / or merchandising

K2: Industry standards, regulations and legislation relating to the ethical and sustainable sourcing, purchasing and sale of goods to ensure compliance

K3: Product lifecycle from development to customer and the critical path approach to support the buying and merchandising process

K4: Principles of buying and merchandising and the specific role of each

K5: The brand position within the market, which includes both UK and global markets, retailer types and trading models

K6: Effective methods of negotiation, and how they relate to the organisation’s strategy, goals and ethical stance

K7: Key aspects of the sector in respect of global and domestic trading patterns

K8: Principles of working within strategic operational buying and merchandising frameworks

K9: Effective methods of communication to achieve operational success

K10: The principles of internal trend analysis and forecasting
**K11:** The principles of undertaking competitor analyses

**K12:** The different purchasing habits of customers, seasonality and the different customer journey across all purchasing channels

**K13:** The importance of keeping up with current trends within the industry

**K14:** The importance of customer profiles and how they impact buying and merchandising operations

**K15:** The principles of team dynamics and relationships in order to achieve individual and organisational goals

**K16:** The importance of coaching and mentoring to support the development of the buying and merchandising teams

**K17:** The goals and targets of the business, the drivers of performance and the contribution of the team in order to achieve these

**K18:** The key performance indicators of the department, their performance and how to individually contribute to their success

**K19:** The range and impact of external factors such as currency fluctuation and global suppliers have on profit margin and costs

**K20:** The impact of stock planning and densities on profitability and how it aligns to organisational/brand strategy

**K21:** Factors affecting and impacting seasonal planning to ensure availability of appropriate products and to drive profit

**Skills**

**S1** Uses their market/industry knowledge to contribute to new product development and innovation

**S2** Contributes to the building of customer focused ranges to meet the brand identity of the business

**S3** Ensures product quality and legal compliance by working within industry standards, regulations and legislation to source, purchase and sell goods

**S4** Ensures accurate implementation of the critical path prioritising actions accordingly

**S5** Negotiates in a manner that balances the need for a sound financial return, with the need to operate ethically, honestly and fairly

**S6** Monitors agreed performance targets with suppliers to manage ongoing supplier relationships

**S7** Applies the organisation strategy to buying and/or merchandising to ensure strategic objectives are met

**S8** Applies an ethical and sustainable approach to the buying and merchandising process in line with policies and procedures to achieve legal compliance

**S9** Ensures the agreed route to market is delivered and maintained successfully so that objectives are met
S10 Works with external and internal departments (for example, marketing, distribution, suppliers) to build relationships to drive sales activity and support the delivery of the business objectives across all channels

S11 Uses data to support decisions to influence both the strategic and operational direction of the buying and/or merchandising approach.

S12 Demonstrates accurate application of systems in analysing data (for example, customer trends, buying patterns, stock rotation and levels)

S13 Analyses and presents business data to support achievement of business strategies, brand and KPIs

S14 Evaluates commercial performance to support proposed actions for both good and poor product performers

S15 Demonstrates anticipation of customer buying and product patterns to forecast future demand

S16 Articulates relevant ideas and opinions towards trends and competitor activity so that opportunities may be identified

S17 Applies customer profile/trend data to inform the development of a range, products and services

S18 Formulates and communicates customer propositions

S19 Develops self and individuals to improve personal and team performance and capability

S20 Demonstrates commercial buying and merchandising within a financial framework

S21 Operates in a manner that produces the required financial rate of return for the business

S22 Ensures effective stock management to support the delivery of the sales and profit forecasts

S23 Coaches and mentors new/less experienced colleagues

**Behaviour**

B1: Is creative thinking, and enthusiastic with a positive and professional attitude
B2: Is confident accountable and pro-active
B3: Shows tenacity and is prepared to take risks
B4: Is resilient, organised with an eye for attention to detail
B5: Is flexible, agile and adaptable to changing markets
B6: Operates within professional code of ethics
B7: Is an ambassador for the business

**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: 4
Duration (months): 18

Review

This standard will be reviewed after three years.

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Find an apprenticeship

Postcode (optional)

Version log

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<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>PREVIOUS VERSION</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>16/05/2019</td>
<td>Assessment plan and funding band first published</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20/11/2018</td>
<td>Standard first published</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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