

# CAREERS: RETAIL BUYER

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## WHAT DO YOU DO IN THIS CAREER?

Retail buyers are responsible for purchasing the goods that we buy from shops and department stores.

The types of things that buyers purchase will depend on the company for which they work but, products can vary from foodstuffs and hygiene products to clothing and accessories. Smaller shops may have a single buyer but, larger departmental stores may have many specialist buyers who are responsible for specific product lines. Buyers need to make sure that they are aware of current trends locally and internationally and they should also be aware of possible future trends as they need to purchase goods that the public will want to buy. The buyer also needs to have a very good understanding of the market for which he or she is buying so that when they look at products to purchase they will know what will and will not sell. Buyers also need to be able to make an educated guess regarding the quantity of what they buy but they will also have to keep their budget in mind. Therefore, a buyer is going to look for the best quality products at the lowest cost.

Buyers need to have a good knowledge of management principals and have basic accounting skills. A buyer must also be able to work with deadlines and have excellent time management skills. Buyers must have a good capacity to plan for the future and make contingency plans if there are problems.

Buyers are also involved in the display and care of the products or goods in a shop and sometimes they are involved in designing window displays. They may sometimes liaise with clients although their work is actually more behind the scenes.

## WHERE WILL I WORK?

Most buyers work in shops and departmental stores. This usually involves working in an office or warehouse. Buyers also have to travel quite often to meet with producers or to merchandiser shows to buy products.

## WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY PERSONALITY TRAITS?

- ✎ Excellent general and world knowledge
- ✎ Good at forecasting trends
- ✎ Excellent communicator
- ✎ Deal well with stress
- ✎ Good analytical skills
- ✎ Well organised
- ✎ Good planner
- ✎ Eye for trends
- ✎ Enjoy travelling
- ✎ Eye for detail
- ✎ Critical

## WHERE DO I TRAIN?

Some Universities and Universities of Technology offer courses. Look out for courses in Consumer Science and Retail Management.

## WHAT SCHOOL SUBJECTS DO I NEED?

Admission requirements vary from institution to institution but Mathematics, Accounting and Consumer Studies are recommended subjects.

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