

Careers in retail

A guide for school students



Welcome to the world of retail!

Or in other words, shopping! Sound appealing? This industry employs over 3 million people, and is made up of 291,000 businesses. There'll be 500,000 new jobs between 2007 and 2010 – so in this fast-moving industry with its huge range of occupations, there's bound to be something for you. Read on to find out the truth about the retail world – how you can learn, what you could earn, and how it can fit with your lifestyle. We've included some handy links at the end of the factsheet to help you find out even more.

What do you think of retail?

We talked to students to find out what thought about a career in retail. Views are mixed, with limited knowledge of the rewards and the roles available. We also found out from university students what they had studied, and how they got on in retail. Have a look at the 'Fact versus Fiction' boxes to see what the retail world really has to offer.

14-19 year olds (Career Aspirations of 14-19 year olds, Skillsmart Retail 2006)

- 24% of 14-19 year olds would consider a career in retail
- 35% were aware of the role of Store Manager
- 37% thought retail managers were paid better than the average, while 35% thought they were paid about the same

University students (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey, 2004/05)

- Management positions in retail are a really important destination for all graduates. In 2006, 29% of recent graduates working in management did so in the retail sector, even though the retail sector only employs 10% of the UK workforce.
- Graduate retail managers have done a variety of degrees but most common are: Business Studies, English, Marketing, Management and Psychology. Pharmacy, optometry, Design and Fashion are also often found in professional and technical roles.

Fact vs Fiction

Funny hours?
**Varied hours mean
you can fit work
around your lifestyle**

Follow the latest trends!

Can you imagine working in a job where you get to talk to people about your favourite gadgets every day? Where you get discount on the biggest fashion labels? Whether working as a sales assistant on the shopfloor, dealing with suppliers and manufacturers to buy in bulk, or even developing a website, this is the world of retail. It's so diverse, ranging from electricals to furniture, sports goods to groceries.

The future ...

Think about how shopping has changed. Ten years ago virtually nothing was bought on the Internet, and the idea of placing orders via your mobile phone was pure science fiction. In 2005, roughly £1 in every £12 was spent on-line. Retailers have to respond quickly to new fashions and new products – with word spreading so quickly on-line. This means even more jobs – in technology services, and merchandising roles where they aim to pick future trends. Look out for growing areas like:

- Websites and mobile Internet as an alternative shopfront
- Contact centres as an alternative first point of contact
- Home delivery for groceries and other items in response to on-line / telephone purchases

Get smart ... for a smarter career

Retail employers need a range of skills, often described as 'employability skills'. Just as important as work experience and qualifications, they include:

- People skills and sales skills
- Personal presentation
- The right attitude
- Enthusiasm and reliability
- Numeracy and literacy
- Teamworking skills

During work experience, it pays to keep these in mind – and you need to make the right first impression. Make the most of the experience you get, as it will help you when looking for full-time jobs further down the line.



Fact vs Fiction

Anyone can do retail ...
Hardly. Recruiters love apprentices and graduates.

Your perfect fit ...

We'd like you to take away these **five key messages** about 21st century retail. It's a huge, varied sector, with lots of routes in – and flexibility to fit around your life and personal interests.

1 Variety

There are nine business areas in retail, and many occupations connected with each one. This means there are lots of entry points – and scope to move around.

- Store operations
- HR and training
- Finance and administration
- Buying
- Customer contact centres
- Marketing
- Logistics
- IT
- Visual Merchandising

> *Read our 'Jobs in retail' factsheet.*



2 Profit

Whether earning while you learn on a retail apprenticeship, joining a graduate training programme (with starting salaries of £17k – 26k), or moving on up into manager level salaries of £60k – 70k – there's great money in retail. Retail also offer perks like discount on your favourite products.

> *Visit our recommended recruitment websites.*

4 Progress

There's plenty of choice on how to get in and get on. Retail Apprenticeships are offered from 16; tailored graduate programmes and students from almost any discipline are welcome. With student work experience giving you an advantage, you don't have to rely on qualifications either.

> *Read our 'Apprenticeships' factsheet.*

3 Lifestyle

Retail gives you a rare opportunity to match personal interests with work. If you enjoy gadgets or clothes, why not use that enthusiasm to sell them or work with them every day? Sport, music, technology, games are all part of retail ...

5 Flexibility

The retail world gives you flexibility. You're not locked into a 9 to 5 day – so you can fit life around your work. With such varied business areas, it also makes it easier for you to move around the business and the industry.

Further information

Contact Skillsmart Retail for the following products and services – or visit our recommended websites.

Publications and games

Retail Therapy – published by Skillsmart Retail in partnership with The Independent.
www.independentezines.co.uk/retailtherapy

Skillsmart Retail Game – on-line and on CD.
www.skillsmartretail.com/game

Quick quiz – are you suited to a retail career?
www.skillsmartretail.com/quickquiz

Work experience guides

Skillsmart Retail has produced work experience guides designed to help you make the most of your retail work experience.

Our factsheets

Skillsmart Retail publishes a range of detailed careers factsheets. They include:

- Careers in retail: A guide for graduates
- Apprenticeships in retail
- Young Apprenticeships in retail
- Jobs in retail

Skillsmart Retail careers website

Our site includes a dedicated area for young people.
www.skillsmartretail.com/careers

Retail careers advice line

Supported by learndirect, our freephone helpline for advice on course and careers.
0800 093 5001

Fact vs Fiction

Not great pay?
Graduate salaries start as high as £26k



Our recommended links for careers guidance, retail courses and jobs.

Careers guidance

Connexions www.connexions-direct.com
Learndirect www.learndirect-advice.com
Northern Ireland careers service
www.careersserviceni.com
Careers Scotland
www.careers-scotland.org.uk
Careers Wales www.careerswales.com

Retail on-line recruitment

www.inretail.co.uk
www.retailcareers.co.uk
www.retailmoves.com
www.retailchoice.com

Graduate Recruitment

www.graduatetoretail.org
www.thebigchoice.com
www.doctorjob.com