

JOB PROFILE: DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

WHAT DOES A DISTRIBUTION MANAGER DO?

Distribution managers, sometimes known as logistics or supply chain managers, plan and manage the control and movement of goods or raw materials from suppliers to retail and business outlets and then on to customers.

They use computer packages to monitor stock levels, re-order goods when necessary, and track the movement of goods through depots. They may also oversee the ordering process and packaging of goods ready for dispatch.

An important part of the job is to improve efficiency by analysing networks and systems and implementing new ones.

Another important part of the job is analysing existing networks and systems and developing new ones to improve efficiency.

Distribution managers also manage clerical, administrative and warehouse distribution staff, and deal with their recruitment and training.

WHAT'S A WORKING WEEK LIKE?

Distribution managers normally work 9 -5, Monday to Friday. However, depending on the operation, they may have to work evenings and weekends on a rota basis, or be on call to deal with emergencies.

They could be located in an administration office, a warehouse or a traffic office.

WHAT SKILLS WOULD I NEED TO BECOME A DISTRIBUTION MANAGER?

To be a distribution manager you should:

- Be able to motivate and manage a team
- Have good forward-planning skills
- Have good spoken and written communication skills
- Have good analytical skills
- Have good numeracy skills
- Be accurate and pay attention to detail
- Be confident using computer packages, including spreadsheets
- Be able to prioritise workloads
- Be able to work under pressure
- Have geographical knowledge

HOW DO I BECOME A DISTRIBUTION MANAGER?

It is possible to start out as a transport clerk, and with training and experience work your way up to supervisory and management positions.

Most new entrants have a BTEC higher national certificate or diploma (HNC/HND) or a degree. Relevant degree and HNC/HND courses such as international transport, logistics, supply chain management, transport management and geography, are offered at a range of centres throughout the country.

Colleges and universities may offer foundation degree and degree courses in subjects such as logistics and transport. Check with colleges for their study programme and entry requirements.

Entry requirements for a degree course are normally five GCSEs (A-C)/S grades (1-3), and two A levels/three H grades, or equivalent qualifications. For HNCs/HNDs you normally need four GCSEs (A-C)/S grades (1-3), and one A level/two H grades, or equivalent qualifications.

An Access to Higher Education qualification may also be accepted for entry to courses. If experienced in a related field, you may be able to gain recognition of skills through Accredited Prior Learning (APL). Please check with colleges or universities for exact entry requirements.

TRAINING FOR WORK

Graduate training schemes are available through some of the large employers.

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) offers certificate, diploma and advanced diploma courses with options in logistics and transport.

NVQs/SVQs are available in Distribution and Warehousing Operations at levels 3 and 4. Other relevant NVQs/SVQs include those in administration, accounting and information technology.

Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (MAPPs) may be available for people aged 16-24.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

A wide range of organisations employ distribution managers. These range from small firms that operate locally, to national and multinational companies.

SALARIES

(Figures are intended as a guideline only)
Starting salaries for graduates are around £15,000 a year.

Experienced distribution managers earn around £30,000 a year.

Senior distribution managers earn around £60,000 a year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ciltuk.org.uk

www.skillsforlogistics.org

www.careersinlogistics.co.uk