

Summer

Lesson

30

RETAIL SALES WORKERS

Career Exploration

What Retail Sales Workers Do

Retail sales workers are often called retail salespersons. Retail workers sell merchandise such as clothing, sporting goods, furniture, and automobiles. They are responsible for helping customers with the selection and finding of products. Retail workers may explain the use and benefit of merchandise to customers. They also may process customers' payments. Retail salespersons may help stock shelves or racks, arrange for mailing or delivery of purchases, mark price tags, and prepare displays.



Work Environment

Retail salespersons almost always work indoors. However, retail salespeople may work outdoors if they sell items such as cars, plants, or lumberyard materials. Retail salespersons spend much of their day interacting with customers. They often stand for long periods of time. Occasionally, they must deal with angry people. Depending on the type of store, retail salespersons may spend a significant amount of time at a register ringing up customers' goods and processing payments.

Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.

1. What is another name for retail sales worker?
2. What do retail workers sell?
3. What do retail workers help process?
4. What do retail workers stock and prepare?
5. Where do almost all retail salespersons work?
6. What do retail sales worker spend much of their day doing?
7. What must retail salesperson deal with on occasions?
8. Where may retail workers spend a lot of time at, depending on the store?

Source: 2018, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook.

How to Become a Retail Sales Worker

Typically, retail sales workers do not need a college degree. However, most employers prefer that applicants have a high school diploma. Those that sell technical products such as computers, cars, or TVs may need a formal education or specialized training helpful. On-the-job training is where most salespeople develop experience and knowledge about their job. On-the-job training is where the company or store provide the training to learn the job. Training can last a few days or months depending on the products or services being sold.



IMPORTANT QUALITIES

The following are important qualities that are helpful in being successful as a retail salesperson.

Customer-service Skills: Providing effective assistance and advice to customers.

Interpersonal Skills: These are a variety of skills used every day to communicate and interact with other people or groups.

Persistence: Not giving up and capable of retrying, despite failing.

Selling Skills: Being able to sell merchandise.

Pay and Work Schedule

The compensation for a salesperson varies; it depends on the type of establishment and the merchandise being sold. Some retail sales workers receive an hourly wage and a commission. Under a commission system, they receive a percentage of the sales they make. This system offers sales workers the opportunity to increase their earnings depending on their selling skills. The average hourly wage for retail a salesperson is about \$11.50. The top ten percent of salespersons may earn more than \$20.00 per hour. Many salespersons work evenings and weekends. During the holidays and peak seasons, stores can be very busy. Many salespersons work part-time. It is estimated that about a third or 33 percent of retail salespersons are part-time workers.

9. What level education do most retail employers prefer applicants to have?
10. Where do most salespersons obtain experience?
11. What might be three topics covered with on-the-job training?
12. What are four skills or abilities that a successful salesperson have?
13. What are interpersonal skills?
14. Why do you think persistence is so important for a salesperson?
15. What do many salespersons earn, besides an hourly wage?
16. What is the amount of a salesperson's commission dependent on?
17. What is the average hourly wage for a salesperson?
18. When might a store need more retail workers?
19. What percent of retail worker are part-time employees?

Job Outlook

The growth of new jobs in retail sales looks poor. Over the next decade, it is expected to grow much slower than other occupations. Employment of retail salespersons is projected to grow only 2 percent. Some types of stores will experience a larger decrease in the need for retail workers. In the last several years many brick-and-mortar stores have closed or have gone out of business. This is because of the impact of online sales has negatively affected them, because more and more people are doing their shopping online line.



Larger stores, such as the warehouse clubs and supercenters, are experiencing some growth. Employment at these types of stores is expected to grow faster. Though new job growth will be slow, the overall number of job openings or what is referred to as job prospects will remain strong. This because the turnover is very high among retail salespersons. Many employees work for a very short amount of time and then leave. Because of the high turnover rate, there will be large numbers of job openings.

20. What is the projected new job growth for this occupation?
21. What has happened to many retail stores?
22. Why have many retail stores closed?
23. What does the bar graph show?
24. What area of retail sales is experiencing some growth?
25. How do job prospects look for this occupation?
26. Why will there be many job openings for retail sales workers?

1. Do you think that this occupation would be a good career for you? Why or Why not?

