# RETAIL/MERCHANDISING

## What can I do with this degree?

### AREAS

**BUYING/PURCHASING**
- Department stores
- Specialty stores (e.g., clothing, home furnishings, jewelry, books, etc.)
- Discount stores/mass merchants
- Grocery stores

**MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION**
- Corporate Management
- Regional Management
- Store Management
- Store Assistant Management
- Store Department Management

### EMPLOYERS

- Department stores
- Specialty stores (e.g., clothing, home furnishings, jewelry, books, etc.)
- Discount stores/mass merchants
- Grocery stores
- Dealerships (e.g., automobile, boat, etc.)

### STRATEGIES

- Develop analytical and problem-solving skills to analyze industry trends and sales data.
- Develop organizational skills to oversee the daily operation of a department or store (e.g., inventory monitoring).
- Develop excellent interpersonal skills to work with and motivate sales force.
- Develop strong written and oral communication skills for report writing and interacting with vendors.
- Be prepared to travel frequently in order to visit various markets and search for new merchandise.
- Gain experience working under pressure.
- Gain as much sales and retail experience as possible.
- Be prepared to begin as a buyer trainee.
- Develop excellent organizational skills to handle the daily operation of a store or a department.
- Be prepared to start at the bottom. Most management training programs start associates on the sales floor.
- Be willing to relocate to take advantage of promotion opportunities.
- Develop excellent interpersonal skills to assist customers, handle complaints, and manage employees.
- Develop excellent organizational skills to handle the daily operation of a store or a department.
- Learn and perfect persuasive sales techniques.
- Gain experience working on commission.
- Be aware that mergers and acquisitions have reduced the number of opportunities in this field.
- Be aware of the abundant number of opportunities in this field.
### Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sales</strong></th>
<th><strong>Emitters</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strategies</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Sales</td>
<td>Profit and non-profit organizations</td>
<td>Obtain a part-time or internship sales position to gain experience. These positions are often stepping stones to higher-level positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Product Sales</td>
<td>Product and service organizations</td>
<td>Develop excellent interpersonal skills and a strong commitment to customer satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services Sales</td>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>Develop problem-solving skills to handle customer or client inquiries and complaints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services Sales</td>
<td>Financial companies</td>
<td>Gain as much knowledge as possible about the product or service being sold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Sales</td>
<td>Insurance companies</td>
<td>Cultivate a competitive drive to reach sales quotas and break sales records.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print and electronic media</td>
<td>Proven leadership abilities are desirable.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail stores</td>
<td>Must be highly motivated and well organized.</td>
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### Visual Merchandising

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<tr>
<td>E-Commerce</td>
<td>Department stores</td>
<td>Develop proficiency for working with matters of taste and aesthetics (e.g., color, lighting, fashion, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog:</td>
<td>Specialty stores</td>
<td>Consider supplementing program with coursework in interior design, art, fashion design, or interior decorating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Retailers in internet sales (e.g., Target.com)</td>
<td>Develop mechanical aptitude to build props or to adjust lighting for displays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfillment/Distribution</td>
<td>Retailers with mail-order specialities (e.g., Spiegel, JC Penney)</td>
<td>Be aware that positions in this area are limited. Many managers or product representatives are responsible for creating store display designs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Advertising agencies</td>
<td>Supplement program with courses in marketing, advertising, or communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Marketing</td>
<td>Magazine, book, and record companies</td>
<td>Obtain sales experience through a retail or telemarketing position.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TV retailing networks</td>
<td>Develop strong computer skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet marketers</td>
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### Non-Store Retailing

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### AREAS

**SMALL BUSINESS**
- Ownership
- Independent Consulting

**EMPLOYERS**
- Self-employed
- Companies that utilize independent consultants (e.g., Mary Kay Cosmetics, Tupperware)

**STRATEGIES**
- Develop an excellent knowledge of and belief in a particular product or service.
- Supplement program with courses in accounting, advertising, or computers.
- Obtain extensive sales and business experience by working for a company or retailer in a related product area before launching a small business.
- Build relationships with potential investors and customers.
- Join small business associations or Chamber of Commerce for networking opportunities.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Obtain retail experience through summer jobs, part-time jobs, or internships.
- Computer knowledge is crucial. Become familiar with technology related to internet sales, distribution, and inventory tracking.
- Join student branches of professional retailing associations. Read their publications and attend their meetings.
- Read the business section of newspapers and magazines to keep track of current trends in retail.
- Be prepared to work holidays and weekends, typically the busiest times for retailers.
- Contact stores or markets of interest. Inquire about management training programs.
- Most retailers promote from within the organization; therefore, management trainee programs or sales associate positions are a good way to begin.
- Supplement program with courses in marketing, accounting, communications, and computers.
- Be aware of the many transferable skills associated with this degree.
- For increased opportunity, determine alternative areas of business in which your skills, experiences, and interests might also apply.