

Your career: progressing to management

Progression tends to happen gradually, with the first management break being a natural jump from a previous role and experience. Management roles are seen as attractive as they allow you to pursue a passion, can be more interesting and challenging and give you greater authority and recognition.

To give you a very general idea of the roles you could be undertaking within a few years of beginning your career in retail, here are just a couple of examples:

Department Manager

Responsible for establishing and implementing policies, strategies, goals and procedures. You will be involved in employee supervision and development, reviewing inventories and sales performance and co-ordinating policies with other departments.

Buyer

Responsible for selecting and ordering of merchandise and sometimes planning sales promotions.

Planner

Responsible for the distribution of goods and planning and controlling inventories to maximise both sales and profit.

Once employees have experienced their first career break, their progress tends to follow a pattern. Firstly you need to demonstrate that you have the ability and commitment as well as the ambition and self-belief to be successful. Secondly your line manager recognises your potential and offers support and guidance, primarily by informing you of opportunities that may exist or roles they think you would be suited to. Thirdly you must wait for an opportunity to arise and be in the right place at the right time to take advantage of this new role. You'll stay in this new role until your ambition is no longer satisfied and if you are still passionate and committed and able to acquire the specialist skills needed, then the pattern will repeat itself. In many instances employees may not have specific goals and are happy to wait until an opportunity presents itself.

When moving to management, personality factors are viewed as more important than skills, as skills can be learned as needed.

Important personality factors include interpersonal skills and showing initiative, passion, motivation and drive.

To progress in the retail industry you need to be tenacious and also very flexible. Retail businesses need to be able to keep ahead of their competition so you must be prepared for innovation as retail is fast paced and constantly evolving to meet consumers' ever changing demands.

“The three most important aspects in being selected for promotion are: always doing more than what is asked, not refusing any opportunities and being in the right place at the right time.”

