

Sales and Related Positions

Retail Salespersons

Retail Salespersons can sell any type of product from shoes to automobiles. While selling their product, retail salespersons assist customers and promote sales by finding what the customer is looking for, and by describing a product's features, demonstrating its uses, and promoting its value.

Many retail salespersons conduct financial transactions with their customers, which usually involves receiving payments, operating cash registers, and bagging or packaging purchases. In addition, retail salespersons may have to open or close cash registers, a task which includes counting the money in the register and separating charge slips, coupons, and exchange vouchers. In addition, they may help stock shelves or racks, arrange for mailing or delivery of purchases, mark price tags, take inventory, and prepare displays.

Retail salespersons may sometimes need special knowledge or skills about the product being sold. For example, salespersons who sell automobiles must be able to explain the features of various models, the manufacturers' specifications, the types of options and financing available, and the details of associated warranties.

Most retail salespersons work in clean, comfortable, well-lit stores. However, they often stand for long periods and may need supervisor approval to leave the sales floor. They also may work outdoors if they sell items such as cars, plants, or lumber yard materials. Many salespersons work evenings and weekends, particularly during holidays and other peak sales periods. The end-of-year holiday season often is the busiest time.

Education/Training

How to Obtain:

Some retail salesperson positions do not require formal education, but most employers prefer applicants who have a high school diploma or equivalent.

Retail salespersons will generally receive on the job training, which will vary in level of formality based on the size of the establishment and the merchandise being sold.

Employers may require a college degree for management trainee positions, for positions selling certain merchandise, and for advancement.

Some employers may require a background check.