

How to Become a Better Buyer through Continuous Education

Being a buyer for a major retail company requires more of a business mind than it does



an artistic mind. Business knowledge and mathematics abilities are more important than having design or artistic skills. To be an effective buyer, you need a solid business foundation. To become a better buyer is all about education. What you sell is less important than how you manage the purchasing of goods, negotiate with vendors, price the products, handle materials and understand the supply and demand of the market.

The actual product is almost secondary, and some people become disillusioned when they do not end up in a position that they dreamed about.

Education

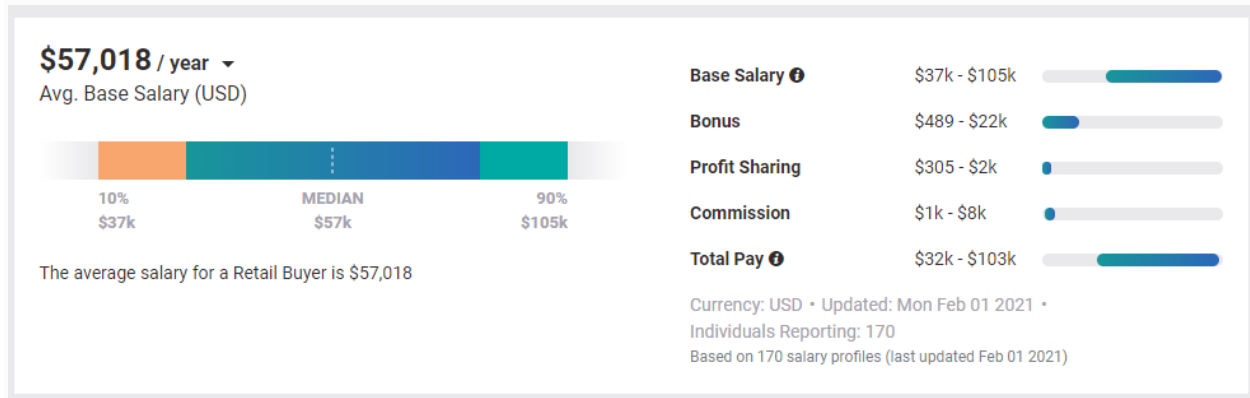
Most major retailers require senior buyers to have a bachelor's degree to get into the field and a master's degree to advance to senior levels. Many buyers, however, start in sales or another role and work their way up. Fields of study that retailers look for include marketing, mathematics, economics, and business, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. You'll spend at least the first year at work learning the specific aspects of the company's buying procedures to gain on-the-job experience. Skills you'll most want to concentrate on are how to develop strong relationships with vendors and best practices for monitoring and managing the inventory. Selecting a winning assortment of products is critically important and is usually learned on the job as well.



The Work

The average salary for retail purchasing agents in 2021 was \$57,018, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. No matter what kind of retail merchandise you end up purchasing, the first few years will most likely be the same. Whether you're buying screwdrivers or baby clothes, you'll spend most of your time analyzing markets, learning how to balance inventory, and keeping on top of industry trends. Very few retail buyers

see the glamorous side of the industry. It can happen, but it's not the norm. At the same time, as you progress in your career, your work most likely will involve travel and working with a diverse and creative team of professionals. The buyers that advance, understand the importance of continuing education and invest the time and energy to grow their knowledge and experience.



Source: <https://www.payscale.com/>

Advancement

In addition to putting in your time and garnering experience on the job, there are a number of industry certifications you can earn to boost your chances for advancement. After you've accumulated some buying experience, it is worth the effort to earn the Certified Professional in Purchasing Manager certification or the Certified Green Purchasing Professional designation from the American Purchasing Society (<https://www.american-purchasing.com/home>). Membership in the organization also provides you with networking opportunities, continuing education courses, books and recruitment opportunities that you can leverage to improve your advancement opportunities. Although most organizations typically do not require retail buyers to be certified, gaining professional qualifications always makes you appear more attractive to potential employers and your current employer. Some of the other certifying bodies are listed here: The American Purchasing Society, the Association for Operations Management and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing. They all offer certificates that could add additional credibility to your resume.

Other Skills

In addition to formal education and experience, you will benefit from developing other soft skills that will help you in your career as a retail buyer. According to the [Princeton Review](#), being able to develop effective working relationships with salespeople and store management will help your days go much smoother. Conflicts within your

organization about what consumers want, what is selling best and what kinds of pricing you need to make a profit are common in the industry. Additionally, you'll want to keep up with trends that affect everything from changing economic environments to pricing, color, style and materials used to make your products so that you can negotiate more effectively with vendors. Stay on top of changing manufacturing processes as well, such as the short production schedules required by just-in-time inventory control that force you to follow tight deadlines. In addition, as we have recently learned, there are all kinds of unforeseen circumstances that can delay product delivery schedules, retail store traffic and product demand.

There are many other websites, books and articles that you can study to enhance your retail knowledge. My passion is to help others in the retail sector and how I do this is by writing articles like this, special reports and books. You can learn more below.

Where to get educated: GRIP Retailer Education www.gripretailer.com

Latest Report Available for Free Today: GRIP Pandemic Special Report 2021

More about the Author:

Elias Amash, President of GRIP, is an industry veteran with more than 20 years of experience in global sourcing, manufacturing, distribution, retail merchandising, fulfillment, marketing, technology, and operations. He is a trusted partner to hundreds of retailers and has "leveled up" the industry with GRIP's undying commitment to offering only the highest levels of service to its customers. Amash has recently published his fifth business book, *The Retail Advantage: How to Win the War with Amazon*. He is also the author of *Retail Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies and Why*, *The Future of Retail*, *Importing from China: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, and *101 Bright Ideas: Winning Tactics to Increase Retail Sales*.

More about GRIP:

GRIP was incorporated by Charles Amash in 1980 and has grown into one of the nation's top suppliers of innovative products to the retail industry. Located just south of Grand Rapids, Michigan, GRIP features a 200,000 sq ft state of the art warehouse facility including a 2,000 sq ft product showroom. GRIP carries a product line of over 1,000 specialty tools, tarps, automotive, cargo control, cleaning, LED lighting, magnetics, outdoors, household items, impulse and general merchandise. GRIP has a proven track record of excellence in supplying retail clients with innovative products, timely fulfillment, and world-class customer support. At GRIP, everything is about earning your business...one customer at a time. It's about building relationships and fostering business partnerships that will last long into the future. Our goal

is to have Customers for Life. The future at GRIP is exciting and we're hoping that you can be a part of it as one of our many Customers for Life.

Learn more at www.gripontools.com For more information: 616-877-0000