

## Title:

Entry Level Retail Jobs Lead to Lucrative Careers

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## Summary:

If you were to survey store managers, merchandisers, buyers, or other high-level retail executives, virtually all of them would say that their first retail jobs were in customer service or in retail sales. Find out why...

## Keywords:

retail job, jobs in retail, store jobs, retail career, retail opportunities, retail work, mall jobs

## Article Body:

If you were to survey store managers, merchandisers, buyers, or other high-level retail executives, virtually all of them would say that their first retail jobs were in customer service or in retail sales. They may have started part-time when they were students, took seasonal mall jobs during the holiday season, or started full-time after taking classes in merchandising or in management. For almost every retail professional, though, what began as a retail job turned into a retail career.

How did they work their way up the ladder of retail work? First, they built a foundation based on customer service and sales. This is partly because, when it comes down to it, every successful retail operation is built upon customer satisfaction. A retailer that offers great prices and good merchandise may do well initially, but if the retailer doesn't take care of customers, the operation is no more than a flash in the pan. Therefore, a proven commitment and passion for exceptional customer service is necessary before advancement is possible.

But the act of keeping customers happy is only one component of enjoying career advancement through retail opportunities. Equally important are the skills you acquire while developing your talent for customer service. After all, customer satisfaction requires a high degree of efficiency (for example, quickly ringing up sales), the ability to troubleshoot (determining what the problem or challenge is and how to fix it), strong interpersonal skills (remaining calm when a customer is upset), and great communication (both in listening and speaking).

Customer service or sales jobs in retail quickly separate those with star potential from those who simply take store jobs out of convenience. Store managers understand that those who have stellar customer service skills directly contribute to the profitability of the enterprise. After all, you are instrumental in establishing and maintaining customer relationships, which result in repeat customers and increased sales. Because retailers almost always promote from within the company, you are well positioned to move up in the company.

As you gain experience in customer service or sales, you are likely to discover other positions that appeal to you. Perhaps you would like to explore retail merchandising, and assume responsibility for merchandise displays, signage, and everything else the customer sees when he or she enters the store. Merchandising is an exciting job that engages your creativity, your understanding of human nature, and your knowledge of the products your store carries.

Another retail career path is in management. Perhaps you like the idea of being in charge of every aspect of your department, hiring and managing employees, and bringing your personal touch to the customer experience. Once you have demonstrated that you have an aptitude for management, you can rapidly advance up the management ranks, moving on to store manager, regional manager, or even district manager.

Retail career advancement can take many different forms. Taking advantage of in-house promotion opportunities is key, but you can help increase the speed with which you move up the ladder by volunteering for company trainings, attending management training programs at community colleges, developing relevant technology-related skills, and taking classes in specialty areas like merchandising.

Wherever your retail career path leads, keep in mind that entry-level retail jobs give you the chance to develop a variety of skills that will serve you well.