

Career Profile: Merchandise Planner

A planner plays an important role along with buyers in the competitive world of retail, especially fashion retail. The planner is responsible for planning and controlling the quantitative aspects of merchandise buying. S/he works with the buyer to develop strategic plans to identify and translate the strategies into plans for what merchandise to buy and in what sort of mixture, bearing in mind the demands of the various stores. The strategies need to incorporate the changing seasons and their impact on merchandise for the coming season. As a merchandise planner you will operate as a member of a team and have a number of important activities to carry out to fulfil your role effectively.

- analyse the performance of products and stores
- develop seasonal strategies
- compile numerical pre-season and assortment plans
- manage the supply-chain effectively and efficiently to ensure that products are completed on time, to standard and delivered to the stores
- control budgets
- carry out store and supplier visits to maintain effective communication
- monitor competitor activities.

The retail environment is an extremely competitive environment and demands passion and commitment.

Education Requirements

National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in retail fashion students are advised to select Mathematics and to add to this a selection from the designated subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

Bachelor Degree

Bachelor of Commerce – BCom (3 years)

A three year degree programme that develops good financial skills, analysis and problem solving to prepare the graduate to be able to function effectively in the fast-paced, competitive environment of retail.

Offered at:

- [University of Johannesburg](#)¹(Faculty of Management)
- [University of Limpopo](#)² (School of Economics and Management)
- [University of Pretoria](#)³ (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences)
- [University of the Witwatersrand](#)⁴(Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management)
- [University of Venda](#)⁵ (Management Sciences)
- [UNISA](#)⁶(College of Economic and Management Sciences)

Specializations offered:

The most relevant BCom would be a general degree or one specializing in Business or Retail Management, or Marketing.

National Diploma / BTech

The National Diploma is a three year course which includes guided practical experience. The diploma is a pre-requisite for admission to a Bachelor of Technology - BTech.

Offered at:

- [Tshwane University of Technology](#)⁷(Faculty of Management Sciences)
- [University of Johannesburg](#)⁸ (Faculty of Management)
- [UNISA](#)⁹(College of Economic and Management Sciences)
- [Vaal University of Technology](#)¹⁰ (Faculty of Management Sciences)

Specializations offered:

There are a number of National Diplomas and BTech degrees to consider.

Tshwane University of Technology

National Diploma: Admin management (Finance), Retail business management, Marketing

BTech: Marketing, Retail business management

University of Johannesburg

National Diploma: Logistics management, Retail business management

BTech: Logistics, Marketing management

² http://www.ul.ac.za/index.php?Entity=School%20Main%20Menu&school_id=5

³ <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=41&subid=41&ipklookid=3>

⁴ <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/CLM/>

⁵ http://www.univen.ac.za/management_sciences/index.html

⁶ <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=32>

⁷ <http://www.tut.ac.za/Students/facultiesdepartments/managementsciences/Pages/default.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=www.uj.ac.za/management>

⁹ <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=32>

¹⁰ <http://www.vut.ac.za/metadot/index.pl?id=19737>

Vaal University of Technology

National Diploma: Marketing, Purchasing management, Retail business management

BTech: Marketing, Purchasing management, Retail business management

Admission Requirements

As admission requirements vary from one institution to another, find out what the specific requirements are by checking on the website and contacting the university if you have any queries.

Possible Employers

- [Truworths](#)¹¹
- [Foschini Group](#)¹²
- [Mr Price Group](#)¹³
- [Woolworths](#)¹⁴
- Other retail organisations

Find out more

Find out more about planning, buying and merchandising, bursaries and jobs:

- [Information about Truworths Graduate/Trainee Programme](#) ¹⁵including trainee planners.
- [The Foschini Group](#)¹⁶ runs a Graduate Programme each year for talented graduates interested in fashion and retail. It offers on the job training.
- [Mr Price Group](#)¹⁷ also has a Graduate Programme with several different possibilities.

¹¹ <http://www.truworthscareers.co.za/>

¹² <http://www.foschinigroup.co.za/careers/organisational.asp>

¹³ <http://www.mrpricegroup.com/careers>

¹⁴ <http://www.woolworthsholdings.co.za/>

¹⁵ <http://www.truworths.co.za/cms/cms11.asp?cmsid=2552&act=cm>

¹⁶ <http://www.foschinigroup.co.za/careers/organisational.asp>

¹⁷ <http://www.mrpricegroup.com/careers/grad.asp>

Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this occupation.

Quiz	Yes	No
Are you excited about the prospect of working in a high pressure environment such as retail?		
Are you detailed and thorough in analysing problems?		
Are you able to think broadly when seeking solutions to problems?		
Do you communicate your ideas clearly to others orally and in written form?		
Do you have a high energy level to cope with pressure?		
Are you detailed and accurate when doing calculations?		
Do you enjoy working as a member of a team?		
Do you have good numerical skills?		
Are you comfortable communicating in a challenging environment with a free exchange of ideas?		
Do you like to work in a systematic and organized way?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is an occupation to consider.