



Purchasing Career Feature

Senior Buyer Career

Purchasing is one of the fundamental needs for a business to function. Businesses buy things, or contract out services, and convert them into products, adding value and going to resell them to their end customers. Because of this, every business needs to buy things, often times constantly. Going for buying jobs puts you deeply into the company's logistical infrastructure, and is a position that merits a lot of analysis and preparation.

As companies get larger, buyer jobs start to specialize. For example, in the publishing industry, one of the major buyer positions is the [print buyer](#). The print buyer has the responsibility to constantly solicit bids for new work, compare how they come together, work with the production staff to make sure the files are in the appropriate formats and color spaces, and then send them onto the printing company. Print buyer is a very specialized example of buyer purchasing jobs, but it's not the only one. No matter what kind of buyer jobs you get in to, a large part of your knowledge is expertise on the products and services being purchased.

Falling back on our print buyer jobs example, a print buyer typically manages several concurrent projects and purchasing decisions at once; each print job will take anywhere from two to three weeks to complete, and up to seven or eight if it's a complex job involving die cutting, or needs to make it through customs brokerages. As the aim of buying things is to get them added to your own company's products and make your own release schedule, the demands of a print buyer position include a lot of time management, but not on the hours and minutes scale, but on keeping track of scheduling and production deadlines. It's a common truism in ANY [senior buyer position](#) that they may know what time of the day and day of the week it is, but they may not remember what month it is.

Other [senior buyer purchasing jobs](#) have many similarities to the print buyer position described above. Senior buyers have to keep track of not only what the top prices are on the particular components or services they're buying, they're responsible for delivery dates as well, and keep track of vendor relationships — when the last bill to the vendor was sent out, the current status of credit and billing cycles. A senior buyer has to be able to communicate competently and thoroughly, and be able to make recommendations for vendors based not only on purchase price, but also on purchase price and shipping costs, versus delivery dates and how many items are expected to sell. It's a senior buyer's fault if there's excess inventory in the warehouse on a

particular product, eating shelf space that could be used to buy new items and depreciating in value, not the sales department.

The senior buyer is also responsible for interfacing with the head of the sales department. The sales agents have to be able to gauge how well a product will sell in the market, and the senior buyer should have an idea of what the sales curve looks like — how many copies will sell in the first 90 days (the peak sales period for any new product) versus how well they'll sell for the next 18 months. The typical purchase, launch, restock loop runs at 27 to 36 months, with the bulk of sales in the first 90 days, and the second major decline in sales happening around 9 months afterwards. After that, the rest of the inventory is a gamble that the product is an evergreen — something that will continue selling more or less forever.

Going back to the example of a senior buyer position in publishing, different specialties have different buying needs. A print buyer at a game publisher might need to know more about die cutting or publishing decks of cards. A print buyer at a fiction house mostly works with hardback books, trade paperbacks, and mass-market paperbacks (and for a given title, may end up doing the buying for each of those re-releases).

Important traits for a print buyer are organizational skills, and the ability to do 'strategic shopping'; a senior buyer will develop a core set of vendors they've used in the past and can reliably turn to make a tight deadline. That does mean that the buyer needs to be able to keep that vendor happy while constantly evaluating other options.

If you're one of those people who likes shopping, and enjoys making decisions — choosing a product or service provider after doing the research to make sure you're getting the best deal, then going into purchasing and buying jobs as a career path may be very rewarding. Salaries scale up as the companies get larger. Being a senior print buyer at a small publishing company pays about \$30,000 per year; being the chief electronics buyer



Purchasing Career Feature

at Amazon.com pays a little over \$120,000 per year. Aside from the technical details, many of the day-to-day duties remain the

same. Both positions evaluate products based on probable sales and price, and set the quantities purchased.

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.