



Becoming a New Age Retail Manager

The New Age retail manager is responsible for improving the commercial performance of those retail outlets that are primarily concerned with selling merchandise related to metaphysics, especially the metaphysics revolution rooted in the early 1970s, by increasing their turnover and maximizing their profitability. Anyone who seeks a job as a New Age retail manager should have an abiding interest in things like creative visualization, crystals, meditation (not necessarily linked to any religion), Tarot cards, esoteric symbolism, “pagan” and Zodiac iconography, Fair Trade, New Age music, and the jewelry and clothing that are intimately associated with the New Age movement. The retail manager of a New Age store has a good opportunity to do work that pays well and is personally rewarding as interest in personal expressions of spirituality that lie outside the mainstream Western religious tradition continues to expand throughout our culture. The day to day management of the store and store or corporate policy is what the retail manager is responsible for.



A New Kind of Retail Business

New Age retailers mainly move in business circles linked to the occult, the world of the psychic, and “self-actualizing” phenomena and practices. This may include

artisans, authors, “life coaches”, people disenchanted with traditional religious institutions who now seek alternative spiritual revelations (in the West this mostly includes people who are interested in paganism or Oriental religious philosophies like Zen Buddhism), commercial psychics like Alison DuBois (made famous by the semi-biographical TV series “Medium”), and researchers into the phenomena of ghosts, crop circles, and UFOs. People who shop at New Age stores also tend to be interested in holistic medicine and health, although they aren’t necessarily athletically-oriented.

The “New Age” retail business takes its name from the New Age Movement, which is a loose agglomeration of people who feel that old worldviews and cultural memes are slowly disintegrating with the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, which is generally believed to have begun to be ushered in in the late 1960s and is often said by insiders to have inspired or influenced the cultural revolutions of that time period. This is a relatively small but very potent and growing business niche. No-one who doesn’t have keen enthusiasm for the trappings, lifestyle, and products of this movement should consider becoming a retail manager within this business niche.

New Kind of Business, Same Old Responsibilities

Retail managers in the New Age niche still need to make money for their stores. As such, their day to day responsibilities include managing the staff, interfacing with customers and figuring out how to meet customer demands, and finding new ways to increase sales.

The retail manager may thus have a large number of responsibilities to juggle on a daily basis and should be excellent at multitasking and possess superior communication skills. This can be a high-pressure job depending on the circumstances.

Specific responsibilities might include: managing and motivating a team of diverse personalities and backgrounds to increase sales and make commercial operations more efficient; managing stock levels and making key decisions about the flow of stock; analyzing sales figures with respect to market trends and forecasting future sales volumes in order to bring the store as much profit as possible (which will often require being able to use information technology to record sales figures and analyze data and draw up predictive charts); and handling staffing issues such as the interviewing of potential staff, conducting appraisals and giving performance reviews to existing staff, and giving orientation and training to new and existing employees.

Furthermore, as part of these responsibilities, the retail manager to have to: resolve health, workplace safety, legal, or security issues; respond to customer complaints and comments; promote the organization locally through various means and outlets; organize special promotions, displays, and events; chair or attend company or staff meetings; update colleagues on business performance, new initiatives, and so on; take tours of the sales floor regularly, talking to colleagues and customers, identifying or resolving urgent issues; maintain awareness of market trends in the retail industry, understand forthcoming customer initiatives, and monitor what local competitors are doing; initiate changes to improve the business; and handle sales directly in certain circumstances.

For the wrong individual, this may be biting off more than you can chew, so careful consideration of the nature of the job and



Retail Career Feature

the New Age niche industry is necessary before you decide you would like to seek a job as a retail manager in this business.



Education and Compensation

There are many good opportunities in retail management for the right person because there is a fairly large turnover in this industry.

Pressure and long hours have to be dealt with. An aptitude for salesmanship, which many people don't have enough of, is also necessary, and a knack for being able to keep a professional, neat, but appropriate appearance.

To obtain a retail manager job in this industry, one may only need a high school diploma and some work experience in retail

sales. However, many of the larger retail chains want to see some kind of college degree, although it doesn't necessarily have to be in business.

Currently, the average annual compensation nationally for a retail manager in the United States is \$51,000. There are usually also excellent employer-provided benefits such as health insurance and paid vacation time.

Conclusion

If you are knowledgeable about and interested in the New Age niche, and have the right kind of character, you don't need a huge amount of higher education to land a good-paying retail manager job.

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