



Retail Sales and Customer Service

What's happening?

- The retail sector accounts for more than 10% of jobs in England. Tesco is the UK's second-largest employer after the National Health Service.
- Employment in retail is the largest in London and the South East, accounting for 14% of employment in those regions.
- Employers report a need for improved skills in ICT, oral communication, customer handling, team working and personal attributes.
- When compared with the English national average, East of England retailers were more likely to report not enough people interested in a retail career (26%), unsociable hours (26%) and a lack of work experience held by applicants as causes of hard-to-fill vacancies.
- Formal qualifications are not always necessary - candidates can learn on the job. Retailers are often more interested in attitude, reliability, experience and skills.
- There are approximately 57,000 telesales operators employed in the UK. The largest employers are finance and retail companies and distribution centres.
- Shops and stores remain the dominant way of shopping throughout the UK, despite the growth of internet based shopping.
- For some consumers there is a degree of unhappiness with global brands and mass consumption. This has led them to seek out ways of buying goods which are produced locally or regionally. This has led to a growth of outlets such as farmers' markets (now numbering around 600 in the UK).

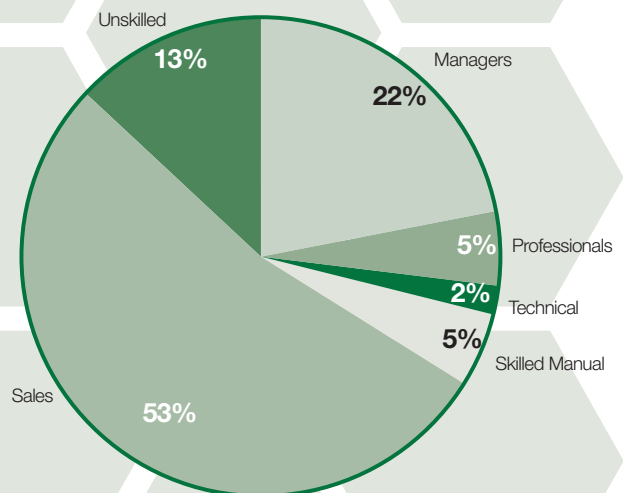
How much could I earn?

Remember – many jobs will demand minimum entry qualifications. Those earning high salaries are usually well qualified and experienced and will continue to learn throughout their working life.

	Annual mean salary
Call Centre Agent/Operator	£13,989
Quality and Customer Care Manager	£36,805
Retail and Wholesale Manager	£26,378
Retail Cashier/Check Out Operator	£7,993
Sales and Retail Assistant	£9,277
Storage and Warehouse Manager	£39,346
Transport and Distribution Manager	£37,533

Salary rates have been calculated using the average gross pay for full-time workers. Figures are for the UK. Averages can hide higher earnings. With training and career development, higher salaries can be achieved. Source: Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings 2007, ONS © Crown Copyright.

Who does what?



Source: Labour Force Survey 2006, © Crown Copyright. Figures are for England.

Numbers employed within sector by local businesses

Essex LSC	82,500
Essex	61,400
Southend UA	8,100
Thurrock UA	13,100
UK	2,394,700

Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2007, [Nomis 17 May 2007] © Crown Copyright. Figures do not include the self-employed, people under 16 or trainees without a contract of employment. Figures are rounded to nearest hundred.



What we think will happen

- There are five key areas identified for regeneration in Thurrock, these are: London Gateway (Shellhaven), Tilbury, Grays, Lakeside/West Thurrock, Purfleet. These will create more jobs in a range of new and existing industries (including retailing, research and development, creative industries and logistics, transport and distribution).
- Work is underway with further and higher education bodies to develop the University College Grays. The new campus will provide a wide range of FE/HE, community and work based learning opportunities, with a central location and a cutting edge landmark design. Courses will be delivered at all levels including Retail.
- The key drivers to change in the sector are consumer confidence, e-commerce, ICT progression, price competition, regulations and the ever-increasing importance of customer services. All of these things will have an effect on the way people work and the skills needed.
- Even though the sector has seen growth over the last few years current forecasts for its future are uncertain. A growth in retail spending will rely on a growth of the UK economy as a whole. If there is an expansion, sales and customer service are expected to be the main areas of employment growth.
- Current econometric modelling predicts that in the period 2004-2014 the number of retail employees working in the East of England will rise by approximately 24,000 (net change).
- Due to people leaving the retail industry, the East of England retail sector will have to recruit 121,000 people (replacement demands). This means that in the ten year period (2004-2014) 49,000 people will have to be recruited into the retail sector.
- Managers will need to be more skilled and better qualified.
- Ethical retailing – the purchases of 'fair trade' and organic products will increase.
- On-line trading is likely to increase as confidence continues to grow in the format, and new technologies continue to be introduced.
- Although in recent years many call centre jobs have been outsourced to overseas facilities, the trend now, among many UK companies, is to bring these operations back to the UK.
- There will be a new qualification called a Diploma in Retail available from September 2010. This will help people prepare for university, college or work.

Is this you?

- Well organised
- Good communication skills
- Enjoy working with people
- Customer service focused

What local students did in 2006

A total of 357 Year 11 local school leavers started full-time employment or work-based training in the retail sector in 2006. (Essex 275, Southend 31 and Thurrock 51).

Source: Connexions Essex, Southend and Thurrock 2006.

Some job suggestions

- Buyer/Purchasing Officer
- Customer Service Manager/Assistant
- Personal Shopper
- Training Officer
- Visual Merchandiser

Next steps...

If you're serious about this type of work - FIND OUT MORE!

Use your Connexions Resource Area in School/College or visit your local Connexions Centre/One Stop Shop for information about jobs; qualifications; local training; further and higher education; skills and personal characteristics; rates of pay and working conditions.

Really useful websites and resources!

The Retail Sector Skills Council – www.skillsmartretail.com

The British Retail Consortium – www.brc.org.uk

The Diploma – www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas

Apprenticeships – www.apprenticeships.org.uk or call the helpline on 08000 150600

Jobs4u (careers database)

– www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

Working in Booklets – case studies of people in a variety of jobs. (Retail and Customer Services). Try your Connexions area, or download them from www.connexions-direct.com. Go to careers>career resources>download publications>Working In For learning opportunities and course information for 14-19 year olds in Essex, Southend and Thurrock, see www.stepon.org

For further information and advice please contact Connexions Direct in confidence (you don't have to give your name or personal details if you don't want to):

Email: via www.connexions-direct.com (click on the email link) • Telephone Connexions Direct on 080 800 13 2 19

Text Connexions Direct on 07766 4 13 2 19 • Local Connexions service www.estconnexions.co.uk

Certain facts and figures are produced under the HMSO Click-Use licence.

March 2008