Selling... A Fast-Paced Career

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YOUR OWN imagination and initiative are the only limits on a career for you in retailing.

Nearly 2 million stores in the United States are offering such careers for women interested in textiles and clothing and personnel work. You can find jobs in almost any section in the country, any size town.

Though the stores include specialty, department, chain, mail order and individual types, your best opportunities are in the department stores. There, 50 per cent of the executives are women. A woman may even rise to the presidency.

You might find a position in any one of the four divisions of a large store—merchandising, advertising, management and control.

If you like to buy and sell, have a nose for trends, style and good taste, and a head for figures, you'll find success and happiness in merchandising. It's the most exciting, fastest-paced of the four fields. The basic job is selling, but you'd want to set your sights beyond the salesperson. Don't overlook the saleswoman entirely however, for it's often the first step up the ladder. Besides, she often makes an outstanding salary. First step after saleswoman is head of stock.

In this position you'd be responsible for a portion of the stock. You'd reorder it and inform the sales people on selling points. You might call yourself an "assistant assistant buyer."

From there you graduate to assistant buyer. You'll do more paper work in this position and manage the office when the buyer is gone. Training salespeople will take up some of your time. This step is one of apprenticeship that every buyer goes through. Your salary will range from $50 to $100 per week.

Now get set for the most glamorous, best known position in merchandising—that of buyer. To be successful you must be a good seller as well as buyer. You'll study the immediate market, decide on a buying plan, select the merchandise to offer and plan the presentation with the salespeople. You'll be dashing off on trips to glamorous places. But the glamour will wear off as you realize it is also a lot of good hard work. Besides your salary of from $60 to $100 per week, you'll be paid a bonus related to sales. From buyer you may be advanced to merchandise manager.

If you have a flair for clothing and style, why not try for a job as fashion co-ordinator? You'd keep the buyers and merchandise manager up to date. It won't be an accident that the leather and colors of shoes and handbags match even if they are in different departments. It will be because you did your job of keeping various departments working together.

Comparison Shopper

Would you rather spend a free Saturday afternoon shopping than doing anything else? Maybe you should be a comparison shopper. In this position you shop all day checking your competitor's prices and quality.

If you have combined journalism and textiles and clothing, you might find your career in publicity. Merchandise must be presented to the shopping public. Today you'd have a chance to work with newspapers, radio and television. In this field you start out as copywriter specializing in one given department such as fashion, children's wear or furniture. From there you progress through art director and copy chief to advertising director. All of these positions are often filled by women.

But suppose you don't care to sell, either face to face or through the written word. Then you might find your place in management or control. The store manager is responsible for the non-selling side of the business. You would take care of deliveries, phone orders and other services to the customers. A personnel director to handle employment, training and labor relations is important in a retail store because they depend on people, not machines. It is a big and vital position requiring an interest in people.
In the control division you are the watch dog of the treasury. You'd be hired to be pessimistic, to take an "I'm from Missouri" point of view on everything. You'd also be hired for your ability in handling figures.

A career in retailing is bound to be interesting and exciting. There is always variety and competition. Things are constantly changing. It offers jobs all over the nation. Women can go back to it after being out for awhile since every store uses the same basic principles.

**Executive Jobs**

In a store like Younkers, Des Moines, there are probably 350 executive jobs, one half of them for women. Here is a field where rewards and promotions are on the basis of ability, not age. Working conditions are good; the field is stable. While you do a real service to your community, you share in the happiest moments of life as you help brides plan trousseaus, furnish homes and select gifts.

But as always there are disadvantages, too. You'll be working when others are enjoying leisure, as on Saturdays. You'll also find yourself doing evening work often.

Now all you have to do is decide if retailing is the field for you. The best way is to try it. Fortunately, it is a field you can experiment with in some small way even while you are working on your education. To start, go out and get a job. This is really easier than it sounds and many stores have training programs to help students fit into them easily. This summer might be the perfect time to try a selling job—just to see if you'd like it for a career.

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