Hi! I am Mary and I work as a **Merchandising Executive.**

At work, I leverage on data analytics and consumer research to justify the types of products to be launched, as well as procurement details.

## OVERVIEW OF IMPACT TO THE ROLE

### Level of Impact

**HIGH**

### Time Horizon

Immediate — Mid-term — Long-term

### Key Trends driving Impact

- Consumer of the Future
- New Retail Model
- Automation & Data
- Future-proofed Supply Chain

### ⚠️ Highly Impacted Retail Archetypes

| Fashion & Sporting Goods | Department Stores |
|---|---|
| Non-brand owners | |

## DETAILED LOOK INTO IMPACT ON THE ROLE

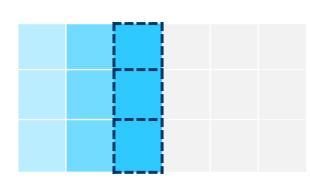| Category of Impact | Types of impact to the role |
|---|---|
| **Technology Implementation** | Displacement by Technology |
| | **Augmented by Technology:** Role incorporate automation processes to manage time-intensive tasks |
| | **Complemented by Technology:** Role utilises real-time data analytics to make agile decisions on product availability and inventory. |
| **Job Reconfiguration** | **Job Enlargement:** Role has to define customer journey roadmaps across online, offline and omni-channel platforms, to support sales conversions across sales channels. |
| | Job Enrichment |

## Skills to Grow

**Customer Behaviour Analysis**
Proficiency level 3

**Merchandise Buying**
Proficiency level 3

**Merchandise Performance Analysis**
Proficiency level 3

## New Skills Required

- Automated Inventory Control
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Application
- Emerging Technology

While the skill level remains, the Merchandising Executive will be increasingly expected to apply these skills in their role:

- **Merchandise Buying, Customer Behaviour Analysis:** Analyse customer behaviours to determine market trends that shape product buying decisions, and understand the characteristics of the target customer's personas.

- **Merchandise Performance Analysis:** Analyse data on merchandise performance and make data-driven decisions to increase revenue, provide customized services, improve customer experience to induce loyalty and optimise merchandising and related operations.

*\*Skills and proficiency levels are identified based on Skills Framework for Retail*

Alternative titles: Category Executive, House Brand Executive

## THE ROLE TODAY

The Merchandising Executive implements the merchandising plans and product category strategies as well as managing partner relationships, including the development and sourcing of products in accordance to allocated budgets.

## THE ROLE TOMORROW

The Merchandising Executive is expected to leverage data analytics to support strategic decisions in optimising product portfolios, supplier bases, procurement needs and merchandising process efficiencies.  The Merchandising Executive will spend less time on repetitive tasks as technology solutions implemented would automate processes such as inventory management, order management and item setup.

## Changes in critical work function

| Critical Work Function | Key Drivers of Change | Implications on Tasks |
|---|---|---|
| **Drive Merchandising Strategies** | Availability of real-time data to predict changing customer demands:<br><br>• As the **pace of changing customer expectations accelerates**, customers' behaviour profiles and purchasing behaviours are morphing quicker than merchandising teams can comprehend and act on to effectuate pertinent changes. Merchandising analytics can provide profound insights that enable fast-paced, data-driven merchandising decisions (e.g. dynamic pricing, product gaps) which meet real consumer demand.<br><br>Rise of merchandising technologies:<br><br>• **Advanced planning systems** are increasingly common for automating historical analytics and generating predictive scenarios.<br>• **Dynamic systems with web-scraping** and predictive impact analytics are also creating opportunities for automating pricing and promotions. | Complemented by Technology:<br><br>• The Merchandising Executive will **increasingly use data analytics tools and skills to enable a comprehensive shift towards effective customer-centric merchandising processes**. Better decision models and agile decision processes would proactively mitigate product-planning activities, reducing opportunity costs when introducing new products.<br>• **Standardised tools based on real-time analytics can also act as an enabler for responsibilities** that require interaction with other parties, such as negotiations and sourcing (e.g. visualisation of historical vendor performance across categories).<br><br>Augmented by Technology:<br><br>• The Merchandising Executive should also **focus on applying automation to highly predictable or time-intensive processes** (e.g. item setup, order management). |
| **Drive Category Management and Product Assortment** | Rise in digital and social platforms:<br><br>• The competitive e-commerce landscape results in customers demanding for a **unique shopping experience that is seamless across sales channels**, such as product availability and information across online and offline sales channels. | Job Enlargement:<br><br>• The Merchandising Executive needs to **collaborate with digital teams to help shape the e-commerce experience, and define a digital merchandising footprint that guides users through the customer journey and promote sales conversion.** The digital footprint should align with the in-store retail experience, harmonising to drive a seamless omni-channel retail experience for the customers. |

## A closer look at how tasks would be impacted:

| Critical Work Function | Existing task... | ...Envisioning the new tasks |
|---|---|---|
| **Drive Merchandising Strategies** | Analyse information on business environment and merchandising landscape | • Implement new merchandising analytics (e.g. AI-driven analytics) that capture real-time demand and consumer behaviour patterns, to support strategic listing and delisting of products to improve overall sales and customer experience. |
| | Provide inputs to formulate merchandising strategies | • Review merchandising strategies and KPIs, based on evolving market trends, developing the core information required for technology tools to identify a curated list of products optimised for product relevance.<br>• Implement retail technology solutions (i.e. AR, VR) that help consumers better understand and visualise the product offered prior to making a purchase, to enhance overall customer experience. |
| **Drive Category Management and Product Assortment** | Analyse product sales, stock turnover rate and inventory level | • Implement automated inventory control systems to analyse real-time inventory levels, predicting consumer demand patterns based on future business requirements.<br>• Automate stock purchasing activities with inventory predictive analytics, driving efficient communication with supply chain and logistics to predict future product demand.<br>• Implement software integration plans on routine merchandising tasks that require limited human intervention, identifying any additional opportunities for data or feedback collection. |
| | Analyse customer feedback on product categories | • Review the outcomes of AI tools (i.e. ML & NLP) processing qualitative customer feedback on social media platforms in a way that translates to real-time changes and increased customer satisfaction.<br>• Develop new product categorisation models that are anchored on changing customer behaviour (e.g. new and existing consumers), transitioning away from distinct product hierarchies (e.g. perfumes). |

**Upskilling of existing skills**

• Merchandise Buying
• Customer Behaviour Analysis
• Merchandise Performance Analysis

**New skills for the role**

• Automated Inventory Control^
• Artificial Intelligence (AI) Application
• Emerging Technology
• Digital Fluency*
• Creative Thinking*

*Critical Core Skills
^Skills not in any Skills Framework