**Success as Large Retail Store Department Manager**

Retail store managers have a ton of responsibility — and it’s because you play a valuable role in the business’s overall success. You also wear A LOT of hats. There’s sales associate, customer service representative, manager, mentor, boss, disciplinarian, website editor, social media manager … you get the picture.

And as many businesses begin to explore [multi-channel selling](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/59551762084/be-a-multi-channel-retailer-5-ways-you-can-add), the number of hats only continues to grow. Let’s see how you can arm yourself with the appropriate skills, staff and technology to help you run a tight ship operationally.

**Support and motivate your staff**

One of a store manager’s most important roles is coordinating and encouraging retail staff. This is especially important considering employee turnover rates in the retail industry — one of the top five verticals with the highest turnover, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf). Plus, 38% of retailers reported an increase in employee turnover from 2016 to 2017, with hourly staff having the highest turnover at 65%, per data from the [Korn Ferry division of the Hay Group](https://www.kornferry.com/press/retail-employee-turnover-up-as-black-friday-and-holiday-shopping-season-nears-according-to-korn-ferry-hay-group-survey-of-top-us-retailers/).

Retail store managers can play a huge role in reducing turnover. Let’s look at an employee’s journey, and an effective manager’s role at each stage:

**Recruiting and hiring**

“Hiring the right people from the start, most experts agree, is the single best way to reduce employee turnover. Interview and vet candidates carefully, not just to ensure they have the right skills but also that they fit well with the company culture, managers and co-workers,” the [Wall Street Journal writes](http://guides.wsj.com/management/recruiting-hiring-and-firing/how-to-reduce-employee-turnover/).

As a store manager, you play a key role in hiring those individuals, and making sure that they are the right fit. Set clear expectations for the role during the vetting process, and ask candidates hypothetical questions to give you a sense of how they’d work under pressure and typical but challenging circumstances in the store.

**Onboarding**

After you’ve identified the right talent, you’ll want to make sure their transition into the role runs smoothly. A major part of this is training staff to get them up to speed on everything from sales tips to how to keep [in-store displays](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830844/store-retail-displays) on-brand.

If you use tools and technology, remember to [train new employees properly on how to use them](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901828089/training-staff-to-use-new-technology). Perhaps the most important piece of tech you’ll want them to master is your POS. For help on that, check out this [guide to training retail staff to use the POS](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830720/cashier-and-pos-training).

To keep the onboarding process consistent and thorough, it could help to document exactly what that process is. This includes specific trainings, milestones, performance goals and deadlines for new hires to meet. This keeps not only you and your employees on the same page, but it also means that every staff member goes through the same training and has the same experience and expectations.

**Managing**

Once you’ve on boarded staff, it doesn’t mean it’s time to leave them to their own devices. As a manager, it’s your job to continue to engage with them throughout their journey. Remember those performance goals we told you to set? Set up regular 1 to 1 meetings with your staff to check in on progress, and to set new goals when previous ones have been met.

And as much as it’s your job to lead and to mentor, it’s almost more important to remember to listen to your staff. Hear their challenges and address them, listen to their ideas and encourage them.

**Proactively contribute to smooth retail ops and growth**

“Hot retailers come in all sizes and formats. Nine of the 10 top businesses represent different retail segments, indicating that growth owes more to management and strategy than any kind of tide lifting boats in any particular category.” – [National Retail Federation STORES Magazine](https://nrf.com/connect-us/stores-magazine)

One of the biggest ways you can contribute is by staying on top of stock control. Shrinkage is a costly issue for retailers. Globally, it cost businesses almost $100 billion in 2017, [Tyco Retail Solutions found](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/tyco-retail-solutions-releases-the-new-2018-sensormatic-global-shrink-index-in-partnership-with-planetretail-rng-300651038.html). As a retail store manager, there are many loss prevention steps you can take to mitigate shrinkage.

**Physical counts:**Maintain a regular [cycle counting](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901827909/taking-physical-count-inventory) practice. A cycle count, or physical count, is when you count a portion of your inventory to estimate your overall stock on hand.

Philip Pravda of [SuitCafe.com](http://www.suitcafe.com/) would do a physical count every day when he was managing his store. “I would choose small sections of the store … [and] count them up with the style numbers and sizes, then walk over to my computer and compare. Doing the whole store for a small business is difficult because you’re always helping customers and certainly don’t want to close … to do inventory.”

**Theft:** Tyco also found that external theft/shoplifting contributed the most, at more than 35% of lost sales to shrink — closely followed by internal theft at nearly 25%. There are many ways you can prevent both external and internal theft. Check out these handpicked resources:

* [How to Prevent Shoplifting in Your Retail Store](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901828999/prevent-and-deal-with-shoplifting)
* [6 Anti-Theft Devices You Can Use To Protect Your Retail Store](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830894/anti-theft-devices)
* [How to Handle Robberies and Theft in Retail](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901829931/prevent-handle-robberies-theft-retail)
* [Retail Loss Prevention: 7 Powerful Tools & Technologies to Help You Reduce Shrinkage](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901828723/loss-prevention)
* [Managing Internal Theft in Retail Stores](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830752/prevent-and-handle-internal-theft-retail)

**Get your staff involved:** Just because you’re the store manager doesn’t mean you have to do it all. (Recall that the ability to delegate is a top leadership quality.) Openly communicate about why it’s so important to stay on top of stock control, and [provide education and training on how they can help](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830004/tips-help-retail-employees-inventory-management).

**Implement and take advantage of the right tools**

Much of retail operations can be streamlined with the right tools. From [choosing the right POS system](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830361/how-to-find-the-right-pos-software-for-retail) to finding the best [inventory management](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830501/optimize-your-inventory-get-it-just-right) software, this technology can change not only how you do your job, but also how efficiently the overall business is run.

Use automated reports to determine which items are selling fast, and which need an extra boost. Identify differences in online and brick-and-mortar trends, and look for opportunities to give sales a boost through creative promotions and campaigns.

Today’s data-driven retailers are the fastest-growing and most sustainable ones. [Understanding metrics](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830602/retail-metrics-and-kpis) like sell-through rate, sales per square foot, and gross and net profit can help you make more insightful recommendations that make a real difference to the bottom line. With the right tech stack, you don’t have to be an analyst to understand your data.

**Make sure you have the skills you need**

Whether you have decades of retail management experience under your belt or have just landed yourself in this position, there are ALWAYS going to be ways to improve your skills.

There are a few key areas to think about getting additional training:

* Retail sales
* Leadership and management
* Your brand

**Retail sales**

Even if it’s not a core part of your duties, there’s going to be a time when every retail store manager is going to have to actively drive sales. We actually have a few resources you can use to read up on some retail sales tips:

* [How to Greet Customers in Retail: 20+ Examples to Try in Your Store](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830567/how-to-greet-customers-in-retail)
* [How to Upsell and Cross-Sell in Retail: 6 Pointers to Implement in your Store](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901829028/cross-sell-upsell-retail)
* [11 Retail Skills Every Sales Associate Should Have (and How to Develop Them)](https://www.vendhq.com/blog/post/64901830605/retail-skills-sales-associate)

If you want to take your education a bit further, considering sales trainings and courses. If scheduling is a challenge, there are many online options. You can also attend in-person training or hire consultants to come to your location to get you and your staff up to speed.

Here are some options to check out:

* [SalesRX](https://www.retaildoc.com/online-retail-sales-training)
* [Retail Training Services](http://retailertrainingservices.com/)
* [The Friedman Group](https://thefriedmangroup.com/online-retail-training/)
* [Retail Sales Academy](https://www.retailsalesacademy.com/retail-sales-training/)

**Leadership and management**

One key difference between being a retail sales associate and a manager is the added responsibility of being in charge. And if you’re transitioning from sales to management, you’ll want to pick up a few extra skills to help you lead more effectively.

[According to The Retail Doc](https://www.retaildoc.com/blog/7-leadership-training-skills-to-make-your-store-more-successful), retail managers should have these seven key leadership skills:

1. The ability to make difficult decisions
2. The ability to get everyone on board — even if they disagree with it
3. The ability to give feedback on a regular basis
4. The ability to listen
5. The ability to communicate clearly and with focus
6. The ability to gain and hold the trust of others
7. The ability to stay positive

Looking for ways to gain or improve your leadership and management skills? Check out these resources:

* [NRHA Retail Leadership Institute](http://www.nrharmcp.com/)
* [MOHR Retail’s Store Manager Training](http://mohrretail.com/retail-training-programs/retail-ready-training-programs/retail-management-training-store-manager/)
* [Dale Carnegie Leadership Development](https://www.dalecarnegie.com/en/topics/leadership-development)
* [American Management Association’s leadership training programs](https://www.amanet.org/training/seminars/leadership-training.aspx)
* [Retail Leadership Group](https://www.retailleadershipgroup.com/)

**Your brand**

If you expect staff to have an intimate knowledge of the brand and products, it’s a good idea for you, as a store manager, to do the same. Use the products, get to know them, understand your competitors, and stay up-to-date with product and brand training. If there’s no training or documentation, start the conversation with your superior.

“Three of the worst words for a customer to hear from an associate are, *I don’t know*. Make a point of everyone examining shipments for what’s new. Make employees try on, handle, or use new merchandise,” the [Retail Doc states](https://www.retaildoc.com/blog/the-9-secrets-to-effectively-managing-retail-employees-infographic).

**Retail operations**

Inventory management and operational tasks fall on your shoulders. If you don’t have experience in these areas, it’s a good idea to study up and learn your role in retail ops as a store manager.

“Retail store managers need to serve customers and make sure they’re supporting their sales personnel. They oversee stocking, make sure promotions and signage are current, and schedule employees,” [Deborah Abrams Kaplan writes for Supply Chain Dive](https://www.supplychaindive.com/news/retail-store-manager-role-Black-Friday-holidays/511456/).

Today’s store managers also have new challenges, she continues. [86% of shoppers](https://www.commercehub.com/top-6-multichannel-retail-trends-for-2016/) shop on more than one channel, which means brick-and-mortar businesses often open online selling channels to diversify income streams and tap into a new customer base. With that, managers may have to contribute to online order fulfillment, customer service, in-store pickups, online returns and even website management.

There’s a wide range of skills to learn, so it’s best to look into your specific needs to identify the best training option.