Careers in Consumer Products, Retail, and Manufacturing

Consumer Products, Retail, and Manufacturing comprises one of the fastest-changing sectors in the United States. Organizations in this industry create physical, tangible products, and the production cycle includes new product development, then manufacturing, and ends with the sale of products. Retailing entails all activities directly related to the sale of these products to the consumer. Over 1 million retailers employ more than 15 million people in the US, which accounts for 11.7% of US employment.

RESOURCES AT BOSTON COLLEGE

- Fashion Club at Boston College
- Sales and Business Development Club
- CSOM Marketing Department

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Curiosity; Willingness to learn
- Creativity
- Forward-thinking; ability to plan
- Problem solving skills
- Written & verbal communication skills
- Analytical skills

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS & JOB SEARCH SITES

- National Retail Federation/Site: nrf.com
- National Association of Manufacturers: nam.org
- IndustryWeek: industryweek.com/associations
- Work in Retail: workinretail.com
- All Retail Jobs: allretailjobs.com
- Manufacturing Jobs: manufacturingjobs.com
- ResourceMFG: resourcemfg.com

JOB SEARCH & INTERVIEW PROCESS

Students will find many opportunities to meet employers in this sector during career fairs and networking nights at Boston College. Employers in this sector are likely to ask behavioral interview questions during interviews. Depending on the role, employers may also ask analytical questions during interviews. Employers in this sector often begin recruiting in the fall and finish hiring in the spring, which allows for multiple opportunities to connect with employers of choice throughout the academic year.

Many of the positions offered within this sector are available directly after completing an undergraduate degree, with the opportunity to move into different job functions and even management over time. Students are able to enter this field with a variety of undergraduate majors and experiences.
Assistant Store Manager – Assistant store managers oversee the operations for a given section of a retail store. They supervise employees, manage payroll and sales goals, and report to senior management.

Business Development Representative – A business development representative is a first point of contact for potential buyers of a product. They will qualify inbound or outbound leads, and in most cases, they do not close business, but pass a qualified lead on to sales.

Buyer – Merchandise buyers assess what types of products their company should sell, how much of that product they should buy and which supplier will best fit their needs.

Marketing Manager – Marketing Managers develop, implement, and execute strategic marketing plans for an organization or a specific department within the organization in order to attract potential customers and retain existing ones.

Merchandise Planner – A merchandise planner works for a retail store tracking inventory and bringing in new products based on projected needs for customers.

Product Manager – A product manager develops products by identifying potential products; conducts market research, generates product requirements, determines specifications, production timetables, pricing, and marketing strategies.