

Job title: **Merchandising Lead L5**

Core information

Location: London head office ▾	Lines of business or shared capability area:
Reports to: Head of Category	
People Management: Yes ▾	
Assignment Management: Please select ▾	
Partnership Level: Partnership level 5 ▾	Manager's Partnership level: Partnership level 4 ▾
Number of direct reports: up to 6	Partnership level(s) of direct reports: Partnership level 6 ▾

About the John Lewis Partnership

The Partnership is the UK's largest employee-owned business and home to our two well-loved retail brands - John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners, as well as expanding into new areas beyond retail.

We aren't an ordinary business though. The Partnership is different because everyone who works here isn't just an employee. We are Partners, with a shared responsibility for our success, and we share the rewards when we're successful.

Everything we do is powered by our unique purpose: **Working in Partnership for a happier world.** Our Purpose inspires our principles, drives our decisions and acts as our guide, so that everything we do contributes to Happier People, Happier Business and a Happier World.

Critical purpose of the role

As Merchandising Lead at The John Lewis Partnership you will be a highly experienced, commercial, customer focused and strategic individual with experience of Merchandising and Commercial. You will have experience of influencing internal stakeholders. and building Brand relationships.

You will work at pace, with agility, to proactively highlight opportunities within the market to exceed customers expectations. You are responsible for supporting the development of the strategic direction of you Merchandising for your Category in line with the Head of Category and/or Head of Merchandising's category vision, using your market knowledge and business & customer insight.

You will work closely with the Commercial Planning team to provide commercial rigour in planning and forecasting within categories to maximise returns over the short and long term. You will also maximise profitability, through rebate management and optimising working capital.

You have accountability to roll up sales, margin and demand plans through the Merchandising profession and support budgets across your Category to ensure these are robust and deliver against strategy.

As required, you will provide detailed merchandising expertise at Directorate level working alongside the Head of Category and have significant involvement in upskilling the Merchandisers (L6 & L8) and where required the Category Lead (L5). As appropriate you will task manage the Merchandisers.

Primary Outcomes & Accountabilities	Measures of success
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Strategic Direction and Thought Leadership:

Primary Outcome: Develop and deliver the strategic direction of the categories focusing on merchandising skill, availability, and stock management to meet the needs of the target customer.

Accountability: Define and execute strategic plans that align with business objectives and market trends, ensuring the category's competitiveness and relevance. Provide thought leadership in merchandising, **identifying opportunities for growth and improvement.**

Trading Management:

Primary Outcome: Lead the BTA (Balance to Achieve) process, re-forecasting, and prioritisation of opportunities or new priorities to budget, maintaining alignment with strategic objectives.

Accountability: Own and manage the BTA process, ensuring accurate forecasting and alignment with budget constraints. Collaborate with Category Leads to set and deliver key metrics for assortment review, optimising revenue, cash flow, profit, and customer satisfaction.

Strategic Initiatives and Collaboration:

Primary Outcome: Drive strategic initiatives across the Category, collaborating with Head of Merchandising and Head of Category to align with broader business objectives and drive category growth.

Accountability: Lead the implementation of strategic initiatives, fostering cross-functional collaboration to ensure alignment with business goals. Collaborate with peers in suppliers to optimise stock flow, efficiency, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Team and Development:

Primary Outcome: Create structure and inspire the merchandising team, creating an environment for all Partners to thrive, contribute their best, and achieve their potential.

Accountability: Provide effective structure and standardisation to the merchandising teams, promoting a culture of collaboration, innovation, and excellence. Support the succession planning process by identifying and developing future talent within the team.

Financial Planning and Decision-Making:

Primary Outcome: Communicate financial planning to the Commercial Planning team, ensuring alignment with budgetary

Margin/Controllable Contribution:

Monitor and optimise margin performance, ensuring profitability while effectively managing controllable costs.

Implement strategies to maximise controllable contribution across the category, driving overall financial performance.

Sales Revenue Growth:

Drive sales revenue growth through effective assortment planning and promotional strategies, resulting in increased revenue.

Cash Flow and Inventory Management:

Maintain healthy cash flow by efficiently managing purchasing and inventory replenishment strategies.

Optimise inventory levels to prevent overstocking or stockouts, ensuring optimal cash flow and operational efficiency and healthy stock.

Availability:

Ensure optimal stock availability across the category to meet customer demand and minimise stockouts.

Rebate Optimisation:

Analyse and manage Rebates to ensure Supplier Relationships drive maximum value.

Utilise connections with cat teams and asset sales to manage the communication of risks and opportunities.

Reduction in Stock Loss & Returns:

Implement measures to reduce stock loss and Returns, optimise inventory management practices, resulting in decreased product stock loss.

Expansion of Market Share:

Monitor market share metrics and implement strategies to gain market share within the category, increasing competitiveness.

Efficiency and Standardisation:

Champion standardisation and efficiency in ways of working, supporting cross-category programmes, resulting in streamlined processes and improved productivity.

Team Management and Development:

Foster a collaborative and high-performance team culture,



constraints and strategic objectives.

Accountability: Make informed decisions based on in-season forecasting data, optimising trading performance, and mitigating risks. Define end-of-lifecycle plans for product assortment, including markdown strategies and promotional plans, to maximise sales revenue and profitability.

Supplier Negotiation and Promotional Strategy:

Primary Outcome: Lead the recommendation for driving value from Brands, collaborating with Category Leads to define the overall brand mix, promotional strategies and rebate optimisation. Where relevant lead the directorate recommendation for space optimisation across the physical estate.

Accountability: Make decisions on promotional plans, ensuring alignment with category objectives and customer needs. Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to drive promotional strategies and optimise rebate performance.

Standardisation and Efficiency:

Primary Outcome: Champion standardisation and efficiency in ways of working, working closely with Commercial Optimisation, supporting cross-category programmes, and leading training initiatives to champion best practices in merchandising across the directorate.

Accountability: Implement standardised processes and workflows to improve efficiency and effectiveness in merchandising operations. Lead training initiatives to promote best practices and enhance capabilities across the team.

providing leadership and guidance to the buying team.

Support the professional development and growth of team members, ensuring a skilled and motivated workforce capable of achieving departmental objectives.

Skills

Highly Analytical with a Keen Understanding of Merchandising Best Practice:

Advanced analytical skills coupled with a deep understanding of merchandising best practices, enabling data-driven decision-making, customer and trend analysis, and continuous improvement initiatives.

Strategic Inventory Management:

Proficiency in strategic stock planning, demand forecasting and inventory optimization to ensure product availability whilst managing costs effectively.

Understanding of Global Supply Chains:

Thorough knowledge of global supply chains, including sourcing, procurement, and logistics, to effectively manage supplier relationships, maintain product quality, and mitigate supply chain risks.

Experience in Pricing Strategy and Promotional Activity:

Proven track record in developing and implementing pricing strategies and promotional activities to drive commercial outcomes.



Understanding of competitive pricing dynamics, discounting strategies, and margin optimization to maximize sales revenue and profitability.

Market Knowledge and Awareness of Trends, Risks, and Opportunities:

In-depth understanding of market dynamics, encompassing trends, risks, and opportunities within the retail sector.

Ability to analyse market data and consumer insights to inform strategic decision-making and adapt to changing market conditions effectively.

People and Team Management:

Strong leadership and team management skills to inspire and motivate team members, foster a collaborative and high-performance culture, and drive continuous improvement.

Effective delegation and workload prioritisation to empower team members and achieve business objectives collectively.

Work with peers to create a robust Merchandising succession plan for the future.

Qualifications & Experience (where applicable)

Essential

Proven Experience in Merchandising:

Proven experience in merchandising roles within the retail sector, with a minimum of three years' experience.

Demonstrated expertise in merchandising practices, including assortment planning, inventory management, and pricing strategies.

Experience Across Multiple Category Areas:

Experience working across at least two category areas within the retail sector, demonstrating versatility and adaptability in different product segments.

Knowledge of diverse product ranges and market dynamics to effectively manage various categories.

Strong Analytical and Numerical Skills:

Proficiency in data analysis, numerical reasoning, and financial analysis to interpret sales data, forecast demand, and make informed merchandising decisions.

Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Excel or similar analytical tools.

Excellent Communication and Presentation Skills:

Strong verbal and written communication skills to effectively communicate merchandising strategies, negotiate with suppliers, and collaborate with cross-functional teams.

Ability to present complex data and insights in a clear and concise manner to stakeholders at all levels.

Track Record of Success in Driving Commercial Outcomes:

Demonstrated track record of success in driving commercial outcomes, including sales growth, margin improvement, and inventory optimisation, through effective merchandising strategies and initiatives.

Understanding of Retail Operations and Supply Chain Management:

Comprehensive understanding of retail operations, supply chain management, and logistics processes to ensure efficient product flow, timely deliveries, and optimal inventory levels.

Familiarity with retail systems and software for inventory management and forecasting.

Proactive Approach to Learning and Development:

Willingness to stay updated on industry trends, best practices, and emerging technologies in retail merchandising.

Commitment to continuous learning and professional development to enhance skills and expertise in the field.

Desirable

Previous Experience in Matrix Leadership Structures:

Exposure to working within matrix leadership structures, collaborating across multiple teams and functions to achieve common objectives.

Ability to navigate complex organisational dynamics and leverage diverse perspectives to drive results.

Advanced Proficiency in Data Analysis and Forecasting Techniques:

Proficiency in utilising data analysis tools and techniques to derive actionable insights and inform strategic decision-making.

Experience in forecasting demand, sales trends, and market dynamics to anticipate future opportunities and risks.

Version	Created/updated by	Date
v1	Lorna Davidson Jon Williams	20/06/2024