

Job title: **Merchandising Manager**

Core information

Location: London head officeHybrid working	Lines of business or shared capability area:
Reports to: Head of Merchandising	
People Management: Yes	
Assignment Management: Yes	
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 6Partnership level 8

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 Manager at The John Lewis Partnership, your role is pivotal to leading Merchandising within your Category.

Along with the Buying Manager you are responsible for translating the Directorate strategy into an effective Category strategy.

This role is critical in driving customer-centric commercial outcomes whilst driving operational efficiency.

You are accountable for profit and cashflow through sales, margin and demand plans for your category and working across connected stakeholders to ensure these are robust and deliver against strategy.

You will be accountable for actively managing an element of the assortment within the overall category you are responsible for, as determined by the needs of the category.

You will work closely with the Commercial Planning team to provide commercial rigour in planning and forecasting to maximise profitability and customer satisfaction through driving availability and optimising working capital.

Be a champion of change by embracing new Merchandising tools, processes and systems.

Lead & energise team, create the conditions for all Partners to thrive, make their best contribution and achieve their potential.

By leveraging your accountabilities and essential skills you will drive category performance, and contribute to the overall success of John Lewis Partnership.

Primary Outcomes & Accountabilities

Strategic Direction and Thought Leadership:

Primary Outcome: Develop and deliver the strategic direction of the category, focusing on ranging, 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 Buying Managers to set and deliver key metrics for assortment review, optimising revenue, cash flow, profit, and customer satisfaction.

Sourcing Planning and Collaboration:

Primary Outcome: Collaborate with Sourcing to develop a comprehensive sourcing plan, ensuring timely and efficient supply of stock while considering pace, cost, reliability, and freight options.

Accountability: Work closely with Sourcing to implement sourcing plans that support category objectives, optimising

Measures of success

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.

Communicate plans and work collaboratively with Commercial Planning to deliver.

Availability:

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

Cost of Goods Sold (COGs) Optimisation:

Analyse and manage COGs to ensure competitive pricing while upholding quality standards.

Implement cost-saving initiatives to enhance profitability

stock availability and supply chain efficiency. Foster collaboration with suppliers to identify alternate supply models and enhance operational effectiveness.

Strategic Initiatives and Collaboration:

Primary Outcome: Drive strategic initiatives across the directorate, collaborating with Heads of Merchandising 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 Leadership and Development:

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

Accountability: Provide effective leadership to the merchandising team, 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 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.

Assortment and Promotional Strategy:

Primary Outcome: Lead the recommendation for assortment review of products, collaborating with Buyers and other Merchandising L5s to define the overall range planning, brand mix, and promotional strategies.

Accountability: Make decisions on promotional plans,

without compromising product quality.

Reduction in Stock Loss & Returns:

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

Speed to Market:

Improve speed to market for new products and assortments, ensuring timely launches and responsiveness to market trends.

Improvement in Partner Net Promoter Score (NPS):

Monitor Partner NPS to gauge satisfaction levels with product assortments and buying decisions.

Implement feedback mechanisms and initiatives to improve partner satisfaction and loyalty.

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, providing leadership and guidance to the Merchandising team.

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



assortment reviews, and overall range planning, ensuring alignment with category objectives and customer needs. Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to drive promotional strategies and optimise sales 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. Upskill capability through technical training.

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.

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 Range Construct and Inventory Management:**
 - Proficiency in strategic stock planning, range 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

Minimum of 3 Years' Experience in Merchandising:

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

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 optimization, 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