

Job title: **Category assistant**

Core information

Location: London head office Hybrid working	Lines of business or shared capability area:
Reports to: Merchandiser	
People Management: No Assignment Management: No	
Partnership Level: Partnership level 9	Manager's Partnership level: Partnership level 6
Number of direct reports: 0	Partnership level(s) of direct reports: None

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

You will be a talented and enumerated individual with a passion for retail. You will be responsible for ensuring the right stock is in the right place at the right time, at the right price. Owning the stock flow process to maximise sales and availability whilst managing spend within budget, protecting profitability by reducing overstocks and markdown. The role is central to maintaining product availability, a key driver of sales and customer satisfaction. Your remit will also be to support buying and executing the administrative tasks required across critical path management, range building, marketing, and trading activities for your assigned category.

You will work for the Merchandiser & Buyer in your Category team, taking responsibility for delivering the daily merchandising activity required to ensure the delivery of a profitable assortment and complete product set up and launch of new products whilst supporting marketing and other buying related activities.

You will need to be able to flex in response to changing trade and priorities and seasonal demands. Working as part of a team, you will be responsible for using data, insight, and commercial thinking to identify risks and opportunities and suggest changes and actions to support the delivery of agreed KPIs including sales, stock, availability

Primary Outcomes & Accountabilities

- Responsible for managing stock levels at a SKU level to maximise sales and availability, working to Open To Buy. Analysing weekly sales performance and taking actions to maintain stock levels in line with Category budgets and strategy
- Responsible for managing product forecasts to accurately calculate stock requirements, applying logical reasoning & commercial knowledge using a wide variety of Data sets

Measures of success

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.



- Use forecasts & insight to ensure correct channel (online vs Branch) mix of stock utilising the replenishment system and relevant RPAs, maximising availability and profitability.
- Use data & insight to identify commercial opportunities to contribute to the department strategy. Show confidence in making data-driven decisions.
- Responsible for availability and ensuring Core lines are never out of stock. Can understand and report on the different availability metrics.
- Monitors supplier availability and can identify risks and suggest actions so that we offer the best availability for the customer and reduce markdown spend
- Use of IT systems to build data reports to understand performance against KPIs and support decision making.
- Liaise with stakeholders on a daily basis. Can build and maintain strong relationships internally and externally and use them to capitalise commercial opportunities.
- Taking responsibility for the complete competitor and assortment analysis - working with supplier and internal teams to collate and deliver - events, marketing activities, samples (range building and assortment reviews).
- Can work in a fast paced environment where you can be agile with workload whilst prioritising based on partnership needs.
- Timely & concise feedback into Merchandisers & Buyers highlighting any risks/concerns and opportunities.
- Contribute to the continuous improvement of the Merchandising process responding to sector trends and new ways of working to drive cash flow efficiencies and maximise Customer availability.

Availability:

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

Speed to Market:

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

Efficiency and Standardisation:

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

Critical Path Management

Timely and accurate execution of critical path, range building, marketing and trading activities, enabling effective running of the category to which you are assigned.

Task Resolution

Resolution of issues and escalation procedures completed according to agreed service levels.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You will propose actions to your category group and execute their decisions within their critical path, assortment, marketing and range plans templates. You will manage exceptions to these processes with the relevant stakeholders. ● You will be accountable for ensuring that all the critical planning and trade support activities are executed in a timely planner. ● You will be responsible for executing administrative tasks to support pricing activities. ● You will set up and manage the critical path for your assigned supplier by collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure launch on time. ● You will be responsible for completing marketing/online nomination templates with hero products and trends put forward by your CPG team. ● You will complete market, competitor and assortment analysis, working with suppliers and internal teams to collate samples for range building and assortment reviews. ● You will be responsible for executing administrative tasks to support pricing activities. ● You will understand supplier performance and propose appropriate actions to tackle underperformance . 	
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Skills

- **Commerciality:**
 - Demonstrates a passion for and breadth of knowledge of Retail, including our own business model; competitors, and wider industry, economic and political challenges.
- **Setting priorities:**
 - Sets clear priorities and reviews regularly, proactivity anticipating changes and adapting priorities accordingly ●
- **Relationship building:**
 - Interacts with authenticity, building rapport and making a positive impression in order to collaborate and build lasting connections across the Partnership and beyond.
- **Data Analysis:**
 - Evaluates and analyses different types of complex data objectively and sees patterns and meaning to establish the key relevant facts. Uses this thinking to make credible recommendations to inform critical decision making.
- **Stakeholder Management:**
 - Identifies key stakeholders, their motivations and priorities, and considers these when building and managing relationships. Anticipates stakeholder challenges and proactively plans for these, displaying strong communication



<p>Qualifications & Experience (where applicable)</p>
<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong numerical and analytical skills ● Proactive Approach to Learning and Development ● Strong working knowledge of product development processes ● Managing process to SLAs ● Communicating, influencing and negotiating with a wide range of stakeholders ● Time management & prioritisation

- Project and milestone Management
- Experience of working with range plans, critical path and assortment review and marketing nomination processes

Desirable

- Experience in a merchandising environment
- Experience in data analytics
- Advanced in MS Excel & Google Sheets
- Experience of working in Retail
- Experience of working in an operational team
- Experience of working with automated processes