

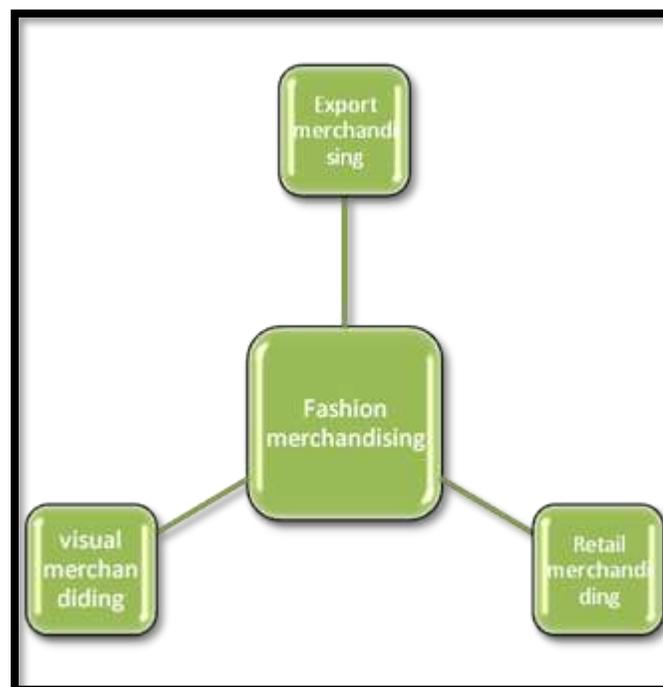
SECTION: B

FASHION MERCHANDISING

Introduction:

The term “**Merchandiser**” defined as a ‘**Person who do buying and selling of goods for the purpose of making a profit.**’ In fashion industry there are different types of merchandising profiles which are meant to perform different types of functions all together at different stages of fashion industry. Over the years of the growth of merchandising as a discipline in the fashion industry, there have been many changes in the job profile of the merchandiser. It has charges from a simple to a much more complex job transcending almost all functions in fashion industry. This has led to a change in the skillsrequired for the job and evolution of the discipline of fashion merchandising.

Different types of merchandising in fashion industry can be described in following way.

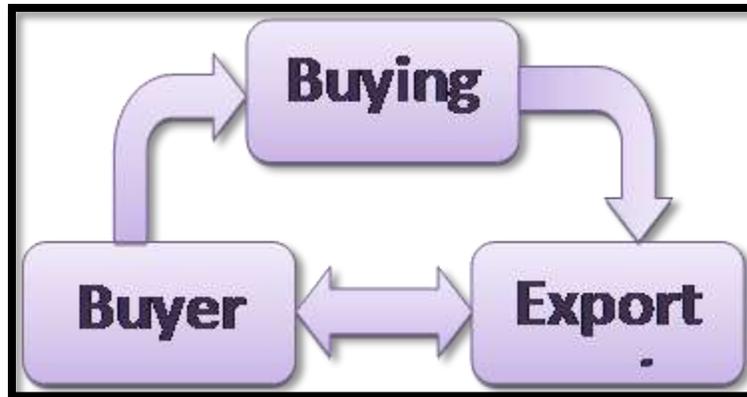


The role of merchandiser is very crucial and demanding in fashion industry. The development of design, production execution and sourcing, selling the merchandise to customer and displaying the merchandise at retail shop, these are the functions of fashion merchandiser at different level of industry. The skills requirement of fashion merchandising tuning with current trends in market, forecasting of upcoming fashion trends, technical parameters like fabric and trim details, garment

quality, deciding the sourcing strategy, communication and coordination along with concern people in the industry. Fashion merchandiser takes design or sketch from designer and develops it in such a way that it will be market feasible, production feasible, and meets customer demands.

Structure of fashion industry:

The structure of fashion industry is changes from strategies adopted by the buyers from different country. But the common trend followed in the industry is as.



All over the world this structure is followed, sometimes buyer directly places the order with exporter. But about 60-70% of total business of fashion products is run through the buying house. In all this process the merchandiser plays the important role.

Need of merchandising:

The need of merchandising in whole fashion industry is summarised as follows

From buyers perspective:

- To find out the market trend
- To make the forecast of market, in order to develop the new style
- Product development is done by merchandiser
- Development of new line for the next season
- Line plan is developed by the merchandiser
- Make the marketing calendar
- To make Communication and coordination with buying house and manufacturer merchandiser is needed.

From buying house perspective:

- To make the coordination with the vendors as well as buyer
- Follow up of the export order.
- Analysis of market is done by buying house merchandiser
- Bring the orders to buying house

- Costing is done by merchandiser
- Filling the daily reports that buying house deals with

From manufacturers' perspective:

- The production merchandiser plays the bridge between the manufactures and buyer
- The need of merchandiser starts when enquiry of buyers comes for new order
- Buyer communicates all the information to the merchandiser, while merchandiser needs to convert that information into format which is understandable to production executives.
- For the proper order follow up merchandiser is needed
- The fabric and trims consumption and costing is done by the merchandiser.

Advantages of merchandising:

- Merchandising Job is very demanding
- Well paid designation
- Opportunity to travel
- Personal growth
- As it is a multiple activity job designation, hence easy to move in related area.
- Wide varieties of job opportunities are available.
- Contact with the people from different background, culture, country, languages.
- Development of soft skills.

Disadvantages of merchandising:

- Excessive work load
- Excessive travelling
- Antisocial approach
- Huge competition
- Rigidity in training program
- Long and late working hours

Different forms of merchandising:

Export Merchandising

Export merchandising is the bridge between the buyer and the manufacturer. It is the back bone of apparel export industry. As the structure of industry is routing through the buying house hence, export merchandising can be divided in two types

- In export production house
- In buying house

1.1 Merchandising in Garment Production:

If the garment production house is small then all the job of merchandising is done by one person, but at the same time if it is big production house then job of

merchandisers is specified, and divided according to the function merchandiser perform, e.g. Marketing, sourcing, sampling, product development, planning, etc.

Marketing Merchandiser:

The main job of marketing merchandiser is to do the marketing of the factory in the market and get the new buyers and the new orders. Once order is confirmed from the buyer, then marketing merchandiser will hand over the orders to the production merchandiser for the further follow ups.

Production merchandising:

Production merchandisers are the face of garment industry. They normally represent the garment industry to the buyer. The role of production merchandiser is very crucial as the success of any export order is largely depends on performance and coordination skill of production merchandiser. The role of production merchandiser can be summarized as follows

- Communication with buyer
- Coordination within the production
- Follow up of different approvals
- Product development
- Costing
- Sourcing or purchasing of raw material
- Preparation of BOM, TNA and trim card
- Shipment scheduling
- Communication with freight forwarder

Sourcing merchandiser:

Sourcing merchandiser works for the sourcing of fabric and trims. He will take care of only sourcing procedure; follow up of the fabric, negation on cost and lead time with vendors. This is much specified work in the industry. In bigger organization this work is done by different person, production merchandiser will give only specifications related to fabric and trims.

Sampling merchandiser:

Sampling merchandiser takes care of sampling only; production merchandiser provides all the details to sampling merchandiser. According to specification sampling merchandiser makes sure that sample will be send to buyer on time with correct requirements of buyer. The role of sampling merchandiser is to take follow up of all sampling as well as take care for quality of the samples.

Product development merchandiser:

Some organizations have in-house design studio or design development department, exporter proactively develops designs seasonally. These designs need

to develop in the form of samples and needs to present to the buyer. PD merchandiser takes care all the activities like design development, availability of the fabrics and trims for the same, get follow up of development samples. Sometimes some organizations have in-house fabric production; hence development of fabric is also followed up by PD merchandiser. To bring the business to the organization is the potential role of PD merchandiser.

Planning merchandiser:

Main responsibility of planning merchandiser is to do the production planning. Planning merchandiser normally coordinates with sourcing team to get all the raw material delivery dates and with Industrial Engineering department for get the SAM value of the garments. Then along with production team planning merchandiser will do the planning of production by considering the efficiency and absenteeism of the operator. Planning merchandiser also needs to coordinates with cutting and packaging department in order to send the accurate merchandise on time to buyer.

1.2 Buying house merchandising

The role of buying house merchandiser is slightly different from production merchandiser. Buying house is an agent who works with the buyer and manufacturer/exporter to fulfil the obligation of the export order. Buying house merchandiser directly communicated with buyer. The function of any buying house is to represent their overseas customer. The work done by buying house is depends upon size of buying house, volumes handled, services provided to buyer. Prime purpose of merchandiser is to ensure that delivery of the order is on time. The role of buying house can be described as

- Research information
- Identifying vendors
- Keeping tracks on trends, understanding the buyers' market
- Product development for buyer
- Development of new fabrics
- Total costing of particular style
- Placement of orders
- Sourcing of fabric and accessories
- Quality control
- Updating the production tracking charts
- Documentation and logistics
- Timely delivery of shipments

Retail merchandising

Retail Merchandisers are responsible for ensuring that products appear in the right store at the right time and in the right quantities. This involves working closely with the buying teams to accurately forecast trends, plan stock levels and monitor performance. While the buyer selects the lines, the merchandiser decides how much money should be spent, how many lines should be bought and in what quantities. In smaller companies, the same person may be responsible for both buying and merchandising. Merchandisers play a key role within organizations, as profitability can be affected by how successfully they undertake their work. Merchandisers set prices to maximize profits and manage the performance of ranges, planning promotions and markdowns as necessary. They also oversee delivery and distribution of stock and deal with suppliers.

3. Visual merchandising

As a visual merchandiser, display designer or window dresser it would be job of visual merchandiser to create eye-catching product displays in shops and stores. Visual merchandiser is responsible for presenting products in a way that attracts customers and maximizes sales. This could mean anything from decorating a store in a seasonal theme – like Christmas or spring sales – to making sure store's displays fit the company's brand image.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FASHION MERCHANDISER

Fashion merchandising is a broad term. So, what does a fashion merchandiser do? Typically, a fashion merchandiser will have several potential areas of focus and is used to juggling different responsibilities. As the name implies, the role of a fashion merchandiser combines fashion and merchandising, and requires a strong sense of style and fashion in addition to business acumen. What does a fashion merchandiser do on a day-to-day basis? Here are a few key responsibilities of a fashion merchandiser.

- **FASHION TREND ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING**

To successfully manage the profitability of a retail store you have to be in tune with fashion trends to know what will sell. To do this fashion merchandisers keep up with the latest fashion news, attend fashion shows, and communicate regularly with fashion designers. Fashion merchandisers are able to blend fashion sense with quantitative analysis to look at how products have performed in the past and forecast consumer demand for coming seasons.

- **FASHION BUYING AND MERCHANDISE PRICE MANAGEMENT**

This is primarily where fashion and merchandising aspects come together. Knowledge of fashion and trend analysis is used to decide how to stock retail stores. This includes which new styles to order, which items to reorder, quantity of items, and the colors and sizes to stock. The fashion merchandiser works within a budget and has to make sure stores can be properly stocked within that budget. Part of this process is buying and negotiating with manufacturers and designers to make sure items can be priced in a way that will sell and make a profit. If responsible for multiple retail stores, fashion merchandisers also need to determine how each store should be stocked since different stores likely have a different surrounding clientele with different tastes.

- **MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

In many cases fashion merchandisers are also responsible for drawing in customers via promotion of products. That requires marketing skills and a keen understanding of local customer demographics. To get their products out to the world and draw in consumers, fashion merchandisers may develop marketing campaigns, design store displays, and create sales strategies.

Conclusion

‘Merchandising’ is very wide terminology used in industry. The role of the merchandiser is varies from stages of the fashion industry like production, buying house, retail and sells, visual merchandiser. The work of merchandiser dynamically changes from organization to organization. In some organization merchandiser plays wide role while in some organization role of merchandiser is very specific. The job profile of merchandiser is also changing with the growth of apparel industry today it becomes more complicated than previous. The requirement of skills for merchandising changes drastically with respect to organization and stage of fashion industry.