

The Employment Journey

Please take one

PEI's Top Source for Career Planning and Job Seeking

Working in retail on PEI

by Gloria Welton

This is the time of year when retail starts to gear up again. Typically, hiring is on-going from April to November.

Wholesale/retail trade is the largest private sector employer on PEI.

The retail sector employs about **10,000** Islanders, according to the **Statistics Canada Labour Market Survey** of September 2009. In this sector, 70 percent of employees worked more than 30 hours per week.

Retail jobs

Jobs in retail include:

- Sales, Marketing and Advertising Managers
- Customer Service, Information and Related Clerks
- Retail Trade Supervisors
- Technical Sales Specialists - Wholesale
- Retail and Wholesale Buyers
- Retail Sales Clerks
- Grocery Clerks and Store Shelf Stockers
- Cashiers
- Sales Consultants
- Retail Merchandisers

Are you suited for retail?

The *Employment Journey* spoke to three people who work in retail in Charlottetown. They were asked about the type of personality and qualities best suited for working in this field.

"It is important to be outgoing, feel at ease when approaching people, and be energetic," says **Rosemary Batchchilder**, Manager of **Reitmans** at the Charlottetown Mall. "To enjoy meeting and greeting people and being a conversation starter are great qualities to have. All the other technical skills of the job can be taught, but to start with the right personality is a must. If someone is a real people person but does not have the work experience, I don't see that as a concern."

"Experience is not a necessity in the retail sector," says **James Maher**, Manager of **Sport Chek** in Charlottetown. "I started as a part-time sales associate with no experience and through hard work and dedication over the years I have been promoted to Store Manager. What you do need is a passion for customer service and the products you are selling. In retail you need to be energetic, outgoing, and willing to work hard."

"To work in retail, you need to be outgoing, be a people person, and make customer service your highest priority," says **Brinsley Smith**, Human Resources Manager of **The Home Depot** in Charlottetown. "We look for people who like a challenge, like that every day is different, and like to help people answer their home repair and building project questions. It is also important to be eager to learn and be a great communicator."

How to search for jobs

On-Line: One of the best places to search for work on-line is through the Job Bank. At the time this article was being prepared, 50 retail jobs across PEI were advertised on the Job Bank.

A step-by-step job search plan

- Check through the phone book and make a list of 10 places you would like to work.
- Visit store locations to get a feel for the work setting before applying for a job.
- Call each business and find out who to speak with about hiring.
- Update your resumé to include all your experience and training.
- Prepare a list of three references.
- Put the two items into an envelope and address it to the person responsible for hiring.
- Dress like you would for a job interview.
- Deliver the envelopes by hand. Ask to speak to the person, introduce yourself, say you are looking for work, and give them your information.



Rosemary Batchchilder, Manager of Reitmans at the Charlottetown Mall.



James Maher, Manager of Sport Chek.



Brinsley Smith, Human Resources Manager of The Home Depot.

Job search tips

- You must let employers know you are out there and eager to work.
- Don't let the lack of a job ad or help wanted sign put you off. Only a small percentage of jobs are advertised.
- Don't assume each employer will provide an application form. Have a resumé and a reference list ready.

To explore the retail sector further, visit: www.jobbank.gc.ca, www.pei.jobfutures.org or www.labourmarketinformation.ca

Jobs in cabinetry & millwork, tourism, call centres, health, insurance, & more

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