



Ajuntament de
Barcelona



The most in-demand jobs in the Trade Sector

REPORT

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Index

01.	<u>INTRODUCTION TO THE SECTOR</u>	3
02.	<u>CURRENT ENVIRONMENT</u>	3
03.	<u>KEY SECTORIAL TRENDS</u>	5
04.	<u>EMPLOYMENT IN THE TRADE SECTOR</u>	7
	04.1. <u>THE MOST REQUIRED HIGHLY-QUALIFIED JOBS</u>	7
	04.2. <u>THE MOST REQUIRED LESS-QUALIFIED JOBS</u>	10
05.	<u>CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS</u>	12
06.	<u>ARTICLES AND CONSULTED REPORTS</u>	14
07.	<u>SECTORIAL COMPLEMENTARY WEBOGRAPHY</u>	14

01. Introduction to the Sector

The trade sector includes all the economic activities of purchase and sell of goods or services with the aim of using them, selling them or transforming them, reaching a wide range of materials and products. Also, traditionally, the industry has been divided, depending on the volume traded, types of customers and marketing strategies used in products: wholesale and retail.

Furthermore, we can divide it into two fields of activity, taking into account the tasks performed by the professionals:

- **Sales Management:** includes all the activities related to the management of purchase and sale, customer relations (market analysis, acquisition and retention), relationship with suppliers, and product positioning.
- **Point of sale:** comprises all the activities that take place on-site or physical space where the exchange takes place, such as the window and the provision of goods, the application of sales techniques or designing marketing strategies.

The trade sector is facing considerable challenges in terms of marketing. Changes in consumer habits, new technologies and global competition are driving the industry to redesign their sales strategies in order to adapt to changing times.

02. Current Environment

Global Trends:

The situation of the trade sector globally over 2015 has been characterized by an increase in competition and household consumption as well as the growth of electronic commerce. In this context, trade emerging markets like Brazil, Chile and China ranged among the countries with the best records of sales in 2014 behind industry leaders with large distribution companies and retailers such as US or Japan. In this sense, China recorded a growth of 12% in the commercial in 2014. Industry experts estimate that the Chinese market for retail and wholesale trade will surpass the US market and will rank as the first and main world trade market in 2018.

On the other hand, during 2015 the electronic commerce (e-commerce) has increased its presence in countries where shopping and Internet sales were relatively few. Most of these countries are in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. In addition, according to official data of the company eMarketer, China and the USA recorded 55% of total online sales globally in 2014.

Regarding Europe, the commerce sector has become a key sector of the EU economy to create jobs and boost other dependent sectors such as logistics. In this sense, the trade sector represented around 11% of EU GDP and created around 33 million jobs (almost 15% of total employment in the EU) in 2014. Furthermore, approximately six million companies of the trade sector were recorded in 2014. Regarding to e-commerce, the online sales growth around 14% reaching a total amount of 214.000 million euros in 2014 according to official data from EUROSTAT.

E-commerce activity represents 2.45% of GDP in the EU and is expected that this amount will stand at around 6% in 2020 according to the European industry association (Ecommerce Europe).

Trends in Spain:

The commerce sector in Spain has improved over the 2015 as a result of the gradual recovery in domestic consumption, the depreciation of the euro that has allowed gaining competitiveness in the international market and also the increase in exports of goods. In this sense, exports of goods grew by 4.9% in the first half of 2015 with a total amount of 125,122.9 million euros. Moreover, the confidence of both the consumer and the trader have increased during 2015 leading to an improvement in business in the domestic market. It is important to highlight the importance of the trade sector in the Spanish economy as its activity represented 10.3% of GDP in 2013, according to official data from the National Statistics Institute.

About the e-commerce, the online sales grew 24,8% in 2014 over the previous year and registered a total amount of 15.891 million according to the official data from CNMC. One of the branches with the greatest business volume was food trade.

With regard to employment, the wholesale trade activity occupies a total of 1,003,500 people in the third quarter of 2015, creating 42,800 new jobs, which represents an increase of 4.5% over the same period of 2014. In the case of retail, the activity occupied a total of 1,945,600 people in the third quarter of 2015, registering an increase of 17,400 new jobs (0.9% growth over the same period of 2014). According to these data, the total number of people employed in the sector has been 2,949,100 in the third quarter of 2015 according to official data from the National Statistics Institute.

Trends in Catalonia:

The commerce sector in Catalonia has improved over 2015 due to factors such as lower prices, the increase in consumer confidence and the gradual creation of employment. Likewise, exports of catalan goods recorded a historic record of 60.195 million euros and retail sales grew by around 2.2% in 2014. Even so, the number of companies in the sector decreased 0.6% which represents a total of 131,224 according to official data of the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (IDESCAT).

Regarding employment, the trade sector has generated new jobs during 2015. The occupancy rate of the sector stood at 483,400 employees in the third quarter of 2015 and recorded an increase of 1.4% over the same period last year.

On the other hand, the Government of Catalonia encourage and promote the creation of new businesses with a presence in e-commerce (online store) through direct subsidies.

Finally, the importance of the city of Barcelona as a shopping tourism destination should be emphasized since it is among the ten most attractive cities in Europe for shopping.

Trade indicators	Contribution to the Catalan GDP ⁽¹⁾	Employed population in Catalonia ⁽²⁾	Number of companies in Catalonia ⁽³⁾
	10,4% (2013)	483.400 (3th half of 2015)	131.224 (1 January 2015)

(1) IDESCAT data from National Statistics Institute Spain (INE).

(2) Available data from IDESCAT of labour force survey. Statistics National Institute Spain.

(3) IDESCAT data from National Statistics Institute Spain (INE).

03. Key Sectorial Trends

	<p>Innovation in trade</p>	<p>Globally trade companies are committed to integrate innovative elements in their business with the aim to improve their competitiveness in an increasingly demanding and changing environment. In this context, companies are investing in incorporating new technologies and use them in the most creative way to attract buyers. Some companies start to introduce Big Data technology to monitor their online stores and social networks in order to obtain more information about the preferences and buying habits of customers and thus provide a more specialized service. On the other hand, it is expected that in the coming years, companies will also incorporate a technology called "internet of things", through which houses would be connected to the network and provide information about consumer buying habits. From this way, purchases and deliveries would be automatic.</p>
	<p>Multichannel: the importance of mobile technology</p>	<p>Online sales have experienced a substantial increase over 2015 due to the growing importance of the online channel by mobile or tablet (14% of online purchases via mobile phone or tablet in 2014). In this context, mobile technology (smartphone and tablet) has become a key tool in different stages of the buying process. In the case of the pre-purchase, consumers use mobile technology to search for products, locate stores or use promotional coupons. Besides, social networks are a very important tool of communication between the consumer and the companies. Consumers often use mobile applications and / or social networks like Facebook to get promotions and exclusive discounts on products.</p> <p>On the other hand, more and more companies opt for new retail formats to combine physical store and online (multi-platform). An example is allowing customers to order online and collect in the physical store.</p> <p>Therefore, the trade sector companies are starting to focus their business strategies towards adopting mobile technology and marketing techniques adapted to mobile, offering users a channel shopping experience.</p>
	<p>Differentiation and Loyalty</p>	<p>The increasing globalization together with the increase in exports and imports of goods implies that the product supply is widening. This situation has led to consumers perceive less difference between companies and also the competition is getting more intense by buyers. As a result, companies require new techniques to adapt to demand and anticipate their competitors. In this context, companies create new business and more innovative and flexible marketing strategies. For example, some companies design experiences that include personalized offers tailored to the preferences of its customers.</p> <p>On the other hand, with respect to customer loyalty, there are a wide range of strategies such as flexible collection of shopping, after-sales support, access to discounts and special promotions, among others. Also, the digital environment has strengthened relations between the buyer and the company both at the time of purchase and after sales since the interaction is closer, agile and flexible.</p>

	<p>Buying Experience</p>	<p>Currently, consumers are acquiring new buying habits both in digital environments (online store) and physical (stores and malls). This is behaving changes in the business models of companies that offer greater flexibility and better shopping experiences to consumers. In this context, the physical store remains very important as it is still the main selling point and is the preferred choice for consumers from e-commerce. However, more and more consumers tend to purchase products and services through online stores. Therefore, it is expected that companies evolve their store model to another more sophisticated and personalized with the main goal of becoming attractive centers where the consumers can live a differential shopping experience. In this way, they can attract consumers who generally make purchases online.</p> <p>Regarding the buyer experience, companies in the retail and wholesale trade are introducing improvements in the purchasing process from the payment to after-sales service. The objective is to offer more flexibility and autonomy to customers. A good example is when the buying process starts from a tablet or mobile and ends in the physical store.</p> <p>On the other hand, it should be noted that online consumer is permanently connected and demand a shopping experience that goes beyond current standards. Moreover, this type of consumer prefers to interact with brands through different channels such as social networks and at different times. For example, shopping from the computer during a break in the workday or buy movie tickets from mobile. Consumer involvement in the purchasing process does not involve any additional cost to business thanks to new technologies such as mobile devices.</p>
	<p>New retail formats</p>	<p>More and more companies invest in new store spaces in order to attract more buyers. In this sense, they are proliferating new concepts of space purchase such as so-called pop-up stores, stores that are enabled temporarily and remain open for days or weeks, in order to concentrate the sale of a particular brand or product . The flexibility of this kind of shop allows testing with different products, campaigns, etc. This new format means that workers hired must be formed quickly and specifically with regard to the product and the sales campaign.</p>
	<p>Travel Retail (Travel Trade)</p>	<p>The continuous increase in purchases by tourists on their holiday destinations in recent years and the resulting economic impact they have generated has led to a new trading concept called Travel Trade or Travel Retail. The main reason is the growth of international tourism and especially the increasing number of tourists traveling alone to buy abroad. This tourism shows great interest in making purchases mainly of luxury products and / or recognized trademark. Furthermore, they also pretend to save on their purchases as prices of the products are lower than in their home countries and receive discounted rates.</p> <p>A good example of Travel Trade are purchases made in airport shops as they have become a shopping destination for tourists because there predominate luxury brands and no longer conceived only <i>Duty free</i> shops.</p>

04. Employment in the Trade Sector

The commerce sector has continued to generate employment throughout 2015 due to the progressive increase in sales both domestically and externally. On the one hand, there has been an increase in commercial profile professionals at the retail selling points. On the other hand, it has increased the demand for skilled professionals in various activities such as digital marketing, foreign trade or web environment among others. This is due to new buying habits of customers and the increasing internationalization of national companies.

It is expected that the demand for professionals both higher skilled and lower skilled positions will continue to grow in the coming months in order to respond to the increase in commercial activity. Similarly, experts expect the growth of electronic commerce will lead to an increase in demand for professionals specialized in web and applications programming.

	Current situation	Forecast growth
Analysis of employment in the Trade Sector	↑	↑

↑ Recovery/Growth; ⇌ Maintenance; ↓ Decrease

4.1. THE MOST REQUIRED HIGHLY-QUALIFIED JOBS

	Job Position	Description	Requirements valued (education, experience and skills)	Additional considerations
1	Area Manager	The area manager is the professional who is responsible for directing and coordinating the activity of a set of shops, integrated or franchised, within an assigned geographic area and in order to adapt the operation of each point of sale according to the trade policy marked by the management of the company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education: it is necessary to have either a university degree in Business field or a training course linked to the Commercial and Marketing field. Experience: previous experience in a similar position in the same sector may be required. 	It is required to have a high level of English and knowledge of other foreign languages such as French, Chinese, Russian, etc.
2	Retail Manager	The retail manager is the professional responsible for the business strategy and expansion of the points of sales. Also, this professional has a great influence on the selection of products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education: it is necessary to have a university degree in the business field. Experience: it is necessary to have experience as an area director in companies at the same sector. 	It is important to have orientation and leadership skills , as well as, concern for order and quality .

	Job Position	Description	Requirements valued (Education, experience and skills)	Additional considerations
3	Foreign Trade Engineer	The foreign trade engineer is the professional responsible for carrying out purchasing and sales operations and manage logistics, warehousing and distribution operations and/or ensure the reliability of a company's international operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have either a university degree in business field or a professional training course in the field of trade and marketing. • Experience: previous experience is not generally required for those who have previous base level training. 	It is required to have a high level of English. Knowledge of other foreign languages are highly valued.
4	Product Manager	The product manager is the professional who is responsible for developing and directing its range of products, negotiate the best conditions in terms of price, delivery days, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a university degree in business field. • Experience: it is required to have at least three years of experience in product management or in sales field. 	Candidates with leadership skills , global vision, customer orientation and negotiation skills are valued.
5	International Commercial Director	The international commercial director is the professional responsible for planning and implementing growth lines defined in the strategic plan of the company. Likewise, it is responsible for leading, developing and training the sales team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a university degree in business field. • Experience: it is mandatory to have at least five years of experience in a position with similar functions and responsibilities in an international environment. 	It is required to have project management, planning and organization skills . It is required to have legal expertise related to international trade.
6	Expansion Specialist	The expansion specialist is the professional who is responsible for the processes related to the commercial expansion of a company and for providing support to franchisees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a university degree in business sciences or in social and legal sciences. • Experience: it is mandatory to have previous work experience in merchandising or marketing field. 	

	Job Position	Description	Requirements valued (Education, experience and skills)	Additional considerations
7	Expert on e-Commerce	The expert in e-commerce is the professional who designs and develops web applications and services (web and mobile apps and tablets) in order to facilitate buying and selling products through it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have bachelor degree in telecommunications, IT engineering or any engineering degree. • Experience: it is required to have previous work experience of 3 years in managing e-commerce projects. 	Key abilities as orientation skills , teamwork , creativity and analytical skills , are valued.
8	Digital Marketing Manager	The digital marketing manager is the professional responsible for the online marketing of the company, the management of the web, strategy and SEO / SEM positioning. It is also responsible for the definition and implementation of social media strategy along with the community manager.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a university degree in business or communication field. • It is recommended to have a postgraduate specialization in the digitalization. • Experience: it is mandatory to have previous work experience in online marketing field. 	Advanced knowledge of social networking software like Microsoft Office and web management programs are required.
9	Web Developer	The web developer is the professional responsible for designing and implementing web applications (portals, corporate websites, platforms, etc.). They also must manage and resolve customer incidents and coordinate projects with the online marketing team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a telecommunications or IT degree. • Experience: it is required to have previous work experience of two years in design, architecture development and website usability. 	It is increasingly important to have knowledge about social networks, websites and communication.
10	Mobile Application Developer	The mobile application developer is the professional responsible for application development projects for Android and IOS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a university degree in telecommunications or IT field. • Experience: it is required to have previous work experience of two years in application design. 	It is necessary to have technical knowledge of web-based (HTML, Java, SQL, etc.) As well as Android and IOS systems.

4.2. THE MOST REQUIRED LESS-QUALIFIED JOBS

	Job Position	Description	Requirements valued (Education, experience and skills)	Additional considerations
1	Section Manager	The section manager is the professional responsible for three basic areas of management financial management, monitoring of the section's sales; sales management, monitoring of the company's sales policy, organization of the shelves and displays, stocks supervision; and people management, person responsible for the training, evaluation and development of the work team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have an intermediate or advanced professional training course in the field of trade and marketing. • Experience: prior experience in a similar post or a post that is hierarchically lower is required. 	Skills such as concern for order and quality , initiative and customer orientation are valued.
2	Store Manager	The Store Manager is the professional who manages the sales area, ensuring revenue targets and the implementation of the defined business, with the objective of maintaining and retain the customer base of the establishment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a training in either commerce or business management and marketing. • Experience: it is required to have previous work experience of one year in similar positions. 	It is highly valued that candidates have some type of formal training (training courses or higher level) or specific courses related to business management and sales. It is recommended to have a medium/high level of English to provide better customer service.
3	Shop Assistant	The shop assistant is the professional responsible for receiving, address and selling products directly to the customer. One of its main objectives is to expand and consolidate the customer base of the shop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have a professional training course in commerce and marketing. • Experience: previous work experience is not required. 	
4	Cashier	Cashier is the professional responsible for collecting all the products that clients buy. People who hold this job must know how to handle each payment method according to total quality standards, trying to assure total customer satisfaction of the clients both in speed and effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is necessary to have minimum compulsory education. Moreover, they must know how to operate cash registers well. • Experience: previous work experience in cash registers is appreciated. 	

	Job Position	Description	Requirements valued (Education, experience and skills)	Additional considerations
5	ICT Sales Point Agent	The ICT sales point agent is the professional responsible for products and services in the portable electronic device field (mobile phones, smartphones, PDAs and others), on the basis of the guidelines set out by the parent company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is required to have a professional training in the commercial and marketing field, or IT/electronic field. • Experience: it is recommended to have previous work experience in customer care and in business relations. 	Key skills such as Communications and empathy to deal with customers are required.
6	Online Sales Promoter	The online sales promoter is the professional responsible for providing support to companies and institutions in the development of online shopping system for the distribution of their products or services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: it is appropriate to have a degree either in the business or in the ICT field. Furthermore, it is necessary to have knowledge of online marketing strategies. • Experience: it is desirable to have previous work experience in similar positions. 	Professionals who occupy these positions often receive training from their company in customer management, boosting sales, negotiation, etc.

5. Conclusions and Future prospects

New opportunities



- Companies in the commercial sector will have to adapt to the new demands and preferences of consumers. Therefore, transform their business models and customer relationships strategies is required to increase sales in an increasingly competitive and innovative market both nationally and international. In this context, companies are starting to focus their strategies towards conversion or adaptation to new mobile devices so as to offer consumers a different shopping experience, turning it into agile and innovative.
- The growing importance of electronic commerce within the sector offers opportunities and advantages for those companies that are committed to develop online shops and strategies in social networks. In this way, companies can expand their business to other geographical areas, establish a more personalized and agile channel and offer a permanent sale schedules. This will provide greater flexibility for those who want to initiate and establish a retail business.
- The forecast in the increase in the tourism shopping in the next five years represents a new business opportunity for companies in the sector since it is estimated that sales will grow to 51% globally. Accordingly, companies must considerate this type of consumer in their business expansion plans in order to attract their buying interest.

Professionals in the Trade sector



- The skills and competencies required by companies in commerce have evolved in recent years result of the growing influence of new technologies and intense competition globally. Some of the most desirable skills are in the area of marketing, IT and web as well as after-sales service. In turn, there are new abilities demanded associated with product design and production systems.
- Large companies in the commercial sector are increasingly turning to hire graduates through specific programs that provide training and professional development within the organization.
- In the current global environment characterized by strong competition, retail companies are increasingly demanding professionals with high business skills and specialized sellers who are able to adapt to changes and trends in both the market and products.
- Companies and retail freelance are aware of the need to increase specialized training and languages, such as English, to enhance the professional development of workers in the sector, especially those with lower professional vocational and educational qualifications.

Alerts



- Experts in the commercial sector consider that companies in Spain must face a challenge in relation to physical stores and the expansion of electronic commerce. Moreover, Spain is a country with more shops per capita in Europe, and as the e-commerce advance, companies will have to adapt and determine the necessary number of stores.
- The sector shows great dependence on economic policy in terms of higher taxation, debt, regulation and volatility of exchange rates. All this has a direct impact and influence the sector growth prospects for the coming years.
- Investment in R&D for both companies and public institutions continues below the average of other sectors. One reason is the size of the business structure of the commerce sector since it is composed mainly by small companies or freelance. In this sense, these companies should invest more in innovative actions and focus on digitization in order to achieve better competitiveness shares and consolidate the internationalization.

Strengths



- The remarkable importance of trade in the Catalan and Spanish economy, especially in retail, is due to its ability to create jobs, their connection and impact on other economic sectors such as tourism and the economic influence in the daily activity of the city.
- The commitment of public institutions both European and national to boost new initiatives and actions that promote competitiveness of both retail and wholesale through financial assistance and economic projects. One example is the Comprehensive Plan of Support for Competitiveness of Retail Trade of Spain 2015.
- The great associative tradition in commerce in Catalonia allows partnerships to generate synergies that facilitate the improvement of the competitiveness of the retail and in turn, stimulate and revitalize commercial areas to increase economic impact on the area where they are located .

The importance and the influence of the new technologies in the sector means that professionals must incorporate them and adapt themselves constantly to be competitive. It is expected that e-commerce will generate specialized employment in the coming years.

06. Articles and consulted reports

Sources: Latest data available. INE; IDESCAT; EUROSTAT; Deloitte Retail; Barcelona Chamber of Commerce; e-Commerce Europa; Banco Mundial; Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad. Prensa: Expansión; La Vanguardia; El Economista; Europapress; El Mundo; Cinco Días.

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07. Sectorial complementary Webgraphy

✓ Col·legi Oficial d'Agents Comercials de Barcelona (Coacb)

<http://www.coacb.com/portal/>

✓ Confederació de Comerç de Catalunya

<http://www.confecom.cat/>

✓ Comerç Barcelona

<http://comerc.bcn.cat/en>

✓ Agrupament de Botiguers i Comerciants de Catalunya

<http://www.abccat.com/>

✓ Cámara de Comercio de España

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Bicing: 42 / 133 / 132



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