



## Shopping the Retail Sector



lepc

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The material contained in this report has been prepared by Tricia Flatley and Martin Withenshaw from the Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) for Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford and is drawn from a variety of sources considered to be reliable.

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*"I promise you that there are a lot of people involved in various kinds of retail activities who think they have a crucial role in the economy, and they're right," local employer.*



[Photos provided by Downtown London]



## Introduction

It's been a wild ride for Canadian retailing. We saw the rapid departure of Target stores, leaving gaping holes in many malls and merchandisers struggling to balance online sales with sales from their physical locations. Retailers are having to juggle an online world along with a physical location to keep up with their competition. If retailers aren't building a strong online presence, stores will quickly find themselves out of the running.

Consumers are now calling the shots, shopping whenever, wherever they want. While some retailers have not yet embraced e-commerce as they should, they will have to evolve their business models to adapt to this changing landscape, taking advantage of the upside and managing the risk.

In 2015, it became evident that consumers' digital-era demands have quickly caught up with businesses that weren't prepared. It was also a year of progress for e-commerce and small businesses in Canada, as more companies made strategic investments to reach their customers across multiple channels. In this new landscape, retailers are looking for people who understand the industry and can keep up with the increasing demand from buyers.

Taking it a step further, retailers have started to create their own shopping events. For example, Wal-Mart Canada and Canadian Tire created Black Friday-ish events around the American Thanksgiving. This trend will require those who are hired within the industry to have strong communication, marketing, and planning skills.

We would like to thank local employers who provided their insight into the sector. As well, Downtown London for providing pictures for the report.

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To help prepare people for employment, your Local Employment Planning Council has created a series of research reports to better prepare current and future job seekers for changing demands in occupations.

This is the fourth research report in a 5-part series that explores the evolution of skills required to be successful in key employment sectors. Each sector has been identified through discussion with local economic development offices and by examining the prominent sectors in our communities. Across Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford and London, it is clear that these five sectors play a significant role in our economy and our workforce:

-  Agriculture
-  Healthcare
-  Manufacturing
-  Supply Chain
-  Retail



## Searching the Retail Sector

According to Statistics Canada, retail sales in the country have increased nearly 2.5% from 2015 to 2016, showing signs that the sector continues to grow. This means there will be many opportunities for jobs and a career within the sector.

### What is Retail?

A retail sale occurs when a business sells a product or service to an individual consumer for his or her own use. The aspect of the sale that qualifies it as a retail transaction is that the end user is the buyer.



### Types of Retail Businesses

There are an estimated 3,310 retail establishments in the London Economic Region (which includes Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford counties and the City of St. Thomas and City of London), from stores and restaurants to salons and gas stations, pest control providers, and auto mechanics. Those businesses employ close to 29,431 people, making retail one of the largest private sector employers in the London Economic Region.

There are four major categories of retailers:

1. **Hardlines** – things that tend to last a long time, such as appliances, cars, and furniture
2. **Soft goods or consumables** – things like clothing, shoes, and toiletries
3. **Food** – things like meat, cheese, produce, and baked goods
4. **Art** – things like fine art, as well as books and musical instruments

*“The downtown core is an economic driver for London with retail playing a huge role. The retail employers require experienced, well trained staff that make viable contributions to our economy,” Janette MacDonald, CEO/GM of Downtown London.*

Within those categories you'll also find different types of retail stores. Some of the most common types include:

- **Department Stores** – the oldest, and often largest, place for consumers to shop for a variety of products under one roof.
- **Big Box Store** – major retailers that specialize in one type of product, such as electronics.
- **Discount Stores** – department stores that stock discounted items and lower priced brands.
- **Warehouse Stores** – these no frills warehouses often require you to be a member to access their low prices.
- **Mom-and-Pop Stores** – smaller, often niche stores run by small business owners. These are your corner stores and local storefronts.

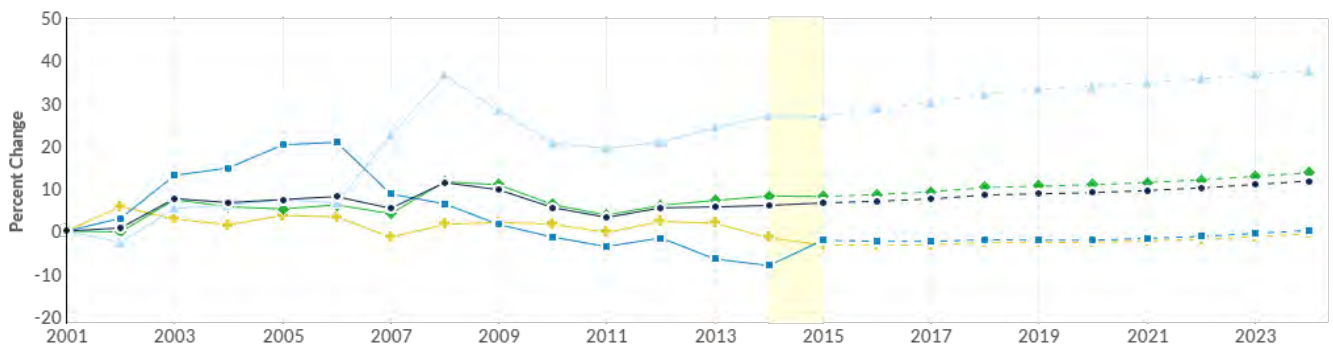
## Regional Trends

There are over 29,000 jobs within the sales and service sector (retail) in the London Economic Region. According to the Q3 Internet job postings report (found on [www.worktrends.ca](http://www.worktrends.ca)) there were over 2,000 online jobs postings related to retail. Some of the job titles include:

sales associate	clerk	cosmetic merchandiser	personal banking representative
clerk deli counter	cashier	clothing salesperson	room service waiter waitress
salad bar attendant	inbound customer service representative	retail merchandiser	bilingual customer care service agent
financial advisor	bakery associate	shoe sales associate	call center agent

- Most of the increase in jobs came from Oxford County, with an increase of 237 jobs in 2015.
- Over half of all the retail jobs are located in the City of London.

## Regional Retail Trends



	Region	2014 Jobs	2015 Jobs	Change	% Change
●	Region	29,268	29,431	163	0.6%
●	Oxford County	3,673	3,910	237	6.5%
●	Middlesex County	2,092	2,088	-4	-0.2%
●	London	20,768	20,745	-23	-0.1%
●	Elgin	2,732	2,685	-47	-1.7%

Source: Emsi Q3 2016 Data Set



# RETAIL OCCUPATIONAL CAREER STREAMS



## EXECUTIVE

Usually requires the Graduate Certificate or higher qualification in addition to significant industry experience

CEO ■ Regional /Area Manager ■ Business Owner ■ State Manager ■ National Manager ■ CEO ■ Regional/Area Manager ■ Business Owner

## MANAGEMENT

Usually requires a level of skill equal to a Diploma and at least 5 years experience

Senior Buyer  
Purchase Manager  
Merchandise Manager

Visual Merchandiser  
Marketing Manager  
Display Manager  
Head Merchandiser

Accountant / Financial Manager  
Web Sales / IT Manager  
Loss Prevention Manager  
Product Specialist  
Lawyer

Marketing Manager  
Promotions Manager  
Advertising Manager

Logistics Manager  
Supply Chain Manager  
Warehouse Manager  
Operations Manager

Store Manager  
HR Manager  
Operations Manager  
Training Manager

## SUPERVISORY

Usually a skill level equal to a Certificate III or IV qualification or at least 3 years experience

Buyer  
Assistant Buyer  
Trainee Buyer

Visual Merchandiser  
Display Designer  
Shop Fitter  
Merchandiser

Store Maintenance Officer  
Credit & Loan Officer  
Loss Prevention Supervisor  
IT Support Technician

Assistant Sales Manager  
Floor Manager  
Team Leader  
Department Manager

Distribution Manager  
Storeperson  
Despatch Coordinator

OHS Supervisor  
Staff Supervisor  
Roster Manager  
Training Manager

## ENTRY LEVEL

Usually a skill level equal to completion of at least Year 10, Certificate I or II qualification

Sales Assistant  
Store Person  
Re-filler

Night Fill Replenishment  
Housekeeping  
Apprentice Shop Fitter

Clerk  
Customer Service  
Cleaner  
Loss Prevention Officer

Sales Assistant  
Sales Representative

Warehouse Attendant  
Forklift Operator  
Delivery Driver



Some retail jobs involve working across multiple occupations and streams. For example the manager of a small shoe store can be the buyer, visual merchandiser, sales assistant, cleaner and staff supervisor.

PROCURE



PRESENT



SUPPORT



SELL



DISTRIBUTE



MANAGE





The following is a list of businesses that offer occupations within the retail sector. Grocery stores, health and personal care stores, and clothing stores employ the most number of people within retail.

Description	2014 Jobs	2015 Jobs	2014 - 2015 Change	2014 - 2015 % Change
Grocery stores	7,049	6,923	(126)	(2%)
Health and personal care stores	3,485	3,581	96	3%
Clothing stores	3,018	3,095	77	3%
Other general merchandise stores	2,443	2,704	261	11%
Building material and supplies dealers	2,544	2,622	78	3%
Department stores	2,289	1,832	(457)	(20%)
Sporting goods, hobby and musical instrument stores	1,352	1,349	(3)	(0%)
Electronics and appliance stores	1,081	1,094	13	1%
Specialty food stores	981	1,016	35	4%
Gasoline stations	993	1,005	12	1%
Beer, wine and liquor stores	751	786	35	5%
Furniture stores	769	763	(6)	(1%)
Home furnishings stores	656	656	0	0%
Travel arrangement and reservation services	550	580	30	5%
Shoe stores	409	485	76	19%
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	326	334	8	2%
Lawn and garden equipment and supplies stores	272	295	23	8%
Florists	159	160	1	1%
Book stores and news dealers	143	153	10	7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29,268</b>	<b>29,431</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>1%</b>
Source: Emsi Q3 2016 Data Set				



## New and Emerging Skill Requirements

The following is a list of skills that employers are looking for within the retail sector. These insights come from the employers we spoke to within the sector.

- People skills/Customer service- The ability to interact with customers in a friendly and courteous manor. To ensure the customer comes first and they have a great experience in store
- Time management- Ensuring your work can get done within the allocated time period
- Planning skills- The ability to take the time to plan something before you start it
- Teamwork- Working with others to get a job done and allowing others to contribute their skills
- Technology skills- The ability to use a computer and/or cell phone to boost customer service
- Decision making skills- The ability to make a good decision based on the information available to you.
- Leadership skills- The ability to provide direction to others and share your knowledge with others
- Management skills- The ability to coordinate efforts and communicate clearly what is expected of individuals





## Observations

The following is a list of the top occupations within retail. These are the most in demand occupations in retail within the London Economic Region.

### Top Occupations within the retail sector

Description	Employed in Industry Group (2015)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2015)
Retail salespersons	7,032	23.9%
Store shelf stockers, clerks and order fillers	4,147	14.1%
Cashiers	3,954	13.4%
Retail and wholesale trade managers	2,362	8.0%
Retail sales supervisors	2,285	7.8%
Source: Emsi Q3 2016 Data Set		



**SALE**

## What are the employment requirements for some of these occupations?

**SALE**



Completion of secondary school is usually required

### 6211 Retail sales supervisors

Previous retail sales experience as a retail salesperson or sales clerk, cashier, telemarketer, door-to-door salesperson or rental agent is required.

A university degree or college diploma in a program related to the product or service is usually required

Experience in sales or in a technical occupation related to the product or service may be required

### 6221 Technical sales specialists – wholesale trade

Fluency in a specific foreign language, and/or foreign work or travel experience may be required for technical sales specialists seeking employment with companies that import or export technical goods or services

Technical sales supervisors require experience as a technical sales specialist

Completion of secondary school is required

A university degree or college diploma in business, marketing or a related program is usually required

### 6222 Retail and wholesale buyers

Supervisors and senior buyers require experience in the occupation supervised or in a particular merchandise line

Previous work experience in retail or wholesale establishments is usually required

Completion of secondary school is required

On-the-job training and insurance industry courses and training programs are provided and are required for employment

### 6231 Insurance agents and brokers

Licensure by the insurance governing body in the province or territory of employment is required

Completion of secondary school is required

### 6232 Real estate agents and salespersons

Real estate agents may operate independently by obtaining a broker's licence in accordance with the regulations of the province of employment. A broker's licence is required to become a manager in real estate





## Sources

Much of the information provided in this report is based on key interviews with employers in the sector. Other sources are identified below:

Retail: What is Retail: (author unknown)- [www.Shopify.ca/encyclopedia/retail](http://www.Shopify.ca/encyclopedia/retail)

The Globe and Mail: Andrea Stairs Dec 2015: The Five trends that will shape how we shop in 2016.  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/the-five-retail-trends-that-will-shape-how-we-shop-in-2016/article27952956/>

Retail Hiring forecast for 2016 in Canada, Monster. <http://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/retail-hiring-forecast-for-canada>

Sales and Service Occupations - Job Vacancies and Wages in the London Economic Region.  
[http://www.worktrends.ca/sites/default/files/u82/SalesAndServiceOccupations\\_VacanciesAndWages\\_FactsSheet\\_LondonER.pdf](http://www.worktrends.ca/sites/default/files/u82/SalesAndServiceOccupations_VacanciesAndWages_FactsSheet_LondonER.pdf)

Statistics Canada –CANSIM: table 080-0020, Retail sales by industry.



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