



## Visual Merchandising

We all know the power that a well-designed shop window can hold over us; in one glance you can be transported into a different world. Behind the glass, the season's 'must buy' products come alive through a visual story that compels you to enter the store and part with your hard-earned cash.



Overall, visual merchandisers are responsible for how a store and its products are presented. This includes designing and creating the best interior layouts and window displays and ensuring the visual style maximises sales. As such, a mix of both creative flair and commercial awareness is paramount, but the role also requires excellent teamworking and communication skills. There is regular liaison with buyers and other retail departments to ascertain how best to promote new stock and manage brand standards across stores.

Displays must be able to stop people in their tracks, but also incorporate the latest fashions and take account of the wider cultural, political and economic trends. All have an impact on the buying habits of the customer. Make no mistake; this is not just about dressing mannequins; it requires creativity and the innovative use of themes, props, light, music and colour to establish an environment that triggers the impulse to buy.

At the heart of visual merchandising (VM) is the fact that shoppers want to be entertained and demand inspiration and excitement as part of their retail experience. Retailers who achieve this are rewarded with the most precious gifts of all, loyal customers and better performing stores. Those that get it wrong, invariably lose out.

### What can you earn?

In-house VMs can expect to earn around £21,000 per year, increasing with experience. A display manager with a top store could take home £40,000+, but many of the most prestigious work freelance, charging day rates.

### Routes in (click for links):

Overview of visual merchandising and courses

Job websites (UK): in-retail, Total Jobs, retailcareers, jobsinretail, RetailChoice

National Skills Academy for Retail skills shops (England)

Visual Merchandising courses at university and colleges throughout the UK