

CHECKOUT
A LIFE ON THE TILLS

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WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF
RETAIL – AND YOUR DREAM JOB

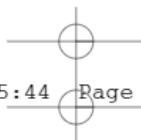


Congratulations! You've finally managed to get an interview and actually been hired. Welcome to the retail family. You are now a checkout girl . . . sorry, checkout *operator*. That feels much more important, doesn't it?



The interview only lasted a couple of minutes, long enough for you to repeat what's already on your CV and give them your bank details. No IQ tests? Or a bit of mental arithmetic? Come off it – you'll be suggesting they analyse your handwriting next. You're going to work on the till, you know, not being called to the Bar.

It's only your first day – but you still have to prove your worth. So let's get cracking, time for training. Don't worry



though – an ‘old hand’ will take you under her wing for at least, I don’t know, a quarter of an hour? A morning if you’re lucky. Or two days if your manager is nice. There are some nice managers, I promise. It’s just the luck of the draw.

Let’s start with a tour of the store. It won’t take long (and besides there are other things to be getting on with). There’s only the locker room, the staff room, the waste disposal area with the bins where all the produce that’s past its sell-by date ends up – you’ll find you spend a lot of time here – the Office where you’ll be given your float and . . . well, that’s it.

Now you know enough about the store to get down to work. You’ll have plenty of time to explore your new workplace further during your breaks. It will make them more fun.

The first time you approach the tills in your wonderful Chanel or Dior uniform, or your hideous overall (depending on the store and the kind of customers they want to attract) with your float under your arm (the equivalent of several days’ salary no less) you are bound to feel a bit intimidated. Take a deep breath. That feeling will pass.

Right, you’ve found your till, organised your float and settled in. You’re really concentrating and really

motivated. The 'old hand' is beside you and you're all ears. You're ready to work. Not a moment too soon.

The main things to remember are: scan the items (with a quick glance to check that the price looks right), add up the total, tell the customer, ask for a loyalty card, take payment, give the customer their change, ask for ID if necessary and give them the receipt. All with a nice sincere smile. Of course. And then 'Thank-you-have-a-nice-day' and on to the next customer. Shall I go through it again?

To begin with it might seem that you have to work fast, too fast – especially if you start on a busy day. But it'll soon become automatic and you won't pay too much attention to what you're doing. Within a month it will be as if you and your till were one.



Time has flown by and the 'old hand' is already giving you less and less advice. It's all sinking in. You're becoming expert at scanning items and giving change. Well done! It's really not that complicated – you just need to know what to do when and the rest comes of its own accord.

Right, now the 'old hand' is leaving you to manage on your own. You'll be able to scan your first items independently. Hurrah! What a treat that will be.

Actually, apart from the *bee-eep* of the scanner, it's not very exciting . . . fortunately there's lots of interaction with



customers (but be patient, more on that later).

Oh yes, I almost forgot. There's a part that's not that easy but, strangely, it's quite interesting. You have to learn all the code numbers by heart for items that are sold by the unit: lemons, peppers, garlic, artichokes, etc. Don't panic. There aren't that many and if you forget there is a prompt sheet on the till. And you can always ask your colleagues, Jessica, Emma, Kate, Sarah, who are never far away. Best not forget their names – not easy when you have about a hundred colleagues.



Your first day is almost over. The last customers are leaving and the store is closing. So what are your first impressions? Actually, it's quite a fun job. You scan lots of items (and discover things you didn't know how to use or even existed), you chat with people, you have pleasant colleagues, you listen to music all day and it's nice and warm.



A dream job. Well, almost. You have to come back and do it all again tomorrow. And the day after. And the day after that. And, as time goes by, getting up in the morning to go to your dream job won't be quite so appealing.

Believe me.

