

# Let's Talk Business

## For Ted Rogers School Students

These reports describe industry sectors and career paths of interest to Ted Rogers School students and alumni. Each report leverages BCH employment data and the expertise of our staff. This collaborative effort engages staff, students, alumni and the University Business Librarian.

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## A Day in the Life of a Merchandise Coordinator

We recently had a conversation with Sebrina Bender, who graduated from the Retail Management program, at the Ted Rogers School of Management, in 2021.

She currently works as a *Merchandise Coordinator* at Indigo.

Indigo Books & Music Inc., known as "Indigo", is the largest book, gift, and specialty toy retailer in Canada. The company offers a wide variety of books, toys, home décor, and stationery.

In this report, Sebrina shares what type of work she does, the software platforms she uses, and some advice for students who are interested in learning more about this compelling career path.



**Q:** What do you do on a 'day-to-day' basis in your current role as a Merchandise Coordinator at Indigo?

**A:** As a Merchandise Coordinator at Indigo, I am responsible for supporting the buying team for the Wellness Category. The Wellness Category comprises general merchandise, including fitness & yoga accessories, water bottles, beauty & skincare, aromatherapy, and wellness tech products.

My daily responsibilities include creating purchase orders, onboarding and supporting national brand vendors with setup and addressing issues and/or questions they may have. I also collaborate with cross-functional partners to ensure a seamless omnichannel experience for the Wellness Category. Although seemingly administrative at first glance, the Merchandise Coordinator role provides growth opportunities for those interested in becoming full-time buyers.

I am lucky to be encouraged by my leadership team to take the initiative and adopt projects outside of my regular responsibilities. My role has evolved since I started my position, and the daily tasks have become more systematic while I utilize the rest of my time to step out of my comfort zone and prove my capabilities as a merchant in training.

**Q: What technology platforms do you use in your role?**

**A:** The most frequently used platform in my role is Microsoft Office, especially Excel. I create and read multiple Excel files a day! I also use PowerPoint and Microsoft Word frequently.

Another platform I use daily is SAP. SAP is an enterprise resource planning (ERP) software that houses business data and information. Everyone in the company uses SAP for different purposes; I typically use it to check and manage inventory information related to purchase orders, product store listings, article information (UPC, category, availability), and vendor information. Most large retailers use an ERP system similar to SAP.

The Retail Information Management course (RMG300) provided me an excellent introduction to ERP systems and essential Excel functions that I use daily in my current role.



**Q: How does your industry impact the world?**

**A:** To quote the motto of the Retail Students' Association, "Retail is Everything". Even though my time as a student leader has ended, this motto remains relevant in my career and has become even more meaningful while working full-time. From my experience, retail is a multi-faceted powerhouse of sales, marketing, design, strategy, public relations, and much more. The image that a retailer presents to its customers is incredibly impactful to those who see it. Therefore, a retailer needs to curate a meaningful message to present to the world.

**Q: Which industry trends should aspirational students be aware of?**

**A:** The retail industry is heavily driven by trends. Therefore, I suggest that aspirational students keep up to date with retail news. Retail trends often vary depending on the type of product one is working with. Because of this, I recommend keeping up to date with trends on aggregate and category-specific levels. An example of a high-level trend would be experiential retail concepts and trends in how customers' shopping habits are evolving. A category-specific trend would be branding partnership trends, product launches, and how shoppers respond to different brands and products.

**Q: What advice would you provide a Ted Rogers student who aspires to work in your industry?**

**A:** My most significant advice would be to stay in tune with what is relevant in the industry. Retail is fast-paced and constantly evolving; therefore, it can be difficult to stay caught up! I also recommend growing your Excel skills early and practicing every day. The industry is smaller than people think, so attend networking events and stay in touch with fellow students and others you meet along your journey. Finally, I suggest getting involved at school (student groups, networking, etc.) and speaking to your Professors about their careers. They have a plethora of experience and advice to provide students!

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### NRF

The [National Retail Federation](#) (NRF) is the world's largest retail trade association. They celebrate, educate, and inspire the people who power the retail industry.



### RSA

The [Retail Students' Association](#) (RSA) represents and educates students on a career in retail through offering events and workshops.



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### Career Consultant Contributor Carey Khuu

Carey is a Ted Rogers Alum from the Retail Management program and has student recruitment experience within the public sector. Carey is passionate about providing students with career guidance that allows them to develop, implement, and sustain meaningful careers.



### Student Contributor Eman Ahmed

Eman is a second year Marketing Management student and a Project Coordinator at the Business Career Hub. She is currently building and further refining critical skills through leadership positions and exclusive programs.