

*Building Retail Leadership*



**National  
Professional  
Certification  
in Retail  
Management  
Candidate Guide  
2008-2009**

Each candidate is required to read this guide before taking the assessment for the National Professional Certification in Retail Management. This guide contains information individuals need to take the assessment and to apply for and maintain certification.

Additional copies are available online at [www.nrf.com/industry-certification](http://www.nrf.com/industry-certification).



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*Dear Certification Candidate,*

*On behalf of the NRF Foundation, I congratulate you for taking the initiative to work toward the National Professional Certification in Retail Management. This is an important step in demonstrating that you have the knowledge and skills shown to be important in retail management work in high-performance organizations.*

*NRF Foundation commends you for your commitment to professionalism in the industry. We wish you much success throughout your career.*

*Sincerely,*

*Katherine T. Mance*

*Katherine T. Mance  
Vice President, NRF Foundation*

## ABOUT NRF FOUNDATION

The NRF Foundation (NRFF) is the research and education arm of the National Retail Federation (NRF), the world's largest retail trade association. NRF represents an industry with more than 1.4 million U.S. retail establishments, more than 23 million employees-and one in five working Americans- and 2004 sales of \$4.1 trillion. The Foundation, a non-profit foundation created in 1981, conducts industry research, develops education and workforce development programs, and promotes retailing as a career destination. The NRF Foundation benefits retailers, their associates and business partners and allies, and consumers in many ways. Research provides the basis for education and the industry and its importance to the economy, and provides industry and government leaders with an analysis of public policy decisions on consumers, retailers and the economy. The Foundation's education and career development efforts, including *NRF University Wired*, encourage professional development and excellence in performance of retailing for associates and executives at all levels. [www.nrf.com/foundation](http://www.nrf.com/foundation).

## COMPETENCY STATEMENTS & CERTIFICATION

The National Professional Certification in Retail Management is based on competency statements developed with input from numerous companies and employers who worked together to develop the assessments and certification. To help employees measure, document, and showcase their skills, these competency statements provide the fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities that current and prospective employers need to succeed in related jobs and careers. The competency statements describe characteristics and communicate the keys to productivity and job success.

Workers can use certification to assess their knowledge and promote their professionalism. Earning certifications through assessments shows that a worker has demonstrated the knowledge and skills noted as important to successful

employment in related jobs and careers. Certifications can help build a committed, professional workforce and raise image and opportunity in sales and service careers.

The Certification was designed to capture the core of what Retail Managers need to know for a broad range of management and supervisory positions. As such, it is appropriate for anyone wanting to pursue a management career in retail and related industries in long-term career and company growth.

Developed by NRFF with support from the U.S. Department of Labor and American Express Foundation, this credential defines a new level of career advancement to motivate retail leaders to stay and grow in their jobs. As such, these competencies have been identified to describe work in a best-practice, high-performance company at the level of a Retail Manager with 3-5 years of experience.

To date, standards have been developed for three major areas, Customer Service, Sales, and Retail Management.

## RETAIL MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

The National Professional Certification in Retail Management was designed to capture the core of what Retail Managers need to know for a broad range of management and supervisory positions. As such, it is appropriate for anyone wanting to pursue a management career in retail and related industries and interested in long-term career and company growth.

The certification is voluntary. The NRF Foundation awards the National Professional Certification in Retail Management solely to indicate that the individual who earns it has demonstrated knowledge and skills noted as important to successful employment in the sales and service industries.

The title of the certification is "National Professional Certification in Retail Management." If an individual passes the assessment and earns the certification, then the individual will be able to say that he or she is a "Nationally Certified Professional in Retail Management." The NRF Foundation does not permit any other representation of the certification. Organizations or individuals who choose to incorporate the assessment or certification as a condition of employment or advancement do so at their own initiative. The NRF Foundation advises that such organizations or individuals must determine for themselves that their criteria and methods of determining qualifications for employment meet their needs and comply with all laws and regulations applicable to them.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for certification, an individual **MUST** pass the required assessment and **MUST**:

- Be at least 16 years old or, if a student, have attained at least grade 11 standing and
- Be in good standing with his or her employer, school, or training program.

Although not required, the NRF Foundation recommends that individuals taking the Retail Management Assessment have three to five years of experience in the retail industry.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The NRF Foundation embraces diversity and values the creation of opportunities for everyone. The NRF Foundation does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status.

## RETAIL MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

The Retail Management Assessment is one component in the national assessment system. The results are portable across the entire system, which is designed to be modular, cross-industry, and highly accessible to a wide audience. All of the assessments in the system are built to facilitate linking with company-specific pieces and systems.

The Retail Management Assessment is based on the retail management competency statements included in this guide. Experts and industry professionals with first-hand knowledge of the workplace studied these competencies and all of the data collected over time to develop a "blueprint" for this assessment. They determined, using all of the data at hand, the areas that are most important to be included in the assessment and what emphasis should be given to each. A national survey sample reviewed and validated the standards.

Workers who are familiar with one or more of the NRF Foundation industries and occupations write and review questions for the assessment. Question writers include frontline workers, managers, instructors, curriculum developers, and training providers. The NRF Foundation makes every effort to select question writers and reviewers who respect and value diversity and will consider the diversity of the workforce and candidates with respect to work environments, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age, and other factors.

The assessment consists of 100 questions covering five major work areas, also called domains. The work areas/domains and the number of questions from each area included on the 100-item assessment are noted on the next page. For a complete listing of the tasks, knowledge, and skills to be tested by the Retail Management Assessment, please review the content outline on page 15.

Work Area / Domains	Number of Questions on the Assessment
Administrative and Financial Accountability	19
Operations	20
Human Resources	18
Merchandising	19
Selling and Services	24

The Retail Management Assessment is given by computer and includes scenario-based, multimedia items with some video, audio, and graphics. The computer presents each of the questions, and the candidate indicate his or her answer to the question on the computer.

All of the questions require the application of retail management skills and knowledge to make a judgment about what is best to do in a retail management situation. The candidate may be asked to select the correct answer from among four choices given (multiple-choice questions), to perform a task, such as clicking on a store's record to find information, or to sort items or information.

The candidate may read a situation, listen to an audio clip, or will watch a video. For some of the questions, more than one answer could be somewhat correct, but the candidate should always indicate the **BEST** answer. Remember although rules and practices vary from company to company, the answers given should be based on the retail management standards of high-performance companies – companies that empower their workers.

The candidate does not need computer experience to take the Retail Management Assessment. At the assessment test site, a staff member will assist each candidate in navigating the system demonstration module. The candidate may work in the demonstration module until he or she is comfortable with the online testing system and may begin the assessment when he or she is ready. Both online help and staff will be available throughout the session to help with the functions of the online testing system.

Two-and-one-half hours are allotted for the entire assessment appointment. This includes two hours for the assessment, 15 minutes for the computer lesson, and 15 minutes for background information and providing an opinion of the assessment. This has been shown to be plenty of time to complete the lesson and assessment without pressure.

## ASSESSMENTS LOCATIONS & SCHEDULING

There are two categories of Assessment Sites – public testing sites and private testing sites. Public testing sites are open to anyone. Private testing sites are typically restricted to candidates enrolled in a training program or class.

**Public Testing Sites:** Candidates can sit for the NRF Foundation's National Professional Certifications at one of Castle Worldwide, Inc.'s national test centers, for a fee of \$80. The fee must be paid by credit card (MasterCard or Visa) at the time of test registration. Candidates can register online at: [http://www.castleworldwide.com/tds\\_v5/asp/NRF\\_registration.asp](http://www.castleworldwide.com/tds_v5/asp/NRF_registration.asp) and click on "Other Location (Castle Partners)." To find a location near you, click on the drop-down box under Location/Date/Time Preference.

**Private Sites:** Some private sites allow candidates to sit for the National Professional Certifications by appointment. These private sites may offer the assessment at specific, set times or may be able to accommodate a personalized reservation. The testing fee varies per site. A list of private sites can be found at: [www.nrf.com/industrycertification](http://www.nrf.com/industrycertification). Contact the test site directly for more information. **Private assessment sites include:** special testing centers, community colleges, high schools, skills centers, and industry settings. A number of training programs can set-up to administer the assessment on-site. If your

company or organization would like to administer the assessment to internal candidates, visit: [www.nrf.com/industrycertification](http://www.nrf.com/industrycertification), or contact the NRF Foundation Certification Director at: 202-626-8182, or at: [certinfo@nrf.com](mailto:certinfo@nrf.com), for set-up information.

## BUYING VOUCHERS

Candidates testing at one of Castle Worldwide's test centers do not need a voucher in order to get access to the certification exam. Candidates can register online at: [http://www.castleworldwide.com/tds\\_v5/asp/NRF\\_registration.asp](http://www.castleworldwide.com/tds_v5/asp/NRF_registration.asp) and click on "Other Location (Castle Partners)." The site is eCommerce so a credit card is needed to confirm the certification.

Companies and organizations that are set-up as private NFFF testing sites must purchase test vouchers for all candidates prior to testing. The cost of the retail management test vouchers is \$80.00/per. Private test sites may charge their candidates up to \$20.00 additional, to cover the cost of the administration of the exam (bringing the total cost to \$100.00). Test sites purchase vouchers and make payment arrangements through NRF Foundation prior to testing. Please contact the Certification Department at: **202-626-8182** to make payment arrangements, or visit: [www.nrf.com/industrycertification](http://www.nrf.com/industrycertification).

## OBTAINING A REFUND

Candidates with medical or personal emergencies that prevent them from keeping their appointments at the assessment test site may obtain a refund of their assessment fees. To obtain a refund, candidates **MUST** submit a written request to the NRF Foundation. The request **MUST** include the:

- Date, time, and location of the scheduled appointment;
- Reason the candidate was unable to keep the scheduled appointment; and
- Documentation of the reason, i.e., a letter from a physician or licensed mental health care professional or clergy member.

The NRF Foundation will require four (4) to six (6) weeks to process the refund request.

If inclement weather or an emergency requires a CASTLE Worldwide-sponsored assessment test site to cancel testing appointments, then candidates will be notified by telephone. The assessment test site will reschedule all appointments at no charge or penalty to the candidates.

## REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

**NRF Foundation wishes to ensure** that individuals with disabilities are not deprived of the opportunity to participate in the assessment solely because of a disability. NRF Foundation complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended, in accommodating candidates with documented disabilities who need special arrangements to take an assessment.

Reasonable accommodations depend on the nature and severity of the documented disability. A particular accommodation will not be granted if it is not deemed reasonable and other suitable techniques are available.

**To arrange for an assessment accommodation,** you must submit an acceptable request to NRF Foundation within thirty(30) days before the assessment appointment. The request must include your name, address, and Social Security Number; the name of the assessment, the approximate date on which you wish to take the assessment, the location at which you wish to take the assessment; and a description of accommodations you request. The request also must include supporting documentation from a physician or other qualified professional reflecting a diagnosis of your disability and an explanation of the accommodation(s). The supporting documentation must be on the physician or other professional's letterhead, specify the professional's credentials, and be signed by the professional. You may also download and submit the "request for accommodation for" on our website: [www.nrf.com/industrycertification](http://www.nrf.com/industrycertification).

NRF Foundation will provide reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, except where such may fundamentally alter the assessment or results, or result in an undue burden. Assessment accommodations typically include:

- Extended time to complete an assessment (time and a half to double time);
- A reduced-distraction environment separate from other assessment candidates;
- Permission to use the candidate's adapting equipment, such as a magnifier;
- A reader or scribe;
- Another accommodation recommended by the professional documenting the disability that NRF Foundation considers reasonable.

Due to the unique nature of each accommodation request, NRF Foundation recommends that candidates request accommodations as early as possible. The assessment will be scheduled after NRF Foundation has received and reviewed all required information.

## ADMISSION TO THE ASSESSMENT TEST SITE

Candidates must check in at the assessment test site at least 30 minutes before their scheduled appointments. If candidates are late for their scheduled appointment, then they will **NOT** be admitted at the test and they will owe the full assessment fee. Remember to allow plenty of time to find parking and the assessment room.

When candidates arrive at the assessment test site, they **MUST** present proper photo identification with signature and date of birth to the proctor. Examples of acceptable photo identification include:

- State-issued driver's license;
- Government-issued passport;
- Government-Issued Identification card; and
- Official school identification.

Examples of non-acceptable photo identification include:

- Gym membership card and
- Identification with signature only.

If candidates cannot produce acceptable photo identification with signature and date of birth, then they **WILL NOT** be admitted for testing.

When candidates check-in at the assessment test center, please remember to bring contact information for a professional reference. Candidates will need the reference's name, telephone number, and e-mail address. A professional reference **MUST NOT** be a family member but can be a teacher, trainer, or employer.

Candidates also may wish to bring the following items to the assessment test center.

- Layered clothing. It is a good idea to wear layers of clothes in order to adjust to the temperature in the assessment room. Be sure to bring an indoor sweater or jacket to use in case it is too cool.
- A watch. Although the online testing system includes a clock, many candidates prefer their own watches to make them more comfortable while taking the assessment.

Candidates will receive scratch paper, a pencil, and audio headphones to use while taking the assessment. In addition, a calculator is included in the online testing system. The assessment test site staff will collect the scratch paper, pencil, and headphones when candidates are finished with their assessments. No assessment materials may be taken from the assessment room.

The following items are not allowed in the assessment room.

- Books or other reference materials;
- Pencils or pens;
- Calculators;
- Food or drink;
- Telephones or signaling devices, such as pagers;
- Other electronic devices; and
- Weapons/personal defense items.

If candidates bring any of the "not allowed" items to the assessment test site, then they will be asked to leave them outside of the assessment room. The assessment test site staff cannot guarantee the safe return of any of the items left outside of the assessment room.

Please note that candidates cannot bring guests, visitors, children, or pets to the assessment test site. Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco are not permitted in the assessment room.

## **CANDIDATE AGREEMENT**

Before candidates begin the Retail Management Assessment, they will be asked to read and indicate their acceptance of an agreement similar to the one that appears below:

### **Terms and Conditions Statement**

Thank you for completing this application. In addition to the Candidate Guide, candidates must agree to the following:

I agree that the NRF Foundation may verify to others that I have earned the National Professional Certification in Retail Management; I authorized NRF Foundation to make such verification, and I release NRF Foundation from any liability associated with such disclosure. Notwithstanding the foregoing, I understand that my assessment performance will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any person or entity for any reason except as may be required by law.

This assessment and the questions contained in it are the exclusive property of the NRF Foundation and are protected by copyright law. No part of this assessment may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including, but not limited to, memorization. I understand that I may not discuss or disclose the contents of the assessment orally, in writing, or by any other means.

I understand that during this assessment, I may **NOT** communicate with other assessment participants, refer to any materials other than those given to me by the assessment test site staff, or help or obtain help from anyone other than assessment test site staff. Participating in any irregularity during the assessment, such as giving or receiving unauthorized information or help, may cause my assessment to be discontinued, invalidate my assessment results, or lead to other appropriate action. In such event, I understand that the assessment fee will not be refunded due to costs incurred by NRF Foundation.

By selecting "I Agree" below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood this agreement. I understand that failure to comply with the requirements outlined in this agreement can cause my participation to be terminated, my assessment results to be invalidated, or other appropriate action to be taken. I confirm that I have provided all accurate and up to date information.

## ASSESSMENT TEST SITE CONDUCT

If candidates must leave the assessment room during the testing period, then they must check-out with the assessment test site staff. Candidates will not be allowed extra time to make up for any time that they spend away from the assessment room.

In addition, the assessment may be stopped and a candidate may be removed from the assessment room and/or assessment test site if he or she behaves in a way that could compromise the integrity of assessment content or jeopardize the safety of assessment test site occupants. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Offering or accepting help of any kind or viewing another person's monitor or test materials;
- Providing fraudulent identification or posing as another test-taker;
- Bringing or trying to bring to the assessment test site any study materials or unauthorized aids ;
- Using or trying to use any study materials or unauthorized aids;
- Disobeying assessment test site guidelines or instructions of the assessment test site staff;

- Disturbing other candidates (for example, by talking or making noise);
- Copying or trying to copy assessment content or trying to remove information about assessment content from the assessment room;
- Altering an assessment test site computer or attempting to use an assessment test site computer for any purpose other than taking the assessment; or
- Failing to follow the rules or instructions given by the assessment staff.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The NRF Foundation offers the following tips for success as candidates prepare for and take the Retail Management Assessment.

- Follow all instructions precisely. Listen carefully to the assessment test site staff, and carefully read all written directions received.
- Read each question carefully. Review all of the possible answer choices. Picture what would be true or the proper thing to do in a real-life setting. Then, make an answer choice.
- Don't try to second-guess what the question writers want by thinking, "What do they want me to do?" Candidates will have more success if they think, "What is the **BEST** approach for this situation?"
- Pace the examination by checking the time periodically. The time allotted for the assessment is meant to allow everyone ample time to finish. Candidates still need to be sure that they are spending a reasonable amount of time on each question, to avoid wasting the time that is set aside for the assessment.

## ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Candidates will receive their results immediately when they complete the assessment. Passing candidates will receive a passing notice at the assessment test site and a certificate and lapel pin in the mail. All passing credentials are subject to verification of professional references, as described in this guide. Individuals who do not meet the passing standard will receive a profile of their strengths and weaknesses, along with information on how to strengthen areas of need. Those individuals who do not pass may register to take the Retail Management Assessment again after 30 days.

A candidate's standing on the assessment indicates **ONLY** how well he or she responded to the types of questions in the assessment and depends **ONLY** on how well he or she answered the questions presented. It will **NOT** indicate how "good" a candidate will be at retail management. It will not indicate whether one person is better at retail management than another. It is designed only to determine how well an individual responds to questions requiring the application of knowledge, skills, and judgment in typical retail management situations.

The passing score represents the minimum level of knowledge and skill a candidate must demonstrate to pass the assessment. The passing score was set through a process that included study and recommendations by a panel of subject matter experts, review and recommendation by the NRF Foundation Assessment and Certification Committee, and adoption by the NRF Foundation Board of Directors.

The subject matter experts, committee members, and board members are highly familiar with the work of entry-level through first-line supervisory employees performing retail management work functions in high-performance workplaces in the sales and service industries. These experts are a diverse group of professionals familiar with retail management work for a variety of different products and services in all sizes of companies. They have experience with retail management work functions through first-hand experience or direct, regular contact with individuals performing the work, or in work analysis and assessment.

There are several versions, or forms, of the Retail Management Assessment. Only one "blueprint" is used for all of the forms, and all forms cover the same content. The actual questions will vary across the forms. A statistical procedure called "equating" or "linking" is used to compensate for any differences in difficulty across the forms. This gives candidates an equal chance of passing, no matter which form of the assessment they take.

After equating, the passing raw score (total number of points correct) is converted to 450 on a common scale (100 to 750) for all forms. Candidate raw scores are converted to scores on this scale. Thus, all candidates who receive the same scaled score have demonstrated the same level of performance, regardless of which form of the assessment they took.

On all forms of the assessment, 100 questions contribute to candidate scores. All score information is confidential. Neither the NRF Foundation nor any of its agents will send score reports to unauthorized third parties or give out score information via the telephone.

## RETAKING THE ASSESSMENT

Candidates who do not pass the Retail Management Assessment **MUST** wait at least 30 days or longer before they retake the assessment. Candidates may retake the assessment as many times as they wish. Each time a candidate sits for the assessment, he or she **MUST** pay the assessment fee.

## RESCORING

Within 30 days of the assessment appointment, a candidate may request that his or her assessment be rescored. Candidates will be charged a fee for this service. Please contact CASTLE Worldwide at 919.572.6880 to request rescoring of an assessment.

## SCORE CANCELLATION

The NRF Foundation may cancel a candidate's score if the Assessment and Certification Committee determines that the candidate:

- Falsified or misrepresented information in the application to sit for the assessment;
- Participated in any violation of the NRF Foundation's copyright or registration;
- Participated in any unauthorized disclosure of assessment materials in any form;

- Gave or received unauthorized help with the assessment; or
- Was in any way dishonest with regard to taking, administering, or preparing others to take the assessment that directly or indirectly compromises the integrity of the assessment or certification.

## APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION/AUDIT PROCESS

The assessment application fee is built into the assessment testing fee. Candidates who successfully pass the Retail Management Assessment are eligible to apply for the National Professional Certification in Retail Management. Each individual who passes the assessment will have applied for certification before taking the assessment. Candidates need to have the name, telephone number, and e-mail address of a professional reference with them at the time they sit for the assessment. A professional reference **MUST** not be a family member but can be a teacher, trainer, or employer.

After applying for certification, CASTLE Worldwide will request verification of each candidate's eligibility within 30 days of passing the assessment. Please note that this audit process is done randomly, and candidates may be asked to verify current employment or enrollment in an education or training program. Not every professional reference will be contacted for verification. However, accurate and up-to-date information must be provided at the time of registration. Failure of the candidate's reference to respond or to provide accurate, confirming information will constitute grounds for the NRF Foundation to withhold certification until such reference information is verified, at the sole discretion of the NRF Foundation. The candidate will be notified of any problems with verification and provided an opportunity within 30 days to resubmit information for the same or a different reference.

After verification, CASTLE Worldwide will enter each approved candidate's name, date of birth, location, and certification into the national database. Credentials then will be mailed to each individual. This includes a certificate for framing, wallet card, and lapel pin. The certification will be maintained in the national database, effective for a period of three years.

## FEE SCHEDULES

**Assessment:** If you take the National Professional Certification in Retail Management at a private NRFF site, the fee will range from \$80-\$100. You must schedule, purchase a voucher and make payment arrangements directly through the test site. If you take the National Professional Certification in Retail Management at one of CASTLE Worldwide, Inc.'s public test centers, the fee will be \$80, and the fee must be paid by credit card (MasterCard or Visa) at the time of test registration.

**You are responsible** for the full amount of the assessment and site fee unless your employer or other organization has a direct arrangement with NRF Foundation. If you cannot or decide not to keep your assessment appointment, you must change or cancel your appointment as directed in this handbook to avoid paying the fee. You are responsible for knowing all rules regarding scheduling and fees presented in this handbook.

**Rescoring:** If for any reason you request that your assessment be rescored, you will be charged a fee for rescoring your assessment. Please contact CASTLE Worldwide, Inc. at 919-572-6880 to request rescoring

**Certification:** The fee to apply for certification is \$20; however, this fee is built into your testing fee. If you pass the assessment, you will apply for certification at the time you take the test.

**Replacement Certification:** If you need a replacement certificate for any reason, there is a \$10 fee. Please contact NRFF directly to request replacement.

**Replacement Lapel Pin:** If you need a replacement pin, there is a \$10 fee. Please contact NRFF directly to request replacement.

## CERTIFICATION DENIALS & APPEALS

The NRF Foundation may deny certification if it determines that the candidate:

- Do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements for the certification;
- Do not pass the assessment;
- Act in a manner that leads to cancellation of the assessment score; or
- Act in a manner that discredits the certification.

Candidates may appeal decisions related to applications for certification within 30 days from the assessment testing date. Requests must be in writing and signed. Mail requests to: NRF Foundation, Certification Department, 325 7th Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20004.

## MAINTAINING THE CERTIFICATION

During the three years that certification is effective the certificate holder must continue to meet all eligibility requirements. Each individual must continue to be in good standing with his or her employer, school, or training program. If, at any time during the three-year certification period, the certificate holder fails to meet the eligibility requirement, then he or she must notify the NRF Foundation. Individuals also must notify the NRF Foundation of all address and name changes.

The NRF Foundation may revoke a certificate if it determines that a certificate holder has violated any of the rules of the NRF Foundation, including those stated in this guide, the candidate agreement, and the certification application.

At the end of the three-year certification period, the NRF Foundation will send a notice of the renewal requirements to certificate holders who are in good standing.

## COMMENTING ON THE ASSESSMENT

During the assessment, candidates will have an opportunity to comment on the questions, the computer system, and other aspects of the experience. Candidates also are welcome to submit any concerns they have to the NRF Foundation office.

Please send questions or comments in writing to: NRF Foundation, Certification Department, 325 7th Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20004.

## CURRICULUM & TRAINING RESOURCES

The recommended training to help candidates prepare for the retail management certification is the self-paced, online courses available through NRF University wired, [www.nrfuniversitywired.com](http://www.nrfuniversitywired.com), an eLearning platform that provides online training for the retail industry. The courses that cover the same areas as the certification test are in the "**Retail Management Training Suite**" (a bundle of six courses).

**Retail Management Training Suite** – Consists of six courses: *Introduction to Retail Management*, *Introduction to Selling and Service*, *Human Resources*, *Operations*, *Merchandising* and *Financial Reporting*. Candidates can take any and of all of these courses to gain knowledge in these specific areas. The main objective of the curriculum is to provide the learner an overview of the retail industry, concepts and processes and an opportunity to understand the areas of accountability for a Retail Manager. Each course takes about one to one and a half hours to complete, depending on the learner. The cost is \$300 for the suite per learner for a one-year license. Individual courses can be purchased at a cost of \$50 per learner for a one-year license.

If you want more information on these courses, visit:

<http://www.nrfuniversitywired.com/coursecatalog/index.cfm?&roomaction=catalog>. To **register online**, go to "**Log On**" at the top right hand navigation bar and select "**I need to create an account.**" Complete all the necessary information and a temporary password will be emailed to you. The site is eCommerce enabled so you can place items in your basket and pay by credit card.

Please keep in mind these courses are recommended, not required. The National Professional Certification in Retail Management does not require you to have a college degree or prior retail experience, but if you do not have retail experience or retail knowledge, training is highly recommended.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following sample questions provide examples of the content included on the Retail Management Assessment. However, an important aspect of the computer-based assessment is the multimedia aspect - video clips, audio clips, and question types that cannot be adapted to paper and pencil, including sorting, identifying records, and other physical responses, which could not be incorporated into this sample. To preview an online demonstration of the assessment, go to [www.nrf.com/industrycertification](http://www.nrf.com/industrycertification). To check the answers to these sample questions, view the key on page 27.

1. A retailer's goal relating to store merchandise loss is to:
  - A. Prevent shoplifting.
  - B. Observe shoplifting.
  - C. Detain shoplifters.
  - D. Prosecute shoplifters.
2. A scale of benefits is allowed in which of the following groups of policies?
  - A. Layoff and promotions
  - B. Discharge and discipline
  - C. Bonuses and perks
  - D. Recruitment and access to training
3. Deceptive pricing occurs when:
  - A. Markdowns are not clearly marked on the ticketed item.
  - B. A misleading price is advertised to lure customers into the store.
  - C. The sign on the fixture does not match the item's ticketed price.
  - D. A sales associate takes an authorized markdown at the register.
4. When discussing with a sales associate how to handle an upset and dissatisfied customer, it is **BEST** to:
  - A. Coach the associate to get a manager as quickly as possible.
  - B. Coach the associate to inform the customer to stop being angry.
  - C. Coach the associate to allow the customer to vent her anger.
  - D. Coach the associate to diffuse the customer's anger first and find out why she is upset.
5. For resale purposes, a company purchases three chairs at \$15 on January 5th, five chairs at \$17 on January 15th, and two chairs at \$15 on January 25th. On January 20th, the company sells four chairs. Using the LIFO inventory method, how much inventory does the company still have?
  - A. Six chairs at a total value of \$92
  - B. Six chairs at a total value of \$100
  - C. Six chairs at a total value of \$160
  - D. Four chairs at a total value of \$60
6. Development of an effective warehouse loss-prevention procedure includes all of the following **EXCEPT**:
  - A. Control of shipping operations.
  - B. Merchant marketing responsibilities.
  - C. Receiving procedures.
  - D. Transportation operations.
7. A sales associate in hosiery needs to know a customer's weight and height in order to help size. What is the **BEST** way to obtain this information?
  - A. "How much do you weigh?"

- B. "You look like you are in the Plus sizes."
- C. "Just look on the packages. You will be able to determine the proper size."
- D. "Let's look at the size chart, where do you see yourself according to the manufacturer's recommendations?"

- C. \$15,000
- D. \$30,500

9. Using the chart below, which full-time associate had the best selling productivity based on personal selling cost?

Housewares Department Monthly Sales Report - February 2005			
Employee	Total Payroll	Total Sales	Personal Selling Cost
#16, full-time	\$1,012 ÷	\$16,010	= 0.063
#13, part-time	\$809 ÷	\$9,260	= 0.087
#17, full-time	\$1,400 ÷	\$18,554	= 0.075
#11, part-time	\$637 ÷	\$11,622	= 0.054

- A. #16
- B. #17
- C. Both #16 and #17
- D. Not enough information

8. The book method of inventory at retail value is the record of stock that should be on hand (stock purchases and stock sold). No actual physical count is required for book inventory, but if done, it is included. Given the chart below, what is the **TOTAL** inventory shortage?

4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter		
Physical Inventory	September 1	\$10,000
Purchases	September to January	\$15,500
Goods Sold	September to January	\$15,000
Physical Inventory	February 1	\$10,000

- A. \$0
- B. \$500

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The Retail Management Assessment is based on current knowledge of the retail management profession. The references recommended below, although not comprehensive, may be helpful in preparing for the assessment.

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## RETAIL MANAGEMENT CONTENT OUTLINE

The Retail Management Assessment consists of 100 questions covering five major work areas, also called domains. Each work area/domain is further described through tasks and knowledge or skill statements. The following content outline describes the material to be tested by the Retail Management Assessment.

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
<b>Domain I</b>	<b>Administrative and Financial Accountability</b>	<b>19</b>
Task 1	Reviews, interprets and responds to store operating and/or financial reports.	7
	<i>Knowledge of basic business math and formulas</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of spreadsheets</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of standard report types</i>	
	<i>Skill in reading and interpreting reports</i>	
	<i>Skill in identifying and implementing actions to address issues uncovered on reports</i>	
Task 2	Completes both selling and non-selling reports per company directives.	5
	<i>Knowledge of spreadsheets</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company standard selling reports</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company standard non-selling reports</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of basic business mathematics and formulas</i>	
	<i>Skill in collecting and compiling data and information into reports</i>	
Task 3	Conducts or oversees periodic physical inventory in compliance with company policy.	7
	<i>Knowledge of physical inventory methods and schedules</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of basic business math and formulas</i>	
	<i>Skill in identifying and allocating resources to perform physical inventory</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	Skill in compiling and reporting physical inventory results	
<b>Domain II</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>20</b>
Task 1	Manages receiving, processing and flow of merchandise to and from selling floor in order to minimize damage or loss and ensure adequate stock on hand.	2
	<i>Knowledge of merchandise receiving standards</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company merchandise receiving policies and procedures</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of merchandise inspection and staging standards</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company merchandise inspection and staging standards</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of merchandise recovery standards</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company merchandise recovery standards</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of merchandise return standards</i>	
Task 2	Anticipates and avoids a potentially hazardous environment by understanding and enforcing all safety policies and regulations.	3
	<i>Knowledge of safety policies, laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of safety inspection standards</i>	
	<i>Skill in developing, implementing and assessing safety inspections</i>	
	<i>Skill in identifying and remediating safety threats</i>	
Task 3	Understands and implements store emergency/disaster plan to ensure safety and support loss prevention.	2
	<i>Knowledge of emergency/disaster plan standards</i>	
	<i>Skill in developing, implementing and assessing emergency/disaster plans</i>	
Task 4	Identifies, assesses and corrects/reports unsafe conditions to proper authorities in a timely manner and in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and company policies.	2
	<i>Knowledge of safety policies, laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of safety inspection standards</i>	
	<i>Skill in identifying and reporting unsafe and/or potentially unsafe conditions</i>	
Task 5	Implements and adheres to corporate policy to minimize loss through customer, employee and vendor theft, cash handling, fraud, and record keeping errors	3
	<i>Knowledge of policies, laws and regulations regarding theft</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	<i>Knowledge of theft deterrence standards</i>	
	<i>Skill in planning, implementing and assessing theft programs</i>	
Task 6	Protects customer and employee information and property in conformance with company policies and regulations.	2
	<i>Knowledge of applicable policies, laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of evolving identity theft issues</i>	
	<i>Skill in implementing identity and property theft programs</i>	
Task 7	Creates a clean, safe and attractive shopping/working environment by scheduling repairs, cleaning and preventive maintenance to protect equipment and facilities and minimize customer/employee inconvenience.	2
	<i>Knowledge of facilities maintenance standards</i>	
	<i>Skill in planning, implementing and assessing facilities maintenance programs</i>	
Task 8	Follows company store opening and closing procedures.	3
	<i>Knowledge of store opening and closing procedures</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of cash handling procedures</i>	
Task 9	Ensures adequate supplies in support of selling; e.g. bags, boxes, pens, etc.	1
	<i>Knowledge of seasonal and/or special selling events</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of supply ordering, processing and management procedures</i>	

Domain III	Human Resources	18
Task 1	Recruits sales associates using approved procedures to ensure there are qualified candidates to interview to satisfy job openings.	1
	<i>Knowledge of company personnel requirements</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company policies and regulations regarding candidate recruitment</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of job descriptions and roles</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
Task 2	Accepts applications from job-seekers; may conduct initial interview or schedule interview for hiring manager.	1

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	<i>Knowledge of labor laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding interviewing</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of job descriptions and roles</i>	
	<i>Skill in interviewing</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
Task 3	Interviews job applicants to select candidate best matching job profile.	1
	<i>Knowledge of labor laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding interviewing and reference checks</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of job descriptions and roles</i>	
	<i>Skill in interviewing</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
Task 4	Provides both positive and negative written feedback to employees in the form of periodic employee performance reviews and documented disciplinary activities in an effort to maximize staff performance.	1
	<i>Knowledge of corporate performance evaluation policies and procedures</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of corporate disciplinary action policies and procedures</i>	
	<i>Skill in interviewing</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
Task 5	Provides ongoing coaching and guidance to associates to ensure quality performance/productivity, build employee confidence, improve workplace morale and communicate management expectations.	2
	<i>Knowledge of employee objectives, goals and performance metrics</i>	
	<i>Skill in coaching</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
Task 6	Conducts or arranges scheduled, required, and/or ad hoc training/cross-training to employees to understand and apply company policies, meet sales goals, and service standards in order to maximize productivity and ensure adequate staffing.	1
	<i>Knowledge of company training policies and resources</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of training techniques and methods</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company culture, mission and objectives</i>	
	<i>Skill in planning, execution and facilitation of training events</i>	
	<i>Skill in assessing training events</i>	
Task 7	Counsels/guides employees in developing skills, knowledge and abilities to enable career advancement and improve retention.	1
	<i>Knowledge of job descriptions and responsibilities across various titles</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company career paths and opportunities</i>	
	<i>Skill in assessing employee skills</i>	
	<i>Skill in developing an employee development plan</i>	
	<i>Skill in coaching, mentoring and providing employee feedback</i>	
Task 8	Actively participates in personal growth and career development by seeking opportunity and continuous learning.	1
	<i>Knowledge of job descriptions and responsibilities across various titles</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company career paths and opportunities</i>	
	<i>Skill in assessing personal skills</i>	
	<i>Skill in seeking coaching, mentoring and feedback</i>	
Task 9	Follows company ethical guidelines and values and promotes the same behavior in subordinates to build and maintain positive company reputation.	2
	<i>Knowledge of company mission, values, goals and policies</i>	
	<i>Skill in assessing personal behavior</i>	
	<i>Skill in seeking coaching, mentorship and feedback</i>	
Task 10	Creates work schedules using projected workload, employee availability, and employee skill sets to optimize sales/service and operations while meeting payroll and budgetary constraints.	1
	<i>Knowledge of employee availability, preferences and skill sets</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	<i>Knowledge of payroll budgetary constraints</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of applicable laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of sales projections and seasonal/special sales events</i>	
	<i>Skill in collecting, analyzing and reporting data</i>	
Task 11	Complies with all applicable laws and regulations when dealing with all applicants, employees, customers, and vendors and ensures that subordinates similarly comply.	2
	<i>Knowledge of labor laws and regulations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding employee management</i>	
	<i>Skill in verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
	<i>Skill in diplomacy</i>	
Task 12	Terminates, or recommends termination, in accordance with company policy and applicable laws and regulations.	1
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding progressive discipline</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company policies, laws and regulations regarding employee termination</i>	
	<i>Skill in reasoning, decision making and negotiations</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in presenting oneself with confidence, professionalism and objectivity</i>	
Task 13	Identifies, investigates, and resolves employee conflict consistent with company policy while maintaining the dignity and respect of all involved.	1
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding employee conflict resolution</i>	
	<i>Skill in reasoning, decision making and negotiations</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in presenting oneself with confidence, professionalism and objectivity</i>	
Task 14	Plans and conducts store meetings with employees to communicate objectives, solicit input and feedback, and recognize achievement thereby promoting consistent, open, and interactive communication.	1
	<i>Knowledge of departmental objectives</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of planning and conducting a professional meeting</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	<i>Knowledge of cross cultural differences</i>	
	<i>Skill in verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in facilitating meetings</i>	
Task 15	Assures proper processing of payroll, benefits and other personnel administrative responsibilities in accordance with company policies and procedures and all applicable laws and regulations.	1
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding payroll and benefits processing</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of basic benefits terminology and application</i>	
	<i>Skill in basic business math and formulas</i>	
	<i>Skill in collating and organizing data</i>	
<b>Domain IV</b>	<b>Merchandising</b>	<b>19</b>
Task 1	Manages new and replenished merchandise through the monitoring of stock reports, physical counts, seasonal needs, hot/slow sellers and basic items to maintain optimal inventory levels.	5
	<i>Knowledge of product seasonality patterns</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of competitor's pricing and stock levels</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company labeling policies</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of fixture availability</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of inventory locations</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of delivery lag periods/order cycle times</i>	
	<i>Skill in visual memory</i>	
Task 2	Follows company policies and procedures or guidelines to make merchandise floor ready.	4
	<i>Knowledge of company labeling policies</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of electronic article surveillance systems</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of the principles of visual display</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of item shrink potential</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of fixture availability</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of inventory location</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of advertisement timing</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
Task 3	Follows company policies and procedures or guidelines for signage, visual display, and merchandise placement to maximize sales, ensure safety and minimize shrinkage.	5
	<i>Knowledge of product seasonality patterns</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of competitor's pricing and stock levels</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company labeling policies</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of electronic article surveillance systems</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of the principles of visual display</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of gross profit structure</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of item shrink potential</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of fixture availability</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of inventory location</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of advertisement timing</i>	
	<i>Skill in visual memory</i>	
	<i>Skill in building displays</i>	
Task 4	Responsible for accurate markdown/markup of merchandise in response to company directives.	5
	<i>Knowledge of product seasonality patterns</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of competitor's pricing and stock levels</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of company labeling policies</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of the principles of visual display</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of gross profit structure</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of item shrink potential</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of markdown/markup retail math</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of inventory location</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of forced sales</i>	
<b>Domain V</b>	<b>Selling and Services</b>	<b>24</b>
Task 1	Ensure customer satisfaction within company policy by meeting and exceeding customer expectations to increase sales and customer loyalty.	4
	<i>Knowledge of company service level policies</i>	
	<i>Skill in verbal and written communication</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
	<i>Skill in decision making and problem solving</i>	
Task 2	Resolves customer comments/complaints, consistent with company policy, by empowering employees to provide meaningful resolutions, thereby increasing sales and customer loyalty.	4
	<i>Knowledge of company policies regarding customer complaint resolution</i>	
	<i>Skill in decision making, problem solving and conflict resolution</i>	
	<i>Skill in verbal and written communications</i>	
Task 3	Analyzes and responds to customer feedback to increase customer satisfaction, sales and customer loyalty.	3
	<i>Knowledge of basic business mathematics</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in decision making and problem solving</i>	
Task 4	Enhance customer loyalty by ensuring the perceived value of products and services is greater than competitors' by offering superior service, and product knowledge thereby ensuring the store's success.	3
	<i>Knowledge of competition</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of product mix</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of customers</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
Task 5	Maintains and/or increases customer loyalty through the implementation of special marketing and promotional efforts.	2
	<i>Knowledge of marketing techniques and methods</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of advertising techniques and methods</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in problem solving and creative thinking</i>	
Task 6	Monitors seasonal and community events to ensure the right product mix, thereby increasing customer traffic and improved store sales.	3
	<i>Knowledge of inventory requirements associated with special selling events</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of special selling event calendar</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of customer traffic flow patterns</i>	

Type	Description	Number of Questions on the Assessment
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
	<i>Skill in community networking</i>	
Task 7	Promotes effective selling skills to ensure meeting or exceeding sales goals and customer satisfaction.	3
	<i>Knowledge of employee skill sets</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of products</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	
	<i>Skill in coaching, mentoring and employee development</i>	
Task 8	Applies the store's service model to gain an understanding of customer's shopping patterns, groups, and habits to support and increase sales.	2
	<i>Knowledge of corporate service model</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of customers</i>	
	<i>Knowledge of corporate mission, vision and goals</i>	
	<i>Skill in written and verbal communication</i>	
	<i>Skill in active listening</i>	

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS ANSWER KEY

Question Number	Content Area	Answer	Reference
1	Domain III	A	Kimiecik, Rudolph. <i>Loss Prevention Guide for Retail Businesses</i> . John Wiley and Sons Publishers, 1995.
2	Domain III	C	Levy, Michael and Barton Weitz. <i>Retailing Management</i> . McGraw Hill/Irwin Publishers, 2003.
3	Domain III	B	Dunne, Patrick and Robert Lusch. <i>Retailing</i> . Southwestern College Publications, 2004.
4	Domain III	D	McArdle, Geri. <i>Building the Sale</i> . Crisp Learning, 1999.
5	Domain III	A	Berman, Barry and Joel Evans. <i>Retail Management: A Strategic Approach</i> . Prentice Hall Press, 2003.
6	Domain III	B	Kimiecik, Rudolph. <i>Loss Prevention Guide for Retail Businesses</i> . John Wiley and Sons Publishers, 1995.

7	Domain III	D	National Retail Federation. <i>Get to Know Your Customer</i> . National Retail Federation, 2002.
8	Domain III	B	Bohlinger, Maryanne Smith. <i>Merchandise Buying</i> . Fairchild Books and Visuals, 2001.
9	Domain III	A	Rosenberg, Jerry. <i>Dictionary of Retailing and Merchandising</i> . John Wiley and Sons Publishers, 1995.





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