



A Professional Standard for a fragrance product category specialist

Developed in partnership with industry standard development expert People 1st

A Professional Standard for a fragrance product category specialist

Product category specialists work as frontline retail employees within a duty free and travel retail environment, but have particular responsibilities to their specialist product category. They must be passionate about delivering a quality service that always aims to exceed customers' expectations and be the brand ambassador for the products they represent. They either can work for the duty-free and travel retail organisation, or may work directly for the supplier. Although in this instance their specialism is fragrances, they will be expected to have a base knowledge of other product categories in order to assist customers in the most effective way. They enjoy direct contact with customers from a variety of backgrounds, nationalities and cultures, and are motivated by maximising a sale and meeting / exceeding the travelling customer expectations. Using their excellent depth of product knowledge, an effective product category specialist will engage with customers providing information, support and guidance. The level of customer service experience will have an impact on maintaining and enhancing all aspects of customer loyalty such as, the duty free and travel retail environment, specific locations, retail operators and brands.

A product specialist should be aware that the mind-set of a travelling customer could be very different to that of someone shopping in the High Street. The stresses and strains of travelling through an airport, often under the added pressure of time, will require a degree of empathy and the ability to engage the customer and maximise the sale in a relaxed but time efficient manner. Maximising sales by utilising up and link selling techniques is a key competency for any product specialist.

This standard comprises of three levels of competence expected from a product category specialist and should be used in conjunction with the professional standard for a front line retail employee in a duty free and travel retail environment. Expansion of areas in the standard are included at the end of the document in the **range** section. Statements in the main body of the standard in bold link to these range statements. The standard also utilises the term 'assigned portfolio'. This term reflects the brands or products a fragrance category specialist personally represents. This representation may cover a single brand or product or a collection of brands or products depending on the specific role.

This standard has been structured into three levels to which fragrance product category specialists can aspire:

Foundation level

The **foundation** level describes the range of competencies and values an employee should develop as part of the on-boarding and induction phases of employment. It would typically take up to three months to achieve.

Competent level

The **competent** level describes the range of competencies and values an employee should display as a fully functional member of the team, operating independently on a day-to-day basis whilst meeting organisational targets and conforming to regulatory requirements. It would typically take up to six months to achieve.

Outstanding level

The **outstanding** level describes the range of competencies and values an exceptional sales assistant will consistently display in the organisation. Outstanding employees are typically rising stars with ambition to excel in their role. It would typically take up to one year to achieve.

Structure of the standard:

This standard contains the competencies needed by a product category specialist, which have been split into key areas. Each area has three levels of competence, building from foundation to outstanding. As individuals progress from one level to the next they are expected to demonstrate higher levels of ability and commitment in each of the key areas for the role.

- **Product knowledge**

Knowing and understanding the full product range is a key competence for a fragrance specialist. They must be familiar with the iconic brands of the region, olfactory groupings, current trends, offers and campaigns and how these will all influence a customer's decision to purchase. A fragrance specialist will use their knowledge and tailor recommendations for products, or alternatives, in a way that satisfies the customer and adheres to organisation / brand standards

- **Manufacturing and processing**

In order to effectively recommend and sell any fragrance a specialist requires the knowledge and understanding of how fragrances are made, including the key ingredients, the manufacturing process and how this differs for each type of fragrance.

- **Compliance**

Sales in duty free and travel retail are bound by local and international regulation. This section of the standard ensures that a fragrance specialist understands the relevant regulations and allowances and ensures that all customer interactions are compliant, with the customer being given accurate information at all times.

- **Product storage, quality and display**

All products on sale in the duty free and travel retail environment must be stored and transported securely between storage areas and the sales floor. Damages, breakages and issues with the availability of stock are key areas which the fragrance specialist needs to know and understand to ensure maximum business performance.

- **Sales approach**

The key competencies of a fragrance specialist are to know and understand the products they are retailing. This, coupled with the ability to profile customers and adapt the sales approach lead to maximising the opportunities for sales. A good fragrance specialist will also realise that the customer relationship is key to current and future business and look for ways to establish and keep loyalty to the organisation and brands.

The following provide **guidance** on the **range** of detail that may be appropriate to cover for areas highlighted above in the body of the standard. Retail organisations/brands should ensure appropriate coverage of these areas

Distributors/Brands – examples could include:

- Coty
- L'Oreal
- Estee Lauder
- Elizabeth Arden
- BPI – Beauty Prestige International
- Shiseido
- Chanel
- Christian Dior
- Guerlain
- Givenchy
- Lancôme
- Puig
- Yves Saint Laurent
- Gucci

Manufacturing process

- Raw materials
- Origin
- Extraction methods
- Blending
- Aging
- Bottling
- Packaging

Fragrance categories

- Perfume / Parfum
- Eau de Perfume / Eau de Parfum
- Eau de Toilette
- Eau de Cologne
- Aftershave

Olfactory families

- Hesperidia
- Cyprus
- Floral
- Fruity
- Oriental or Amber
- Aromatic
- Woody

Conditions which may affect product quality

- Temperature
- Light
- Rotation of stock items
- Damage of stock items
- Shelf life