

Merchandiser interview questions

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What to expect

Merchandiser interviews usually mix hands-on questions about building and maintaining displays with questions that test how you use sales data to make placement decisions. Expect at least one scenario question about handling a stock or timing problem, since supply issues and last-minute changes are routine in this role.

- **Process/technical:** Questions checking how you'd actually plan, build and maintain a display or planogram from start to finish.
- **Behavioural:** Past-experience questions about adjusting displays, handling stock problems, or working across multiple sites.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical situations, such as a delayed delivery or a promotion clash, testing how you'd prioritise and respond.
- **Data and analytical:** Questions about reading sales or stock data and turning it into a placement or replenishment decision.
- **Stakeholder-facing:** Questions about working with suppliers, warehouse staff or store managers when priorities conflict.

Interviews for this role typically open with a walk-through of your merchandising background, move into a couple of scenario or judgement questions about stock and display problems, then close with a look at the tools and systems you've used and any questions you have about the store or category you'd be working on.

1. Walk me through how you'd plan and set up a new seasonal window or floor display from a brief.

Why they ask

This checks whether you understand the full process from brand guidelines through to installation, not just the creative end.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a step-by-step walkthrough: brief and brand guidelines, sourcing stock and props, layout planning, installation, and how you'd check it against standards once it's up.

Example answer

"I'd start by checking the brand guidelines and any promotional standards for the campaign, then look at what stock is actually available before committing to a layout. I'd sketch the display, confirm timing with the warehouse so stock arrives before installation, and build it in stages rather than all at once so I can adjust proportions as I go. Once it's up, I'd walk past it as a customer would to check sightlines and make sure pricing and signage are correct before leaving it live."

2. Tell me about a time you changed a product's placement based on sales data.

Why they ask

This is core to the role: merchandising decisions are supposed to be data-informed, not just visual.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the sales data you looked at, the action you took, and the result.

Example answer

"A product category in one store was underperforming compared to similar stores in the group. I pulled the weekly sales reports and saw it was positioned in a low-traffic corner. I moved it closer to a complementary, higher-traffic category and coordinated with the supplier to make sure stock levels could support the new spot. Sell-through improved over the following weeks, and the store manager asked me to apply the same logic to two other slow-moving lines."

3. A supplier delivery is delayed and a promotional display is due to launch tomorrow. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement under time pressure and how you handle a common problem in this role.

How to structure your answer

Talk through your immediate priorities, who you'd contact, and the fallback option you'd put in place, rather than giving a single fixed answer.

Example answer

"First I'd confirm the actual delivery timing with the supplier and warehouse rather than assuming the worst. If it won't arrive in time, I'd build the display with whatever stock is already available and hold back the promotional signage until the rest arrives, so the space isn't left half-finished or misleading to customers. I'd also flag the delay to the store manager so pricing or advertising tied to the launch date can be adjusted if needed."

4. How do you use sales or stock data when deciding what gets prime shelf space?

Why they ask

Checks your comfort with the analytical side of the role and the tools involved.

How to structure your answer

Explain your reasoning process: what data you look at, how often, and how it translates into a placement decision.

Example answer

"I look at sell-through rate and stock turn by category, not just total sales, since a high-volume item with thin margins isn't always worth the best spot. I check the sales analytics dashboard weekly and compare it against the current planogram to see if anything's underperforming for its position. If a product's been slow for a few weeks running, I'll test moving it to a higher-traffic zone and track whether that shifts the numbers before making it permanent."

5. Describe a time you disagreed with a supplier or store manager about how a display should look.

Why they ask

Merchandisers regularly balance brand standards, supplier preferences and store-level practicality, so conflict handling matters.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, but focus on how you reached a workable outcome rather than who was right.

Example answer

"A supplier wanted their product displayed with a large amount of extra signage that didn't fit the store's brand guidelines. I explained the guidelines to them directly and offered a compromise: a smaller feature panel that still gave their product visibility without breaching the standards. They agreed once they saw it kept the product prominent, and the store manager was happy it stayed compliant."

6. What retail management or design software have you used, and how did you apply it day to day?

Why they ask

Confirms hands-on familiarity with the actual systems used in this role, such as SAP, Oracle, POS platforms or Adobe Creative Suite.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a short inventory of tools with a concrete example of use for each, rather than a general list.

Example answer

"I've used SAP for checking stock levels and raising replenishment requests, and POS reports to track how individual promotions performed against forecast. For display planning I've used Adobe Creative Suite to mock up layouts before presenting them to a store manager, which made it easier to get sign-off before committing time to a physical build."