

4.7: Retailers As Channels of Distribution

What you'll learn to do: describe types of retailers and explain how they are used as a channel of distribution

Retailing is important for marketing students to understand for two main reasons. First, most channel structures end with a retailer. While products may pass through a wholesaler or involve a broker or agent, they also include a retailer. Second, retail offers an immense number of job opportunities. Today in the U.S., there are 3,793,621 retail establishments that support 42 million jobs. Retail also contributes \$2.6 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product.^[1]

You can view the number of jobs and retail presence in your state at the [National Retail Federation](#) (NRF).

Who are these retailers? The NRF posts an annual list of the top one hundred retailers by retail sales. The top ten are listed in the table below.^[2]

National Retail Federation's 2019 Top 10 Retailers List

Rank	Retailer	U.S. Headquarters	2018 Retail Sales (billions)
1	Walmart Stores	Bentonville, Arkansas	\$387.66
2	Amazon.com	Seattle, Washington	\$120.93
3	The Kroger Co.	Cincinnati, Ohio	\$119.70
4	Costco	Issaquah, Washington	\$101.43
5	Walgreens	Deerfield, Illinois	\$98.39
6	The Home Depot	Atlanta, Georgia	\$97.27
7	CVS Health Corporation	Woonsocket, Rhode Island	\$83.79
8	Target	Minneapolis, Minnesota	\$74.48
9	Lowe's Companies	Mooresville, North Carolina	\$64.09
10	Albertsons Companies	Boise, Idaho	\$59.71

In this section you'll learn more about the retail channel and the strategies that drive its growth.

Learning Activities

- [Reading: Define Retailing](#)
- [Reading: Types of Retailers](#)
- [Reading: Retail Strategy](#)
- Self Check: Retailers As Channels of Distribution

1. "Retail's Impact." NRF. Accessed September 24, 2019. <https://nrf.com/retails-impact>. ↵

2. "STORES Top Retailers 2019." NRF. NRF. Accessed September 24, 2019. stores.org/stores-top-retailers-2019/. ↵

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