Home Science Tools is a successful, agile, growth-oriented online retailer of educational science products. Our mission is to inspire learning so that students grow and impact their world. Over the next five years, we expect our educational science products to positively impact over two million K-12 students in home, public, charter, and private schools, shaping a better world through them! We passionately pursue our mission while living out our core values of family, faith, wonder, growth, and stewardship. Visit the company website, www.homesciencetools.com, for more information.

The Product function develops, manages, improves, sources, and supports the products that deliver HST's mission and growth strategy. The Product Team brings together product development, product-line leadership, product management, product marketing and Growth Pathways, and purchasing and supply-chain execution. Product works closely with Marketing, Sales, Customer Care, Operations, and Finance through the Growth System to deliver distinctive, educationally effective, profitable, available, and supportable products.

Associate Buyer

REPORTS TO: Leader of Product & Supply Chain

PURPOSE

The Associate Buyer supports product availability and cost management through accurate purchasing, inventory monitoring, logistics coordination, vendor communication, and sourcing support. This position performs routine supply-chain work within established procedures, follows up on orders and availability, and develops the knowledge and judgment needed for greater purchasing responsibility.

PRIMARY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Purchasing
- Inventory Availability
- Logistics Coordination
- Vendor Management
- Cost Management
- Product Team Support

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Purchasing

- Prepare and process purchase orders within established requirements and authority.
- Ensure purchase orders are accurate, acknowledged by vendors, and properly recorded.
- Monitor open purchase orders through receipt and closure, following up with vendors and internal teams on outstanding materials, receiving discrepancies, and orders requiring resolution.
- Resolve routine purchase-order discrepancies and escalate issues requiring decisions outside of established guidelines.
- Maintain accurate, complete, and up-to-date purchasing, vendor, inventory, and logistics records and documentation in the company system.

Inventory Availability

- Monitor inventory, backorders, potential stockouts, and upcoming demand to identify availability concerns.
- Communicate availability risks and escalate issues requiring changes to purchasing plans or priorities.
- Support readiness for seasonal demand, new product launch, growth pathway and other planned business needs.

Logistics Coordination

- Coordinate routine inbound shipments, including freight quotes, shipping arrangements, and delivery tracking.
- Assist with domestic and international shipping documentation under established procedures and direction.
- Maintain accurate shipment and expected arrival information, communicating delays and assisting with resolution of delivery issues.

Vendor Management

- Maintain professional vendor relationships through routine purchasing, delivery, and availability communication.
- Resolve routine receiving discrepancies, damaged products, supplier errors, credits, and replacements within established procedures; escalate exceptions.
- Maintain accurate vendor information, tracking recurring issues, and escalate significant supplier concerns.

Cost Management

- Maintain accurate purchase costs and approved vendor price changes in company systems.
- Identify potential savings through pricing, quantity breaks, freight options, or alternative suppliers.
- Obtain and compare vendor quotations, including pricing lead times, and purchasing requirements, to support sourcing decisions.

Product Team Support

- Support Product Developers with sourcing research for new, replacement, and alternative products, components, and suppliers, including pricing, samples, availability, and lead times.
- Assist with purchasing and vendor coordination for new-product launches, substitutions, product improvements, and lifecycle changes.
- Support Product Management with vendor-related product quality issues and corrective-action work outside of discrepancies.

ROLE BOUNDARIES

The Associate Buyer:

- Executes routine purchasing, inventory monitoring, vendor communication, and logistics coordination within established procedures and delegated authority.
- Makes routine purchasing decisions within assigned guidelines, escalating exceptions or commitments outside those parameters.
- Supports sourcing research and supplier evaluation, referring decisions outside established authority to the Buyer or Leadership.

- Assists with international purchasing and logistics, escalating complex supplier relationships, import coordination, and commercial decisions.

SECONDARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Participate in Product Team, purchasing, inventory, and cross-functional meetings.
- Support inventory counts, supplier meetings, and improvement projects.
- Assist with urgent supply and customer-order issues.
- Perform other related responsibilities consistent with the position.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Two years of relevant experience in purchasing, inventory, logistics, vendor coordination, warehouse operations, customer service, or related work. Prior purchasing experience is helpful but not required.
- High school diploma or equivalent required.
- Bachelor's degree in supply chain management, Business, Operations, or related field preferred; equivalent relevant experience will be considered.
- Strong attention to detail, organization, prioritization, and follow-through.
- Good research, problem-solving, written, and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work with purchase orders, inventory information, costs, and delivery dates.
- Ability to develop productive relationships with vendors and internal teams.
- Ability to learn ERP, inventory, purchasing, and product-information systems.
- Proficiency with Excel, Outlook, and other business software.
- Alignment with HST's purpose, mission, core values, and leadership expectations.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS & WORKING CONDITIONS

- Works primarily in a professional office and product environment.
- Prolonged periods of sitting and computer work are required.
- Occasional handling, inspection, lifting, or carrying of product samples and materials may be required.
- Must manage changing priorities, supplier issues, and frequent deadlines.
- Occasional extended workdays may be required during critical deadlines or seasonal peaks.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- Competitive wage based on experience.
- Opportunity for company performance bonus.
- Paid time off includes PTO and nine holidays.
- Generous medical, dental, short-term disability, long-term disability, and life insurance.
- Employee Stock Ownership and 401(K) plans with generous company contributions.

Location: Corporate Office, Billings, Montana
Travel Required: Less than 10%
Job Type: Full Time
Classification: Exempt
Career Level: Professional

Send resume and cover letter to Human Resources, janey@homesciencetools.com.