

CASE STUDY

MBTI WORKSHOPS – MARKS & SPENCER plc Enhanced Team Working and Team Building

This workshop was a valuable and expertly handled exercise in helping a widely based group to recognise each others' differences and how to leverage these for the greater good of the Team. All the takeaways were extremely positive.

Kim Phillips – Head of General Merchandise Packaging, Marks & Spencer plc

Background:

M&S needs no introduction! It is one of the best known brand names in the UK. A key reason for this is the consistent public image M&S has presented across all its product ranges.

Packaging and presentation are essential to this to build and retain public trust.

Retail Communication ensures the M&S name remains in front of the public in the best possible light.

Challenge:

M&S has a very wide product range from food and clothing to underwear, cosmetics and accessories.

All of these have to convey the same instantly recognisable brand image to the consumer. The buying departments which source these products operate separately, so the Head of Packaging has a difficult task to co-ordinate the overall look. Ensuring there is a coherent M&S identity requires close co-operation and understanding between “competing” departments.

The Head of Retail Communications has the task of re-enforcing this message if a unified public identity with M&S quality, value, style etc is to be achieved. The challenge is to speak with one voice for such a variety of continually changing merchandise.

Specific Issues to address:

Leveraging diverse talent dispersed across several departments and deconstructing potential silos by harmonising different working styles and viewpoints: Raising team ethos.

Intervention:

M&S has used Myers Briggs (Step 1) as a base diagnostic in many areas of the business.

In order to make best use of the output from this information, LeaderShape were invited to facilitate separate workshops for 17 members of the Packaging team and 12 members of the Retail Communications team with the objective of identifying common traits and highlighting differences to see how these varying skills and attitudes could be harnessed into enhanced teamworking.

The LeaderShape facilitators constructed four exercises to demonstrate the four MBTI dichotomies (E/I, S/N etc) and how opposite types can react differently to

similar information and situations. These live interplays were preceded by a brief overview of MBTI and an exploration of the personalities behind individual types and how these play out in Team issues including in the areas of problem solving and decision making.

Approximately 2/3rds of these sessions were devoted to interactive dialogue. Individuals were given customised sheets showing their decision making preferences and encouraged to discuss the differences with colleagues.

Valuable group learning (as below) emerged, which the Heads of the Teams were keen to build into future meetings.

Key Learnings:

- ✓ Made me more aware of my Team
- ✓ How to approach people to get a better understood response
- ✓ More aware of colleagues' strengths
- ✓ Adapt my style of work to get the best out of others
- ✓ Tolerance and understanding of others
- ✓ Seeing differences in a Team and how they can work well together
- ✓ Understanding more about myself
- ✓ Learning I am not always right!
- ✓ A mixed Team is a better Team

Feedback:

Evaluation sheets at both workshops reported an average score on all aspects of nearly 9/10. The factors measured included Importance to individuals, Enjoy-ability of exercises, Communication of materials, Value as a business takeaway.

We learned that our Team overall has its own "type" and way of doing things. However within this group there are individuals who may do things differently. For them and for others to understand how they all need to flex to optimise Team performance was a major plus. We came away refreshed, energised and challenged from a most enjoyable and well run workshop.

Sally Haskayne- Head of Retail Communications, Marks & Spencer plc

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