

# YOUR M&S

## Marking Change at Marks & Spencer

### Overview

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is one of the United Kingdom's leading retailers with more than 21 million customers visiting the stores every week. The stores sell 2.7 billion articles of clothing, home products, and food, and everything is sourced responsibly from 2,000 suppliers around the world. The company was founded on five core values of quality, value, service, innovation, and trust.

"Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important value driver for business—enhancing trust with customers and employees, helping reduce the cost base, opening up new markets, creating resilience in supply chains," said Mike Barry, head of sustainable business at M&S. It's this thinking that prompted the implementation of Plan A—an approach that incorporated SR into its operations with not only staff, but customers and suppliers.

### Social Responsibility Challenge

M&S faced the challenge of how to build disparate single issue CSR activities into a communicable, comprehensive sustainability plan that is fully embedded in business day-to-day operations.

### Solutions

M&S went beyond its internal organization in 2007 and developed an approach to integrate SR not just within its walls, but also to customers and suppliers. The company introduced Plan A ("because there's no Plan B"), which included commitments to make products and services to help customers live more sustainably.

In just three years, M&S made outstanding progress in the initial five Plan A pillars (climate change, waste, natural resources, fair partner, and health/well-being), achieving 62 of its original 100 commitments while generating \$80 million in additional profit.

In March 2010, M&S unveiled an expanded, more demanding Plan A, setting out 80 new commitments for the next five years and its ambition to become the world's most sustainable major retailer by 2015.

Louise Nicholls, head of responsible sourcing, says the company is going beyond integrating Plan A qualities into its products by helping customers develop their own plans and demonstrating the skills, tools, and motivation required to make a difference. An active website with videos and games helps people learn about sustainability and have fun, but it also clearly points out where the company is progressing and falling short in its commitments.

*Photos: Marks & Spencer is the UK's largest retailer of fair trade certified cotton clothing—one of its many ongoing sustainability efforts.*



### Measurement/Results

Since 2007 M&S has:

- Cut carbon emissions from operations by 8 percent—and improved store energy efficiency by 19 percent (after weather adjustment).
- Reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill by 33 percent.
- Reduced the average weight of non-glass packaging on general merchandise by 36 percent and food by 20 percent per item—and used 400 million fewer carrier bags than in 2006-07.
- Helped customers and employees raise money for community initiatives, including \$4.3 million for local charities through its 125th anniversary fundraising.
- Become the UK's largest retailer of fair trade certified cotton clothing and helped suppliers set up 10 ethical model factories.
- Built on leading sustainable raw material position, for example:
  - Since 2002, only sold free-range eggs and only used free-range eggs in its baked goods and processed products.
  - Since 2006, all tea and coffee sold in M&S cafés and shops is fair trade certified.
  - In 2009, became the first UK retailer to switch all tuna sold in its products to 100-percent pole and line.
  - Also in 2009, became the first UK retailer to purchase GreenPalm certificates to cover entire palm oil usage.

### Other SR Involvement

One of its signature projects is the Oxfam Clothes Exchange. Customers have donated more than \$3 million in clothes to Oxfam in exchange for M&S coupons.

**Organization:** Marks & Spencer

**Location:** London, England

**Website:** [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

**Founded:** 1884

**Employees:** 75,000

