Marks & Spencer (M&S) is an iconic British retailer employing over 80,000 people across 800 stores in the UK and Ireland with a further 450 stores worldwide. M&S appointed ETS in 2012 to build on its existing employee engagement programme.

**Challenge**
Build on existing platform, make engagement more inclusive and increase global participation

**Solution**
Created an employee survey programme that measures engagement, enables a quick turnaround of results and shows where to take action

**Result**
Clear understanding of engagement and survey results are driving action plans, improving the company’s performance.

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Challenge:

M&S has been running an employee survey since 2000 but brought ETS in to help develop a more flexible and intuitive employee survey programme for global use.

Our first job was to understand the culture at M&S and the engagement challenges they face. This included getting managers to buy-in to the employee survey and engagement in general.

Angela Young, Head of Employee Engagement at M&S, briefly explains what they were looking for in an engagement partner:

“We were seeking a provider who could really understand us as an organisation; our needs and our aspirations. As a global company, we needed a supplier with a global reach and we found that ETS, with their solution, was able to demonstrate that and support us in our ambitions.”

Solution:

The questionnaire

The survey questionnaire at M&S was designed to provide measurement and insight for the following strategically-important areas:

- Maximising business initiatives
- Employer brand
- Employee voice
- Developing engaging line managers
- Inclusion and wellbeing.

Survey technology

We created a bespoke programme for M&S, which featured an online survey platform and reporting outputs for executives, line managers and different business areas.

A particular strength of the technology introduced is the speed with which results can be processed. M&S is now able to generate results within seven days of the survey closing, including over 5,000 manager reports, helping them to maintain momentum.

The survey technology enables them to accurately measure and report on engagement annually. M&S also use it to internally run regular ‘pulse’ surveys, providing managers with insights to support their development.
In addition to the online system, there’s a paper survey process too, for those employees not able to access a PC.

M&S has also added an ‘engagement hub’ on its company intranet. Here, managers can find guidance on devising effective action plans on survey results.

**Result:**

**Using survey results**

M&S reports a tremendously positive response from employees to the ‘Your Say’ survey results and also to the approach to measuring employee engagement.

Global participation has improved markedly with 40 countries now taking part in Your Say, compared with just 12 in 2012.

Results are being used to drive improvement in a number of ways, as Angela Young explains:

> We use the survey results at different levels. At a corporate level, we look at how people are thinking and feeling about our strategies and plans. Our employees’ views then inform changes to our plans going forward. At a local level, we use the individual store reports to pull together a set of 3 to 5 commitments that store managers and teams can focus on to drive improved engagement.

Our business psychologists have assisted M&S HR and executive teams to interpret survey results and identify key areas on which to take action.

**Analysing the results**

M&S wanted to have a clear understanding of the financial value of employee engagement. They’ve used historical survey results as part of an in-depth study to explore how engagement influences performance.

The study showed that long term employee engagement trends directly link to long term sales performance, as stores with an improving engagement trend significantly outperformed stores where engagement levels were declining.

The ability to cite such evidence has been instrumental in transforming managers’ understanding and prioritisation of engagement. And to ensure that engagement remains an ongoing focus for managers, it has since been added as a key performance indicator (KPI).
Summary:

Business impact of employee survey

- M&S has a clear idea of how employees are feeling and what drives engagement.
- Analysis has shown the business value of increased engagement with a positive impact on sales, absence, and length of service.
- Results are being used by managers to inform action plans driving improved engagement within stores.

If you’d like help with your employee survey or employee engagement strategy, please contact us:

📞 Call us on 01932 222700
✉️ Or e-mail us at info@etsplc.com