

# Building an excellent employee experience

**M&S**  
EST. 1884



## Case study

Iconic British retailer Marks & Spencer began working with ETS in 2012.

### CHALLENGE

Over the course of our long partnership, we've worked closely with M&S to continually evolve their survey and approach to measuring the colleague experience, ensuring alignment with strategic goals. Against the backdrop of an ever-changing retail landscape, leaders at M&S were keen for a more regular temperature check on how the business was doing but they didn't want to fall into the trap of over-surveying people.

Sarah Manlow, Head of Colleague Engagement at M&S, explains:

“Our aim with changing the survey has been, firstly, to simplify our questions and allow colleagues to add context to their answers in their own words, and so bringing their voice alive on a regular basis. Secondly, we want to provide our leaders with clear data and insights that are action-driven, putting the engagement of colleagues back into their hands. This way leaders can be held accountable to make real improvements and see the link clearly between commercial performance and colleague engagement.”



### SOLUTION

#### Talk Straight

We help M&S to run their 'Talk Straight' survey on a monthly basis. This involves sampling different areas of the business each month. In addition, there is also a monthly leadership survey specifically for the transformational leadership team.

Over the course of a year, the survey goes out in multiple different languages with 70,000-plus colleagues invited to take part.



The survey platform we provide for M&S enables a rapid turnaround of results, giving thousands of managers' access to their results dashboard very shortly after the survey closes.

### **Evolving how M&S measures engagement**

As part of the M&S transformation the 'The M&S Way' a new set of organisational behaviours were introduced across the business in 2019. We were able to incorporate the sentiment of the behaviours into the survey, evolving the engagement measure so it all aligned.

At the same time, we also brought in an employee

net promoter score (eNPS), mirroring what M&S was already doing to measure its customer experience.

### **Adding automated theming**

M&S see huge value in their colleague free-text survey responses. However, the size of the population and the frequency of the surveys meant finding the time to read the comments and draw conclusions just wasn't feasible. We introduced automated theming, allowing M&S to include more free-text questions within their survey and use the insights in a way that is complements the scaled questions in their action plans.

## **RESULTS**

### **USING SURVEY RESULTS**

Following every monthly survey at M&S, each key business leaders receives a monthly insight report, which gives them key headlines for their area of the business, trends from previous months, and a recommendation on areas to focus on.

The addition of an intuitive manager dashboard has made it even easier for managers at M&S to view and interpret survey results for their business area. Each store or business division then discusses their results, capturing three commitments to work on in the dashboard's action planning tool.

### **DEEP DIVE ANALYSIS**

Another way in which we've been able to really help M&S move their business forward is through our detailed analysis of their data. This has involved using their survey data to predict future attrition to help leaders and managers at M&S to identify which profile of colleague may be more likely to leave the organisation.

Further to this, we also led some employee segmentation based on how colleagues responded to various questions. This identified different profiles of people across M&S, each with quite distinct drivers of engagement. This insight has helped M&S to target action planning initiatives based not only on the business area, but also the profile of colleagues.

