

# Hr department at marks and spencer hq



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

It has been a busy start for Tanith Dodge, who only took up her new position running the HR department at Marks and Spencer HQ a year ago. The last 12 months or so have witnessed the announcement of 1, 200 job losses, 27 store closures and a hefty slump in profits. But despite the recent turbulence, Dodge has lived up to her name, and been swift to deal with the issues affecting the organisation, quickly cementing herself into the M & S family.

But then, this is not surprising for a woman of Dodge's pedigree. Her list of credentials includes a graduate traineeship at British Aerospace, an employee relations consultant at Prudential and a five year stint as HRD at WH Smith. And while HR is her background, it is in leadership development that Dodge is carving a name for herself. Indeed, her passion for transforming people in the organisation has been effectively channelled into her latest venture: Lead to Succeed which is being heralded as the company's flagship development programme and is considered to be a key component in its future people strategy.

“ We are doing quite a bit of work on how senior leaders take reorganisation through a period of change, and making understanding how to lead change and make change happen a part of their toolkit is absolutely key.”

Launched last year, the programme targets the development of the 300 most senior M&S employees, and is designed to identify and train the next generation of leaders. “ Lead to Succeed is designed around our business strategy going forwards; what we need to deliver over the next couple of years,” says Dodge. “ We have taken a lot of the research that was done around the core attributes of leader – head, hearts and guts – and that

underpins the programme. But then we've looked at what is it that M&S really needs in terms of its leadership attributes going forwards, so our core values around trust, value service, quality and innovation."

Dodge has ensured that the programme is both robust and practical by looking at potential leaders as individuals rather than simply names on a list. This is then underpinned by coaching and business simulation which is designed around some of the challenges M&S experiences as an organisation: " We ask things like: are you leveraging your own strengths as a leader, how do you then galvanise your team, how do you take the leadership and create that coalition across the organisation and as leaders how do you influence shareholder value? So it is very practical," she adds.

And for Dodge, a focus on practice rather than theory is particularly pertinent at the moment, mainly as many of the senior staff have never before experienced any kind of economic turbulence. " It is unprecedented," she says. " The ways of doing things in the past are not necessarily the ways that will make you successful going forward. We are doing quite a bit of work on how senior leaders take reorganisation through a period of change, and making understanding how to lead change and make change happen a part of their toolkit is absolutely key."

Reflecting this, Marks & Spencer devotes significant time and resources to developing its leaders and nurturing its talent. " Continuing to invest in your talent for now is absolutely key," Dodge emphasises. " Organisations that stop that investment risk cutting the Achilles heel. You have to keep these people and do it in ways that aren't ridiculously expensive." To this end,

Dodge has developed a thorough, robust succession process which has done away with annual reviews and instead focuses ongoing conversations which enables her and her team to look at individuals' capabilities against specific indicators which demarcate them as ' high potential'.

“ Continuing to invest in your talent for now is absolutely key. Organisations that stop that investment risk cutting the Achilles heel.”

“ We do it at all levels from our senior people through to store managers, who have got the potential to develop into another role going forward. We also look at what roles are critical for us going forward and whether we have got enough pipeline of talent coming through for those critical jobs.” In addition, she runs the annual staff survey - ' Your Say' which gives employees the opportunity to voice their views on a range of issues including training and development.

Early reports suggest that the programme is a huge success, with the company witnessing significant change in the way that people behave as a result of the training, and the way that they challenge problems within the organisation. Dodge believes that the success of such schemes are very much dependent on those that facilitate them: not only does it show employees how their leaders behave but it sets a precedent so when they themselves reach the higher echelons of the organisation, they too can lead by example.

“ It is very much about you as an individual leader, your impact on your style with your team and then your impact on your style with your organisation,”

she concludes. “ So it builds on the whole ‘ Your M&S’message – yourself, your team, your organisation.”

Today ethical leadership is more important than ever. The world is more transparent and connected than it has ever been. The actions and philosophies of organisations are scrutinised by the media and the general public as never before. This coincides with massively increased awareness and interest among people everywhere in corporate responsibility and the many related concepts, such as Fair Trade, sustainability, social and community responsibility (see the ethical leadership and ethical organisations page). The modern leader needs to understand and aspire to leading people and achieving greatness in all these areas.

Here is (was..) an excellent 30 minute BBC Radio 4 Discussion about Modern Leadership- (first broadcast 2 Sept 2006, part of the ‘ Sound Advice’ series). Its mere existence is evidence of changed attitudes to leadership. Such a programme would not have warranted BBC airtime a generation ago due to lack of audience interest. Today there is huge awareness of, and interest in, more modern leadership methods. The radio discussion highlighted the need for effective modern leaders to have emotional strength and sensitivity, far beyond traditional ideas of more limited autocratic leadership styles. I’m sorry (if still) this linked item is unavailable from the BBC website, especially if the recording is lost forever in the BBC’s archives. If you know a suitably influential executive at the Beeb who can liberate it please contact me.

Incidentally as a quick case-study, the BBC illustrates an important aspect of leadership, namely philosophy.

<https://assignbuster.com/hr-department-at-marks-and-spencer-hq/>

**Philosophy (you could call it ‘ fundamental purpose’) is the foundation on which to build strategy, management, operational activities, and pretty well everything else that happens in an organization.**

Whatever the size of the organization, operational activities need to be reconcilable with a single congruent (fitting, harmonious) philosophy.

Executives, managers, staff, customers, suppliers, stakeholders, etc., need solid philosophical principles (another term would be a ‘ frame of reference’) on which to base their expectations, decisions and actions. In a vast complex organization like the BBC, leadership will be very challenging at the best of times due to reasons of size, diversity, political and public interest, etc.

Having a conflicting philosophy dramatically increases these difficulties for everyone, not least the leader, because the frame of reference is confusing.

For leadership to work well, people (employees and interested outsiders) must be able to connect their expectations, aims and activities to a basic purpose or philosophy of the organization. This foundational philosophy should provide vital reference points for employees’ decisions and actions – an increasingly significant factor in modern ‘empowered’ organizations.

Seeing a clear philosophy and purpose is also essential for staff, customers and outsiders in assessing crucial organizational characteristics such as integrity, ethics, fairness, quality and performance. A clear philosophy is vital to the ‘ psychological contract’ – whether stated or unstated (almost always unstated) – on which people (employees, customers or observers) tend to judge their relationships and transactions.

The BBC is an example (it’s not the only one) of an organization which has a confusing organizational philosophy. At times it is inherently conflicting. For

example: Who are its owners? Who are its customers? What are its priorities and obligations? Are its commercial operations a means to an end, or an end in themselves? Is its main aim to provide commercial mainstream entertainment, or non-commercial education and information? Is it a public service, or is it a commercial provider? Will it one day be privatised in part or whole? If so will this threaten me or benefit me? As an employee am I sharing in something, or being exploited? As a customer (if the description is apt) am I also an owner? Or am I funding somebody else's gravy train? What are the organization's obligations to the state and to government?

Given such uncertainties, not only is there a very unclear basic philosophy and purpose, but also, it's very difficult to achieve consistency for leadership messages to staff and customers. Also, how can staff and customers align their efforts and expectations with such confusing aims and principles?

The BBC is just an example. There are many organizations, large and small, with conflicting and confusing fundamental aims. The lesson is that philosophy – or underpinning purpose – is the foundation on which leadership (for strategy, management, motivation, everything) is built. If the foundation is not solid and viable, and is not totally congruent with what follows, then everything built onto it is prone to wobble, and at times can fall over completely.

Get the philosophy right – solid and in harmony with the activities – and the foundation is strong.

This of course gives rise to the question of what to do if you find yourself leading a team or organization which lacks clarity of fundamental philosophy

<https://assignbuster.com/hr-department-at-marks-and-spencer-hq/>

and purpose, and here lies an inescapable difference between managing and leading:

**As a leader your responsibility extends beyond leading the people. True leadership also includes – as far as your situation allows – the responsibility to protect or refine fundamental purpose and philosophy.**

See also the notes and processes for incorporating fundamental philosophy within strategic business development and marketing.

### **allegiance and leadership**

Different leaders have different ideas about leadership. For example, see below Jack Welch's perspective, which even though quite modern compared to many leaders, is nevertheless based on quite traditional leadership principles.

First here is a deeper more philosophical view of effective modern leadership which addresses the foundations of effective leadership, rather than the styles and methods built on top, which are explained later.

A British government initiative surfaced in March 2008, which suggested that young people should swear an oath of allegiance to 'Queen and Country', seemingly as a means of improving national loyalty, identity, and allegiance.

While packaged as a suggestion to address 'disaffection' among young people, the idea was essentially concerned with leadership – or more precisely a failing leadership.

The idea was rightly and unanimously dismissed by all sensible commentators as foolhardy nonsense, but it does provide a wonderful



perspective by which to examine and illustrate the actual important principles of leadership:

1. Always, when leaders say that the people are not following, it's the leaders who are lost, not the people.
2. Leaders get lost because of isolation, delusion, arrogance, plain stupidity, etc., but above all because they become obsessed with imposing their authority, instead of truly leading.
3. Incidentally, leading is helping people achieve a shared vision, not telling people what to do.
4. It is not possible for a leader to understand and lead people when the leader's head is high in the clouds or stuck firmly up his backside.
5. That is to say – loyalty to leadership relies on the leader having a connection with and understanding of people's needs and wishes and possibilities. Solutions to leadership challenges do not lie in the leader's needs and wishes. Leadership solutions lie in the needs and wishes of the followers.
6. The suggestion that loyalty and a following can be built by simply asking or forcing people to be loyal is not any basis for effective leadership.
7. Prior to expecting anyone to follow, a leader first needs to demonstrate a vision and values worthy of a following.
8. A given type of leadership inevitably attracts the same type of followers. Put another way, a leadership cannot behave in any way that it asks its people not to.

9. In other words, for people to embrace and follow modern compassionate, honest, ethical, peaceful, and fair principles, they must see these qualities demonstrated by their leadership.
10. People are a lot cleverer than most leaders think.
11. People have a much keener sense of truth than most leaders think.
12. People quickly lose faith in a leader who behaves as if points 10 and 11 do not exist.
13. People generally have the answers which elude the leaders – they just have better things to do than help the leader to lead – like getting on with their own lives.
14. A leadership which screws up in a big way should come clean and admit their errors. People will generally forgive mistakes but they do not tolerate being treated like idiots by leaders.
15. And on the question of mistakes, a mistake is an opportunity to be better, and to show remorse and a lesson learned. This is how civilisation progresses.
16. A leader should be brave enough to talk when lesser people want to fight. Anyone can resort to threats and aggression. Being aggressive is not leading. It might have been a couple of thousand years ago, but it's not now. The nature of humankind and civilisation is to become more civilised. Leaders should enable not obstruct this process.

### **traditional leadership tips – jack welch style..**

Jack Welch, respected business leader and writer is quoted as proposing these fundamental leadership principles (notably these principles are expanded in his 2001 book ' Jack: Straight From The Gut'):

<https://assignbuster.com/hr-department-at-marks-and-spencer-hq/>

1. There is only one way – the straight way. It sets the tone of the organisation.
2. Be open to the best of what everyone, everywhere, has to offer; transfer learning across your organisation.
3. Get the right people in the right jobs – it is more important than developing a strategy.
4. An informal atmosphere is a competitive advantage.
5. Make sure everybody counts and everybody knows they count.
6. Legitimate self-confidence is a winner – the true test of self-confidence is the courage to be open.
7. Business has to be fun – celebrations energise and organisation.
8. Never underestimate the other guy.
9. Understand where real value is added and put your best people there.
10. Know when to meddle and when to let go – this is pure instinct.

As a leader, your main priority is to get the job done, whatever the job is.

Leaders make things happen by:

- knowing your objectives and having a plan how to achieve them
- building a team committed to achieving the objectives
- helping each team member to give their best efforts

As a leader you must know yourself. Know your own strengths and weaknesses, so that you can build the best team around you.

**However – always remember the philosophical platform – this ethical platform is not a technique or a process – it's the foundation on which all the techniques and methodologies are based.**

Plan carefully, with your people where appropriate, how you will achieve your aims. You may have to redefine or develop your own new aims and

<https://assignbuster.com/hr-department-at-marks-and-spencer-hq/>

priorities. Leadership can be daunting for many people simply because no-one else is issuing the aims – leadership often means you have to create your own from a blank sheet of paper. Set and agree clear standards. Keep the right balance between ‘doing’ yourself and managing others ‘to do’.

Build teams. Ensure you look after people and that communications and relationships are good. Select good people and help them to develop. Develop people via training and experience, particularly by agreeing objectives and responsibilities that will interest and stretch them, and always support people while they strive to improve and take on extra tasks. Follow the rules about delegation closely – this process is crucial. Ensure that your managers are applying the same principles. Good leadership principles must cascade down through the whole organisation. This means that if you are leading a large organisation you must check that the processes for managing, communicating and developing people are in place and working properly.

Communication is critical. Listen, consult, involve, explain why as well as what needs to be done.

Some leaders lead by example and are very ‘hands on’; others are more distanced and let their people do it. Whatever – your example is paramount – the way you work and conduct yourself will be the most you can possibly expect from your people. If you set low standards you are to blame for low standards in your people.

“... Praise loudly, blame softly.” (Catherine the Great). Follow this maxim.

If you seek one single most important behaviour that will rapidly earn you respect and trust among your people, this is it: Always give your people the credit for your achievements and successes. Never take the credit yourself – even if it's all down to you, which would be unlikely anyway. You must however take the blame and accept responsibility for any failings or mistakes that your people make. Never never never publicly blame another person for a failing. Their failing is your responsibility – true leadership offers no hiding place for a true leader.

Take time to listen to and really understand people. Walk the job. Ask and learn about what people do and think, and how they think improvements can be made.

Accentuate the positive. Express things in terms of what should be done, not what should not be done. If you accentuate the negative, people are more likely to veer towards it. Like the mother who left her five-year-old for a minute unsupervised in the kitchen, saying as she left the room, "...don't you go putting those beans up your nose..."

Have faith in people to do great things – given space and air and time, everyone can achieve more than they hope for. Provide people with relevant interesting opportunities, with proper measures and rewards and they will more than repay your faith.

Take difficult decisions bravely, and be truthful and sensitive when you implement them.

Constantly seek to learn from the people around you – they will teach you more about yourself than anything else. They will also tell you 90% of what you need to know to achieve your business goals.

Embrace change, but not for change's sake. Begin to plan your own succession as soon as you take up your new post, and in this regard, ensure that the only promises you ever make are those that you can guarantee to deliver.

Here are some processes and tips for training and developing leadership.

### **leadership behaviours and development of leadership style and skills**

Leadership skills are based on leadership behaviour. Skills alone do not make leaders – style and behaviour do. If you are interested in leadership training and development – start with leadership behaviour.

The growing awareness and demand for idealist principles in leadership are increasing the emphasis (in terms of leadership characteristics) on business ethics, corporate responsibility, emotional maturity, personal integrity, and what is popularly now known as the 'triple bottom line' (abbreviated to TBL or 3BL, representing 'profit, people, planet').

For many people (staff, customers, suppliers, investors, commentators, visionaries, etc) these are becoming the most significant areas of attitude/behaviour/appreciation required in modern business and organisational leaders.

3BL (triple bottom line – profit, people, planet) also provides an excellent multi-dimensional framework for explaining, developing and assessing

<https://assignbuster.com/hr-department-at-marks-and-spencer-hq/>

leadership potential and capability, and also links strongly with psychology aspects if for instance psychometrics (personality testing) features in leadership selection and development methods: each of us is more naturally inclined to one or the other (profit, people, planet) by virtue of our personality, which can be referenced to Jung, Myers Briggs, etc.

Much debate persists as to the validity of 'triple bottom line accounting', since standards and measures are some way from being clearly defined and agreed, but this does not reduce the relevance of the concept, nor the growing public awareness of it, which effectively and continuously re-shapes markets and therefore corporate behaviour. Accordingly leaders need to understand and respond to such huge attitudinal trends, whether they can be reliably accounted for or not at the moment.

Adaptability and vision – as might be demonstrated via project development scenarios or tasks – especially involving modern communications and knowledge technologies – are also critical for certain leadership roles, and provide unlimited scope for leadership development processes, methods and activities.

Cultural diversity is another topical and very relevant area requiring leadership involvement, if not mastery. Large organisations particularly must recognise that the market-place, in terms of staff, customers and suppliers, is truly global now, and leaders must be able to function and appreciate and adapt to all aspects of cultural diversification. A leader who fails to relate culturally well and widely and openly inevitably condemns the entire

organisation to adopt the same narrow focus and bias exhibited by the leader.

Bear in mind that different leadership jobs (and chairman) require different types of leaders – Churchill was fine for war but not good for peacetime rebuilding. There's a big difference between short-term return on investment versus long-term change. Each warrants a different type of leadership style, and actually very few leaders are able to adapt from one to the other. (Again see the personality styles section: short-term results and profit require strong Jungian 'thinking' orientation, or frontal left brain dominance; whereas long-term vision and change require 'intuition' orientation, or frontal right brain dominance).

If it's not clear already, leadership is without doubt mostly about behaviour, especially towards others. People who strive for these things generally come to be regarded and respected as a leader by their people:

- Integrity – the most important requirement; without it everything else is for nothing.
- Having an effective appreciation and approach towards corporate responsibility, (Triple Bottom Line, Fair Trade, etc), so that the need to make profit is balanced with wider social and environmental responsibilities.
- Being very grown-up – never getting emotionally negative with people – no shouting or ranting, even if you feel very upset or angry.
- Leading by example – always be seen to be working harder and more determinedly than anyone else.



- Helping alongside your people when they need it.
- Fairness – treating everyone equally and on merit.
- Being firm and clear in dealing with bad or unethical behaviour.
- Listening to and really understanding people, and show them that you understand (this doesn't mean you have to agree with everyone – understanding is different to agreeing).
- Always taking the responsibility and blame for your people's mistakes.
- Always giving your people the credit for your successes.
- Never self-promoting.
- Backing-up and supporting your people.
- Being decisive – even if the decision is to delegate or do nothing if appropriate – but be seen to be making fair and balanced decisions.
- Asking for people's views, but remain neutral and objective.
- Being honest but sensitive in the way that you give bad news or criticism.
- Always doing what you say you will do – keeping your promises.
- Working hard to become expert at what you do technically, and at understanding your people's technical abilities and challenges.
- Encouraging your people to grow, to learn and to take on as much as they want to, at a pace they can handle.
- Always accentuating the positive (say 'do it like this', not 'don't do it like that').
- Smiling and encouraging others to be happy and enjoy themselves.
- Relaxing – breaking down the barriers and the leadership awe – and giving your people and yourself time to get to know and respect each other.

- Taking notes and keeping good records.
- Planning and prioritising.
- Managing your time well and helping others to do so too.
- Involving your people in your thinking and especially in managing change.
- Reading good books, and taking advice from good people, to help develop your own understanding of yourself, and particularly of other people's weaknesses (some of the bestbooks for leadership are not about business at all – they are about people who triumph over adversity).
- Achieve the company tasks and objectives, while maintaining your integrity, the trust of your people, are a balancing the corporate aims with the needs of the world beyond.

### **great leadership quotes and inspirational quotes**

Some of these quotes are available as free motivational posters.

“ People ask the difference between a leader and a boss.... The leader works in the open, and the boss in covert. The leader leads and the boss drives.”

(Theodore Roosevelt)

“ The marksman hitteth the target partly by pulling, partly by letting go. The boatsman reacheth the landing partly by pulling, partly by letting go.”

(Egyptian proverb)

“ No man is fit to command another that cannot command himself.” (William Penn)

“ It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” (President Harry S Truman)

“ I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow.” (Woodrow Wilson)

“ What should it profit a man if he would gain the whole world yet lose his soul.” (The Holy Bible, Mark 8: 36)

“ A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline.”  
(Harvey Mackay)

“ Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple, learn how to look after them, and pretty soon you have a dozen.” (John Steinbeck)

“ I keep six honest serving-men, They taught me all I knew; Their names are What and Why and When, And How and Where and Who.” (Rudyard Kipling, from ‘ Just So Stories’, 1902.)

“ A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant may see farther than the giant himself.” (Didacus Stella, circa AD60 – and, as a matter of interest, abridged on the edge of an English £2 coin)

“ Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.” (Samuel Johnson 1709-84)

“ The most important thing in life is not to capitalise on your successes – any fool can do that. The really important thing is to profit from your mistakes.”  
(William Bolitho, from ‘ Twelve against the Gods’)

“ Out of the night that covers me, Black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be, For my unconquerable soul. In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced nor cried aloud: Under the bludgeonings of chance my head is bloody but unbowed . . . . It matters not how strait the gait, how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.” (WE Henley, 1849-1903, from ‘ Invictus’)

“ Everybody can get angry – that’s easy. But getting angry at the right person, with the right intensity, at the right time, for the right reason and in the right way – that’s hard.” (Aristotle)

“ Management means helping people to get the best out of themselves, not organising things.” (Lauren Appley)

“ It’s not the critic who counts, not the one who points out how the strong man stumbled or how the doer of deeds might have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred with the sweat and dust and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause and who, at best knows the triumph of high achievement and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.” (Theodore Roosevelt.)

“ Behind an able man there are always other able men.” (Chinese Proverb.)

“ I praise loudly. I blame softly.” (Catherine the Great, 1729-1796.)

“ Experto Credite.” (“ Trust one who has proved it.” Virgil, 2, 000 years ago.)

**more great leadership and inspirational quotes**

**see also the free motivational posters for leadership quotes**

**leadership development exercises and games**

The are various games and exercises on the