

# Marks and spencer essay



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The researcher of this study adopted a somewhat similar research approach as Currie & Procter (2003): an interpretative approach to data gathering and analysis (Currie & Procter, 2003), in a largely inductive attempt to generate 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). Data gathering and data analysis were not clearly distinct phases, but, instead, were intertwined (Bryman and Burgess, 1993). In the process of data analysis, the researcher read and re-read written notes from interview transcripts and documentation to identify and discuss themes continually in the course of data gathering (Refer to Appendix: Sample Questionnaire).

The database of study included participants from the four organisations (Marriot Hotel, Marks & Spencer's, The Inland Revenue & TESCO PLC) who belonged to HR and also other departments/functions. Apart from survey research extensive meta-research of existing literature was carried out to acquire both primary and secondary data. For this purpose several articles, journals, websites and company resources were utilised. The following are a few limitations which the researcher faced: 1) Limited Budget. 2) Limited Time,

3) Lack of Knowledge in related areas. 4) Barriers while performing qualitative research. The following rights of the participants were reserved throughout the process of this research: Informed Consent: The participants were informed about the details of the study and how they could most effectively add value to this research. (Refer to Appendix: Informed Consent) Right of Withdrawal: Participant can withdraw at any stage during the research process. Right of Refusal: Participant can refuse to share information.

Privacy: The information shared by the participant will not be disclosed to others. Anonymity of Data: The identity of the participant will remain anonymous. The outcome of this process is a comparative study of four large organisations (Marriot Hotel, Marks & Spencer's, The Inland Revenue & TESCO PLC), pieced together by the researcher, which is a second-order interpretation of organisational processes from the standpoint of the actors involved. In May 1998, Marks & Spencer was the UK's most profitable retailer.

It reported profits of 2 billion and its share price hit a record high of 664p per share. But in October of that year, M&S reported the first fall in profits since the start of the decade and, by the end of 1998, its share price had dropped by 32 per cent. Two years later, the share price had fallen to less than 180p (Rana & Crabb, 2002). Worst of all, customers were turning their backs on products offered by M&S, the firm which until recently was seen as a national institution. Some commentators doubted whether the company would survive.

In contrast to this and despite the size of their workforce, the senior managers at TESCO appear quite exceptional in their knowledge of employees. Eglin points out, for example, that it has records, accurate to within minutes, of the commuting time of each employee and the working preference of every single mother on the payroll. Compare this to the hospital manager who will neither employ young mothers nor move away from the rigid shift system and so will lose potential staff (Parrish, 2003).

Regular, ongoing research into staff attitudes at TESCO has been introduced by modern managers, people who have concern, compassion and courage, and who value their staff. A recent staff consultation revealed the need for a clear policy on career development to help management gauge how talent was generated and to ensure the staff would be capable and motivated as the business grew. This approach represented a major change in the management's attitudes toward talented members of staff, and was intended to liberate them to develop both their careers and the services they provide (Parrish, 2003).

This refreshing approach was markedly different from the overly defensive and negative behaviour apparent in many other organisations, where managers try to hang on to staff at any price. At TESCO, in order to develop a career development policy, cross functional project groups were created, comprising people from different areas and levels of the organisation. From this it was concluded early on that success required more than the recording and identifying of staff talent.