

John lewis plc about us marketing essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The John Lewis Partnership is a visionary and successful way of doing business, boldly putting the happiness of Partners at the centre of everything it does. It's the embodiment of an ideal, the outcome of nearly a century of endeavour to create a different sort of company, owned by Partners dedicated to serving customers with flair and fairness.

All 70, 000 permanent staff are Partners who own 30 John Lewis shops across the UK (28 department stores and two John Lewis at home), 234 Waitrose supermarkets ([www. waitrose. com](http://www.waitrose.com)), an online and catalogue business, [johnlewis. com](http://johnlewis.com) (www. johnlewis. com), a production unit and a farm with a turnover of nearly £7. 4 billion last year. Partners share in the benefits and profits of a business that puts them first.

When our founder, John Spedan Lewis, set up the Partnership, he was careful to create a governance system, set out in our Constitution, that would be both commercial allowing us to move quickly to stay ahead in a competitive industry, and democratic giving every Partner a voice in the business they co-own. His combination of commercial acumen and corporate conscience, so ahead of its time, is what makes us what we are today.

Our founder: the John Spedan Lewis story

With an ambitious vision of co-ownership, and of how a business could put the happiness of its employees at the heart of everything it did, and profit by it, John Spedan Lewis left a radical mark on commercial history. The John Spedan Lewis way is as alive today as it was 80 years ago.

John Spedan Lewis c1906

The Partnership has over 70, 000 Partners who own 30 John Lewis shops (28 department stores and two John Lewis at home shops), 234 Waitrose supermarkets, an online and catalogue business - johnlewis.com, a production unit and a farm, and share in the benefits and profits of a business that puts them first. This is how it began.

The early years

Born in September 1885, John Spedan Lewis was the eldest of two sons whose father had opened the John Lewis department store in Oxford Street. By the age of 21, not only had he acquired a quarter share holding in the department store - download a copy of the letter introducing John Spedan Lewis as a partner in the business (PDF size: 335KB), written by his father in 1907 - he was well on his way to becoming Director of Peter Jones, the other shop in his father's control.

The beginnings of a radical idea

It was during this time that Spedan Lewis became aware that he, his brother and his father between them were enjoying earnings equivalent to those of the entire workforce in both shops. But it wasn't until a riding accident forced him to convalesce that he was able to spend time developing his ideas for the future of the business, ideas that would radically change its foundation.

With the happiness of his employees firmly at the centre of his mind, he began to instigate new systems and practices as soon as he returned to work. Intent on bettering the working conditions and spirit of the company, he offered shortened working days, the setting up of a staff committee, a third week's holiday paid holiday was an innovation for the retail trade at this

time and eventually, a house magazine, the Gazette, which is still published today.

Trying it out at Peter Jones

By 1914, a conflict with his father, who was alarmed by some of these bold practices, meant Spedan withdrew any active involvement with the Oxford Street shop in exchange for total control of Peter Jones. And although it had been unhealthy financially, Spedan's bravery paid off as within five years it converted an annual deficit of £8, 000 to a profit of £20, 000.

Founding the John Lewis Partnership

In 1920, the first profit-sharing scheme was introduced along with a representative staff council. A reconciliation with his father after his mother's death meant the cooperation between the two stores resumed, then his father's eventual death in 1928 gave Spedan sole ownership. He created the first Constitution and the following year the John Lewis Partnership Limited and signed the First Trust Settlement. This gave him practical control of the business, but allowed the profits to be distributed among the employees. Twenty-one years later, he signed the irrevocable Second Trust Settlement, and the Partnership became the property of the people employed within it.

Voice of history

Hear John Spedan Lewis talking to the BBC about his vision for the Partnership – Dear to my heart recorded on 15 April 1957 or download his speech.

The Partnership Spirit

Our Partners will tell you that the John Lewis Partnership is a very special place to work. We believe our distinctive culture – our spirit – lies at the heart of this feeling.

After all, as a Partnership we are a democracy – open, fair and transparent. Our profits are shared, our Partners have a voice and there is a true sense of pride in belonging to something so unique and highly regarded.

Our profits are shared, our Partners have a voice and there is a true sense of pride in taking responsibility for our business success. We build relationships with our customers, suppliers and each other based on honesty, respect and encouragement.

This video explores some of the ideas and behaviours that are important to us, and what makes the John Lewis Partnership the special business it is.

The Partnership

When our founder, John Spedan Lewis, set up the Partnership, he was careful to create a governance system, set out in the company's Constitution, that would be both commercial – allowing the company to move quickly and maintain a leading position in a competitive industry, and democratic – giving every Partner a voice in the business they co-own. This combination of commercial acumen and corporate conscience, so ahead of its time, is what makes us the business we are today.

A system of checks and balances

High standards of corporate governance are at the heart of the Partnership: our structure gives our management the freedom to be entrepreneurial and competitive in the way they run the business for long-term success, while giving the company's owners, the Partners, the rights and responsibilities of ownership through active involvement in the business.

The Chairman, the Partnership Board, the divisional Management boards, the Group Executive, and the Business Strategy Group form the management of the company. The Partnership Council, which elects five Partnership board directors, the divisional and branch level democracy, make up the democratic bodies that give Partners a voice and hold our management to account.

The Partners' Counsellor and system of registrars, make sure the integrity of the Partnership and our democratic system remain intact.

The Chairman, the Partnership Board and the Partnership Council make up the main governing authorities of the Partnership

Governing authorities

At the top level, the Partnership has three governing authorities: the Partnership Council, the Partnership Board, and the Chairman.

The Partnership Council is unique in corporate governance: directly elected by Partners, it holds the Chairman and executives to account and appoints five non-executives to the Partnership Board. The Chairman appoints five executives to the Board: the Managing Director of John Lewis and Waitrose,

the Finance Director, the Director of Personnel and the Partners' Counsellor. The Board also has an external non-executive Director, who is the non-executive Deputy Chairman.

Partnership Council Partnership Board Chairman

John Lewis

John Lewis began in 1864 with the opening of the first shop in London's Oxford Street. 'Never Knowingly Undersold', our unique promise to our customers that the price of any item we sell will always be as low as the lowest price in the neighbourhood, has been our slogan for over 75 years. Through the efforts of our Partners serving customers with our suppliers' high quality goods, we have succeeded in building the largest department store retailer in the UK, with 30 John Lewis shops (28 department stores and two John Lewis at home) and a growing online business – johnlewis.com.

Our Partners work hard to offer customers everything they need under one roof: the best fashions, furnishings and household goods of all kinds at competitive prices with excellent service and free delivery.

Supported by our network of suppliers around the world, John Lewis department stores – voted 'Britain's favourite retailer' in the Verdict consumer satisfaction index, January 2010, as well as being the second overall and rated top in every sector in which it trades in an annual customer service survey by Which?, January 2009 – typically stock more than 350,000 separate lines. In July 2009 John Lewis came first in the UK Consumer Satisfaction Index from the Institute of Customer Service (ICS). Our stores at

Oxford Street and Bluewater also include a John Lewis Foodhall from Waitrose.

In February 2010 John Lewis became the Official Department Store Provider to London 2012.

The John Lewis at home shop is a third of the size of a typical department store. Focussing exclusively on the home, electrical and home technology assortment and with additional features including a café and collection point these smaller format shops are currently located in Poole, Dorset and Croydon, Surrey.

To find your nearest branch go to the johnlewis. com website (www. johnlewis. com). From that website you can also add John Lewis shops as points of interest to your TomTom GPS satellite navigation system. You can follow John Lewis on the following social media channels:

[www. johnlewis. com/twitter](http://www.johnlewis.com/twitter)

[www. johnlewis. com/facebook](http://www.johnlewis.com/facebook)

[www. johnlewis. com/youtube](http://www.johnlewis.com/youtube)

Shopping online

The johnlewis. com website (www. johnlewis. com) stocks more than 100, 000 lines focused on the best of home, fashion, giftware and flowers and is consistently ranked one of the top online shopping destinations in the UK. In May 2010 John Lewis achieved the accolade of the Best Online Retailer in the Which? Awards.

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John Lewis Insurance offers a distinctive range of insurance products specially chosen with Partnership customers in mind. We work with a panel of insurers including AXA, Fortis and Friends Provident to provide products that are both excellent quality and good value.

Our principles

The John Lewis Partnership's seven principles define how we run our business. They are as relevant today as they were when they were set out by our founder, John Spedan Lewis, in our constitution.

Purpose Power Profit Members Customers Business relationships The community

Purpose

The Partnership's ultimate purpose is the happiness of all its members, through their worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business. Because the Partnership is owned in trust for its members, they share the responsibilities of ownership as well as its rewards profit, knowledge and power.

Power

Power in the Partnership is shared between three governing authorities: the Partnership Council, the Partnership Board and the Chairman.

Profit

The Partnership aims to make sufficient profit from its trading operations to sustain its commercial vitality, to finance its continued development and to

distribute a share of those profits each year to its members, and to enable it to undertake other activities consistent with its ultimate purpose.

Members

The Partnership aims to employ people of ability and integrity who are committed to working together and to supporting its Principles. Relationships are based on mutual respect and courtesy, with as much equality between its members as differences of responsibility permit. The Partnership aims to recognise their individual contributions and reward them fairly.

Customers

The Partnership aims to deal honestly with its customers and secure their loyalty and trust by providing outstanding choice, value and service.

Business relationships

The Partnership aims to conduct all its business relationships with integrity and courtesy and to honour scrupulously every business agreement.

The community

The Partnership aims to obey the spirit as well as the letter of the law and to contribute to the wellbeing of the communities where it operates.

Our strategy

The Partnership's reputation is founded on the uniqueness of our ownership structure and our commercial success. Our purpose is 'the happiness of all our members, through their worthwhile, satisfying employment in a successful business', with success measured on our ability to sustain and

enhance our position both as an outstanding retailer and as a thriving example of employee ownership.

Our strategy is based on three interdependent objectives Partners, customers, profit which together will make us a successful business:

Partners should gain personal satisfaction by being members of a co-owned enterprise in which they have worthwhile, secure and fulfilling employment and confidence in the way the Partnership conducts its business.

The Partnership should recruit and retain loyal customers through their continued trust and confidence in our reputation for value, choice, service and honesty and for behaving as good citizens.

The Partnership should make sufficient profit to sustain our commercial vitality and distinctive character, allow continued development and distribute a share of profits each year consistent with Partners' reasonable expectations.

These objectives build on the advantages of our co-ownership structure and demand an appetite for continuous improvement, innovation and enterprise to maintain the vigour of our commercial and democratic capability. They also require the highest levels of corporate governance through effective Audit, Corporate Social Responsibility and Risk Committees.

Achieving our three objectives requires us to demonstrate the benefits of co-ownership and the behaviours that differentiate us. Our ability to compete against and outperform conventional companies will be the most important illustration of the effectiveness of our approach to business.

Our responsibilities

The Partnership was ahead of its time in recognising that commercial success depended on showing the highest level of good citizenship in its behaviour within the community. Today we are best known for the fact that our business is owned for the benefit of our employees all of whom are Partners and share in its profits but we know that to cut our way through tough competitive conditions, we have to continue to prize sound relationships with our customers and suppliers, and sustain a keen sense of civic responsibility.

Our founder's ideals, set out in our Constitution, are the inspiration behind our approach to corporate social responsibility and shape the principles we apply. We are determined to embrace diversity and earn a reputation as an 'employer of distinction' by treating all our employees (Partners) as individuals, with respect, honesty and fairness.

Sharing the rewards and responsibilities of ownership and conducting our business with integrity and courtesy are the principles we live by; this approach underpins our environmental policies, our involvement with local communities and our approach to responsible sourcing and trading.

Our approach

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a modern term, but nonetheless it encapsulates the ideals and principles on which our founder, John Spedan Lewis, built the Partnership, and which remain the cornerstone of our business today.

As a Partnership we recognise that the management of social, ethical and environmental issues involves everyone. This section provides the context for our CSR policy and programmes: our principles and policy on CSR; how through active engagement with our stakeholders we determine the priorities for our business; how we monitor and manage our performance; how we set our business goals and objectives; and who is responsible for making sure we live up to our promises every day.

Principles

When John Spedan Lewis founded the Partnership, he set out how the business was to be run in our Constitution, a set of corporate values and principles which govern and guide our business. Our seven business principles purpose, power, profit, members, customers, business and relationships align perfectly with current thinking on corporate social responsibility. They set out how we see our responsibilities in terms of community investment, environmental protection, responsible sourcing and trading and workplace dignity, diversity and equality.

Our unique Partnership culture

Through the combined efforts of our Partners over the years, we have built a culture based on our principles which ensures that corporate social responsibility issues are embedded in the way we run the business. We believe that this unique Partnership culture, which makes sure we deal with our customers, suppliers and all stakeholders with integrity and respect, is at the heart of our commercial success. Find out more about our business' principles.

Read our CSR Policy.

CSR Policy

As a responsible retailer, owned beneficially by our employees (Partners), we believe that the long-term future of the Partnership is best served by respecting the interests of all our stakeholders: Partners, customers, suppliers and the wider community. We look actively for opportunities to improve the environment and to contribute to the wellbeing of the communities in which we trade. Our CSR policy sets out the principles we follow and the programmes we have developed to focus on the areas where we have significant impact or influence.

Principles

Shared responsibility

Social and environmental responsibility involves everyone. In our own case, the John Lewis Partnership's unique structure means that Partners share the responsibilities of ownership as well as its rewards. We aim to develop and implement social and environmental policies which fit in with our Partners everyday activities and responsibilities.

Honesty and accountability

Democratic ownership means sharing profit, knowledge and power. We will communicate our environmental policies, objectives and performance openly and honestly to our Partners and to others with an interest in our activities, including customers and suppliers. We will encourage them to communicate with us and will seek their views.

Sustainable progress

We are committed to improving our performance. We will take into account technical developments, changing scientific evidence, costs and customer concerns and expectations in the development and implementation of all new social and environmental policies and procedures. We will monitor our performance, set objectives for improvements and report our progress.

Demonstrable compliance

As a minimum, we will meet or exceed all relevant legislation. Where no legislation exists we will seek to develop and implement our own appropriate standards.

Programmes

Environment

We will take all reasonable steps to manage our operations so as to minimise our environmental impact and to promote good environmental practice. We will set and follow high standards in food production, quality and safety. We will continue to promote responsible and sustainable methods of agriculture, animal husbandry and biodiversity; and review regularly our business practices and performance to identify how we can improve our energy efficiency, minimise packaging and reduce water usage, waste disposal and air emissions.

Relationships

We will conduct our business relationships with integrity and courtesy, and honour our trading commitments. Our aim is to build long-term relationships with our suppliers and provide support for small, local, specialist producers.

We are committed to trading fairly with all our suppliers, and will communicate our responsible sourcing expectations to them in the areas of health, safety and worker welfare, sustainable and profitable agriculture, high animal welfare standards, biodiversity and good environmental practice.

Communities

We will build relationships with our customers, suppliers and the local communities we are part of by encouraging our Partners to consider the needs of others and involve themselves in public service. We will obtain a wide range of views on our social and environmental policies and performance.

Partners

We will respect our Partners and encourage their development and training. We will promote equality as differences in responsibilities permit and consider the interests of our Partners including their welfare, health and safety. We aim to empower our Partners and we will recognise individual contributions and reward our Partners fairly. Our ultimate aim is the happiness of our members through their worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business.

Our customers

The John Lewis Partnership aims to deal honestly with customers, securing their loyalty and trust by providing outstanding choice, value and service. Our 70, 000 permanent staff are Partners in the business and share in its profits, which is why we care about our customers. We are passionate about the products we sell and strive to offer customers the best service, unrivalled product assortments from our network of suppliers, and unbeatable value in

a pleasant, convenient and accessible shopping environment through our shops, websites and call centres.

We offer our customers an unrivalled product assortment and the best service we can.

John Lewis

Our 28 John Lewis department stores offer more than 350, 000 different product lines including clothing and accessories for customers of all ages, a wide range of home and giftware and a fast-growing range of own-brand goods. The two smaller format John Lewis at home shops are a third of the size of a typical department store with a smaller assortment focussing exclusively on home, electrical and home technology. Our buying teams work hard to maintain the freshness and popularity of the product ranges by partnering with trusted suppliers to source the best products at the best prices from all over the world. We actively support British manufacturing where we can, which is why we own a textile manufacturer in the UK.

Waitrose

Waitrose believes that few things in life are more important than the food we buy for ourselves and our families. Working with the best producers and growers, Waitrose has built a reputation on the freshness, quality, safety and provenance of the food we sell.

Our 234 shops offer around 18, 000 product lines, combining the convenience of a supermarket with the expertise and service of a specialist shop.

Engaging our stakeholders

We believe that being a responsible retailer means respecting the interests of all our stakeholders, and this involves listening to them, responding to their concerns, being honest in our expectations and fair in how we report our performance.

Here we outline some of the ways we are actively engaging and involving our key stakeholders in shaping our vision and programmes for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Associations Customers Employees (Partners) Government and regulators
Trade associations NGOs Suppliers Local communities Have your say

Here we outline some of the ways we are actively engaging and involving our key stakeholders in shaping our vision and programmes for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Government, NGOs and other stakeholders Customers and Local
Communities Employees (Partners) Suppliers Have your say

Government, NGOs and other stakeholders

As a responsible company we aim to meet the spirit as well as the letter of the law. We give a considered view to Government consultations on regulation that will impact our business and engage in regular dialogue with policy makers on key issues affecting our Partners, our customers and the communities in which we operate.

We are active on a number of business leaders forums and government policy advisory groups, including the Climate Change Leaders Group, the British Retail Consortium and the Retail Energy Forum.

Local authorities

We work closely with local authorities during the planning and construction of all our new builds. With a growing network of shops we need to ensure that our new shops are built responsibly and will operate sustainably in order to minimise both our impact on the environment and the local community.

Regulators

We work closely with regulators such as the Environment Agency and the Health & Safety Executive to make sure that the Partnership operates in compliance with the law.

On the very rare occasions that legal compliance issues occur, we respond immediately, working with the regulator and any other organisations concerned to rectify the situation and put right any problems caused.

Trade associations

The Partnership is a member of the British Retail Consortium (BRC), the UK's leading trade association for the retail industry. Representatives from both Waitrose and John Lewis sit on various Policy Advisory Groups including those covering CSR, food standards, chemicals, the environment and product stewardship. The BRC works closely with government on all campaigning and policy issues on behalf of its members, and has built a firm and constructive relationship with key governmental departments. In addition to this, the BRC

(www.brc.org.uk) has strong ties and dealings with the numerous regulatory agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

For more information on trade associations, see our section on retail industry sources .

NGOs and consumer associations

We work proactively with non-governmental organisations and consumer associations, responding to their requests for information and entering into constructive engagement on campaign issues that we believe should be supported. Examples include our work with Greenpeace on sustainable fish and sustainable timber; the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil; and Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF).

Find out more about our work with these organisations and Our Views on the following issues:

Sustainable fish

Sustainable timber

Sustainable palm oil

Fair trade

LEAF.

Other associations

We work with many organisations which provide us with independent advice and expertise, helping us define our CSR policies and programmes. We also

actively participate in a number of industry groups and forums that promote the CSR agenda, and work to develop industry-wide solutions to the many challenges we face.

Customers and Local Communities

We aim to deal honestly with our customers and secure their loyalty and trust by providing outstanding choice, value and service. We like to hear what our customers think and we want to know how we can do things better. Only by gathering feedback on our performance can we maintain and raise our standards of customer service and keep customers satisfied.

We do our best to encourage customers to give us feedback, both positive and negative, by being open to comments and making it clear how customers can contact us. We also gather feedback ourselves through a variety of methods, such as customer surveys, panels, focus groups and online feedback forms.

To find out more about customer service, what our customers say about us and how we respond, see our section on customer service .

Local communities

As a large retail company we appreciate that we have a significant impact on the community. We engage with the community in a number of ways, and aim to build long-term relationships with local interest groups. Both Waitrose and John Lewis are actively involved with their local communities, not just through donating money and providing support and assistance, but by talking with local communities, understanding their needs and issues and recognising our potential impact on localities and our ability to help. We offer <https://assignbuster.com/john-lewis-plc-about-us-marketing-essay/>

opportunities for Partners to volunteer their time and get involved in local events and activities.

Waitrose

In 2008, Waitrose introduced a new giving initiative, Community Matters. The scheme, which went live in all branches in September, gives each branch £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month – such as welfare organisations, community groups, schools or local divisions of national charities. Customers vote for their preferred cause using a green token each time they shop and the money each cause is given is directly proportional to the tokens they receive. Under the scheme, customers nominate organisations, with the final decision made by PartnerVoice forums (Waitrose's local democratic bodies). Each branch will have a Community Matters Champion, who will find out about potential beneficiaries.

John Lewis

Every John Lewis shop has its own Community Liaison Co-ordinator (CLC) who ensures that the shop is playing its part as a responsible member of the local community. The shops management works with the CLC to develop and promote Partner awareness, interest and involvement in local communities. This also involves working with external partners like Business in the Community to help the shop build stronger relationships with local community organisations, and develop and promote our reputation as a responsible business and an employer of distinction in the local area.

New shop developments

With ambitious plans for new shop developments for both John Lewis and Waitrose, as well as plans to expand or refurbish many of our existing shops, it is important that we engage our local communities in this process. We aim to reach out to everyone concerned at the outset of a planning process.

During the development stages of new shop locations, we carry out appraisals involving structured public consultation so that we understand the views of local people.

See our section on [Our community](#) for more information on how we work together.

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Employees (Partners)

The John Lewis Partnership's 70, 000 permanent employees are known as Partners, because we are all owners of the business and share in its success. As Partners, we all have a say in how the business is run, as well as an equal percentage share in its profits. Giving our Partners a 'voice' is central to the principles of co-ownership and we engage the views and opinions of our Partners through a number of key channels.

Councils, committees and forums

We actively engage our Partners through our democratic network of elected councils and committees, the highest level of which is the Partnership Council who receive regular reports from the Chairman and other Partnership Directors and who are responsible for electing five directors to the Partnership Board. Both John Lewis and Waitrose have elected councils who

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hold their own management boards to account and can question senior management on any aspect of the business. Partners can make their views known through a variety of committees dedicated to community investment, support for retired Partners, financial support for Partners, and social and leisure activiti