

Community
Engagement
Assessment 1

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INTRODUCTION

Community engagement is defined as the process of working collaboratively with groups of individuals affiliated through geographic proximity, similar situations or similar interest in order to address the issues or problems affecting wellbeing of individuals. It is a powerful approach for bringing about behavioural and environmental changes which will enhance the health of community and society as well as its members. Marks & Spencer is a leading organisation which is established in 1884 and its headquarters is located in London, United Kingdom. This report covers analysis of best practices of company on community engagement and participation of stakeholders.

MAIN BODY

Analysis of the best practices of organisation specifically on community engagement and participation of stakeholders

Community engagement is a strategic process with particular purpose of working along with identified group of individuals in order to address issues that affect their wellbeing. Community engagement often includes coalitions and partnership which assist in mobilizing resources as well as impact systems and alter relationship among partners and for changing practices, policies and programs, it serves as catalyst. Marks and Spencer is one of the leading organisation which is highly committed towards taking initiatives associated with community engagement and participation of stakeholders. A global community program has developed by Marks and Spencer to make sure that it emphasizes on developing resilient supply chain communities which will supply the company in decades to come.

As a part of plan A 2025, Marks and Spencer announce its major ***Community Transformation Program*** which is this new plan that aims to support 1000 communities, assist 10 million individuals live happier and healthier lives as well as convert the company into a zero waste business. This pioneering program will see company work with charity partners and local councils in order to support communities to deliver measurable and positive change. The community transformation program of Marks and Spencer was launched on 'Make it Matter Day' - when the company is encouraging the United Kingdom to make each decision count and spend it well. The program was launched in the year 2017 when it was initially being piloted in around 10 communities for over two years, when company was trial many actions developed to tackle the

issues or problems which matter the most to communities - like poverty, loneliness, mental health and wellbeing, skill shortages and unemployment. By year 2023, successful initiatives will be executed to further 100 locations as well as Lawrence will be shared with around 1,000 locations by year 2025 (M&S ANNOUNCES MAJOR NEW COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME, 2017). For around 133 years, the company has been taken initiatives for social change and taking positive actions and play leading role in enabling communities and customers to live healthier and happier lives.

Through the wide store network in United Kingdom, the organisation is seeing more evidence that community require support from partners to deliver the change positively. The company have looked at what community requires, which are the key issues life social inclusion, access to employability skills, support for mental health issues and play a crucial role in making the difference to the lives of community. The company was started with 10 communities so that it can learn, adapt and formulate an agile approach which enable it to support thousands of communities by year 2025. Currently, 10 communities of Marks and Spencer includes Bradford, London borough of Newham, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Derry Londonderry, Middlesbrough, Rochdale, Norwich and Merthyr Tydfil. In all these communities, the company trial locally tailored initiatives whose main aim is to enhance the happiness of residents and social wellbeing through working with The Social Innovation Partnership in order to track the way residents feel regarding their community - their positivity and connectedness towards a community and weather they feel themselves as part of community.

In order to deliver the initiatives, Marks and Spencer work with local partners and councils involving Royal Voluntary Service, Neighbourly, Business in the Community, Frazzled Cafe, Power to Change and The Silver Line. In each of the locations provided above, programmes of activities are executed which is expected to involve some or all bespoke initiatives. The activities included in the community transformation program of Marks and Spencer are as follows:

- CV, interview support, career advice and work experience for school leavers.
- Support food surplus charities to cool bags and fund fridges in order to ensure that they can administering volunteers to host special events and redistribute fresh food throughout of the year. Marks and Spencer provide around 30000 Meals every year to the people living in poverty and homeless individuals in 10 locations.

- For the people who are in need of support or feeling stressed, it hosts frazzled cafes for those people.
- The company provides support for children to start their schooling, involving around 10,000 pairs of plimsolls.
- A plan to develop one of the biggest friendship group in area in order to tackle exclusion and loneliness through bringing the customers, local people and colleagues together by the events at Marks and Spencer stores like tea parties, a volunteer network phone buddies and walking clubs.
- It supports up to 100 startup community businesses which are led by as well as benefit for local individuals in England's 7 communities through partnering with Power to Change in order to combine grants of around 50000 pounds and advice on topics like supply chains, customer research, business planning and digital development and access to skills. A similar program is also developed with different partners for three communities in North Ireland, Wales and Scotland.
- Employee volunteering - in this, the officers to donating their time to more than 700 local community projects executed in all over the United Kingdom over the next 10 days.
- The proposals including High Street flowerbeds, green walls, urban gardens and City tree planting have the potential to provide benefit 2 more than 1,50,000 individuals in 10 communities.

The plan A 2025 of company aims to support 1000 communities along with making the company a zero waste business as well as to assist 10 million individuals to live healthy and happier lives. The new commitments of company include:

- Halving food waste by year 2025.
- All the packaging of company to be widely recyclable by year 2022.
- Supporting the colleagues of Marks and Spencer all over the world to administer 1 million hours of their work time in community volunteering between year 2017 and 2025.
- All the main raw materials that company utilizes to come from sustainable source by year 2025.
- At least half of the food sales of company all over the world coming from healthy goods by year 2022.

- Assisting to raise 25 million pounds for charities tackling mental health issues, heart disease, dementia, loneliness and cancer by year 2025.
- The company will reduce emission of greenhouse gas by 80 percent in its operations by year 2030 and during the similar period of time, cut down emissions in supply chain by around 13.3 m tonnes.

Marks & Spencer report on the progress of Plan A 2025 annually in the month of June as well as the commitments are guaranteed through independent auditors and the own audit team of Marks & Spencer. The company ensure to understand the changing needs of customers, employees and local communities and put efforts to assist them to deal with issues like poverty or unemployment as well as to enhance their health and wellbeing. Throughout the history of 130 years, the company supporting local communities and committed to support economic prosperity, inclusive growth and social cohesion - by being relevant in global local neighbourhoods. The main goal of community engagement program of Marks and Spencer is to develop positive influence in society and enhance the lives of people. The company is also committed to its stakeholders to help to understand issues in society and decide the role which company can play in finding out the innovative solutions to help the people in society. The company aims to take progressive approach for enhancing the engagement in community. The approach of company to community engagement covers entire value chain as well as in involves workers, customers and employees in supply chain, local communities and charity partners around the globe. The company identified four ways in which it makes a difference as a retailer:

The company started its **flagship employability program** named as Marks & Start which assists individuals who face barriers getting into work in order to gain experience and skills by work placements. The company has supported more than 20000 single parents, homeless people, people with disabilities or other health conditions and disadvantaged young people since the year 2004. Currently, The Prince's Trust, Remploy and Business in the Community assist Marks and Spencer to deliver Marks & Start. In year 2003, the company launched **Make Your Mark** program in partnership with the Prince's Trust to assist unemployed people of 18 to 24 years.

Apart from this, the company setting up a wider industry collaboration, **Movement to Work** whose aim is to administer youth employment opportunities. Since the launch of program, the employers have developed over 90000 vocational training as well as work experience opportunities for the young people. In year 2017, the company launched a pilot, named as "**The**

10 Communities Programme" in order to test how company could make a huge impact on local communities. It ran for 18 months and the learning from this program is being taken forward. The company provide its employees with paid time off of one day for volunteering and run employee volunteer awards. A volunteer week is organised by company for last 3 years in which the colleagues are participate. Every year, an average 4000 to 5000 colleagues volunteer with around 450 community organisations. Rapid changes are experiencing by retail industry of United Kingdom currently.

The company actively work with its suppliers on supporting employees in supply chain on programs involving financial literacy, leadership skills and health. The code of ethics and behaviour in company set out policies and procedures which are relevant to community engagement. The company support local charities through **"In Touch with your Community"** model, without outlets making donations of 50 pounds to local charities, hospitals and schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As per the above mentioned report, it has been concluded that the community engagement program of company is very effective in improving the health and wellbeing of people and enabling them to live happier and healthier life. Apart from this, the company actively work in partnership with other organisations towards improving the community engagement and takes various initiatives which help in engaging the community and resolving the social issues effectively and successfully. Although, various initiatives are taken by company, it is recommended to the company that it should provide its employees with training and development program which health implies in dealing with the sociocultural issues associated with society in an effective way. Apart from this, it is also recommended to the company that in order to improve community engagement and enhancing competitive advantage, the company should encourage people to invest some of their time in volunteering and take efforts to improve the lives of society.

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