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Introduction

‘Marks & Spencer is the UK's biggest non-supermarket retail group, selling a range of food, clothing and home goods under the banner of ‘luxury for less’¹. ‘It is a unique retailer with a great heritage of brand values’² and has been a household name on the high street since 1884, when ‘Michael Marks and – from a partnership that began in 1894 – Thomas Spencer together built a company that would become Britain’s biggest clothing retailer’³. It has 428 international stores with 80,787 employees as of 31 March 2018⁴. Its Instagram follower count is over 1 million and Twitter follower count is 527.3 thousand. Its Group revenue is £10.7 billion and its Clothing and Home revenue is £3.7 billion⁵. The success and longevity of Marks & Spencer (M&S) is fascinating and leads me to reflect on how it continues to have such a dominant presence on the UK’s high street.

*‘I have grown up with and have always loved M&S!’*⁶ - Holly Willoughby, 2018.

This quote from television presenter Holly Willoughby, illustrates her passion for M&S. It highlights M&S’ current use of celebrity endorsements, which will be further explored in this dissertation. Holly’s recognition of M&S’ presence throughout her life highlights its longevity. This also links with M&S’ recent focus on social media advertising to reflect consumer obsessions with celebrity culture, influencers and social media platforms, all of which are undoubtedly a reflection of today’s society. Like any other long lived retailer, the growth of online shopping and the rise in technology has affected M&S as a company. It is important as a business to identify and adapt to any marketing and advertising changes that occur in order to be successful.

I intend to explore the ways in which M&S’ marketing and advertising strategies have evolved and to consider how they have effectively reflected society of that time and why they have used the marketing and advertising strategy that they have used. In order to gain a solid understanding of

¹ Author: unknown. (n.d.) *Marks & Spencer (UK)* https://www.adbrands.net/uk/marksandspencer_uk.htm [Accessed 07.11.18]

² Author: unknown. (n.d.) *About M&S - M&S Today* <https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/aboutus/m-and-s-today> [Accessed 08.01.19]

³ The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. (07.18.15) *Fashion for the People: a history of clothing at Marks & Spencer* <https://rbkclibraries.wordpress.com/2015/08/07/fashion-for-the-people-a-history-of-clothing-at-marks-spencer/> [Accessed 25.09.18]

⁴ Author: unknown. (n.d.) *About M&S - M&S Today* <https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/aboutus/m-and-s-today> [Accessed 08.01.19]

⁵ Author: unknown. (n.d.) *Investors - KEY FACTS* <https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/investors/key-facts> [Accessed 08.01.19]

⁶ Hosie, R. (13.09.18) *People Are Loving Holly Willoughby’s M&S Edit* <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/holly-willoughby-m-and-s-collection-marks-and-spencer-autumn-collection-must-haves-a8535596.html> [Accessed 13.11.18]

their marketing and advertising changes, enabling me to draw out relevant and sensible conclusions, I will analyse a variety of M&S' advertisements in detail, from both the 20th century and 21st. Whilst including relevant facts and details regarding the sources of advertisements, I will incorporate my own opinions and judgements as well as reference relevant published articles and books. Through analysis of these advertisements, I will develop an understanding of who M&S are targeting their advertisements at and the general purpose of the advertisements. My intention is to describe each advertisement in detail, using five subheadings: form, garments, aesthetics information and models. This prescriptive approach will enable a deep and thorough analysis of the advertisements to support the conclusions.

The first advertisements that I will analyse are from the Gender Archives Leeds website. The Gender Archives Leeds website displays 'hard copy' advertisements ranging from 1932 until 1976, presenting five different advertisements annually. I have decided to focus on 20 year intervals, namely 1930's, 1950's, 1970's and 1990's. Specifically, I will select advertisements from 1932, 1950, 1976 and 1980-90.

MARKS and SPENCER



ART. SUEDE CREPE
BLOUSE.
5187/136. 4/11d.
Ivory, Beige, Pink, Lemon.
NINE-GORE TAILORED
SKIRT.
Diagonal Stripe.
5355/17. 4/11d.
Lido, Navy, Brown, Green,
Black.

ART. SILK TAFFETA FRILLED
PARTY FROCK.
7042/109. 4/11d. 18 in. and 21 in.
Rose, Sky, Apple, Ivory.
Embdy. in Soft Pastel Shades.
ART. SILK TAFFETA FLARED
SKIRT PARTY FROCK.
7087/3. 4/11d. 21 in. and 24 in.
Pink, Sky, Lemon.
Trimmed Self Ribbon Ruching.

ALL-WOOL JUMPER.
5165/60. 4/11d.
Brown/Sand, Navy/Red,
Lido/Sand, Brown/Lemon,
Green/Lemon.
NINE-GORE TAILORED
CLOTH SKIRT.
Self Colours. 5355/4. 4/11d.
Lido, Navy, Brown, Green,
Black.

ALL-WOOL STOCKINETTE
DRESS.
5028/295. 4/11d.
Length 48 in.
Brown, Red, Blue.
Piped contrast colour.

ALL GARMENTS ILLUSTRATED ABOVE ARE BRITISH MADE THROUGHOUT.

Figure 1

M&S Advertisement - 1932 Christmas Catalogue (Fig.1)

<http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/929/> [Accessed 24.01.18]

Form

The first M&S advertisements for analysis are from 1932, and are taken from the Gender Archive Leeds website, originating from the the M&S company archive collection. This advertisement promotes garments for different ages - maxi dresses for older women and shorter frocks for younger girls. Although the title suggests this advertisement was from a catalogue, this particular image was originally from the Christmas edition of the Marks & Spencer Magazine, 1932. 'After decades of staid, long copy-based newspaper ads, magazines began to offer advertisers a bolder, more visual way to sell their products'⁷. 'Magazines became a glitzy, glamorous medium that reached a new generation of aspirational customers'⁸. This 1932 magazine advertisement represents an evolution in advertising from the more traditional poster. Interestingly, the advertisement that I will analyse from 1950, nearly 20 years later, is in poster-form, which could be perceived as a step back in terms of advertisement technique changes and innovations.

Garments

This advertisement presents two different types of garment, designed for and worn by women/ girls of varying age and size. The garments worn by the younger girls are shorter in length and fuller in shape. The dresses appear to be gathered at the waist, thus creating shape and structure to the skirt. It is likely that the older lady models depict the target consumer. The older models are wearing the longer maxi-style dresses which appear to be relatively simplistic, modest, and of muted colours. This perception is reinforced by the observation that: 'the world, then, was deep into the grip of the Great Depression. It was a terrible time with a 25% unemployment rate'⁹. The longer-style dresses may be indicative of society and lifestyle choices during this time. The 'simpler lines' of the garments reflect the 'simpler lives of the public'¹⁰. As mentioned, the colours of the dresses appear to be muted. 'Women's fashion design had taken a turn toward cleaner, simpler lines that reflected the new austerity of a bad economy'¹¹. This traumatic, social situation could provide reason for the muted colour palettes; as if to reflect the mood of society. Although this reflection is not wrong, the reason for the limited colour is more likely to be because 'magazine/poster ads of the Great Depression showed far less colour than they do today as ink

⁷ Veksner, S. (05.01.15) *100 Ideas that changed Advertising* Year published: 2015. Publisher: King, L. Pg 28. [Accessed 12.04.18]

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Monet, D. (03.08.17) *Fashion History - Ladies' Fashion Designs of the 1930s* <https://bellatory.com/fashion-industry/FashionHistoryLadiesFashionDesignsofthe1930s> [Accessed 17.09.18]

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

was expensive. Most fashion illustrations (on paper) of this time, showed the clothing in sketch form rather than photographs'¹².

Aesthetics

The setting appears to be a household interior; the background includes a large window with a green curtain, and a bookshelf with a vase and a lamp resting upon it. The middle ground consists of the models posing, standing on a maroon carpet and beige rug. The inclusion of the household interior as a backdrop presents a domestic, homely feel. This is likely intentional because of the social/economic change that was occurring at the time caused by the Great Depression. Maybe M&S intended to produce an advertisement presenting a household interior, to encourage people to come together as families and friends, and to support one another during this difficult period. The colours appear to be limited and have a colour-washed effect. The blue title is the largest font, against a white background, and immediately draws the consumer's attention. The font becomes the font that M&S consistently uses in its subsequent advertisements, instantly associated with the M&S brand. In this advertisement, the text is separate from the graphics, making it easier for the consumer to see the garments being advertised, and then to read further details separately.

Information

The title simply states 'Marks & Spencer'. Above that is stated 'The Marks and Spencer Magazine', which immediately informs the viewer about what form this advertisement takes. The only other bit of information is included in the white section at the bottom of the page. The font size is very small, and it is quite difficult to read, emphasising that the pictures are what M&S wants the public to focus their attention on predominantly. The words do not string together to make full sentences; the information is minimal and simply states the names of the garments, the fabrics, and the colours and sizes available. It is specific and detailed information that allows the consumer to go and obtain the garments easily due to the knowledge they have gained from the advertisement.

Models

There are five models presented in the advertisement. The adult model images appear somewhat realistic, but their bodies are extended and their legs are elongated to give the impression they are tall and slim. During this period, the way a woman's body should be, in terms of measurements such as height and weight, was something that people were greatly aware of. The famous model of this time was June Cox, and being 5 ft. 6 3/4 in height and 124 lbs in weight¹³, was admired and an inspiration of this time. However, the reasoning behind the elongated figures, is that the

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Berman, E. (02.06.18) *This is what the Ideal Women looked like in the 1930s* <http://time.com/3860561/ideal-woman-1930s/> [Accessed 24.09.18]

increasing involvement of ladies in sport around this time had made them taller and thinner, and as such, 'the boyish form became the Vogue'¹⁴. Each model looks similar, with a similar style and size. The models are adopting similar poses, with their out-stretched legs, crossed feet, and a mature, feminine look. It is interesting to note that they are all using their arms expressively; either bent, on their hips or resting on a surface. This reinforces the perception that women of this era liked to be perceived as feminine, and the bends in their arms accentuates this.

¹⁴ Ibid.

MARKS & SPENCER

St. Michael
DRESSES, BLOUSES & SKIRTS pictured here are examples of the beautiful variety of ever-changing ranges that await you at MARKS & SPENCER. You will find something new every time you visit your favourite MARKS & SPENCER—new cloths, new prints, new styles—drawn by our designers from the fashion centres of the world.



St. Michael BLOUSES in a great variety of styles and gay colours, prints and embroidery. COTTONS 16/11 to 25/-, NYL-DE-CHINE with beautiful embroideries 25/- and 27/6.

St. Michael SKIRTS in the new fashion lengths. COTTONS in many lovely designs 29/11 and SAILCLOTH in colours that glow 25/11 & 35/-.

PERMANENTLY PLEATED in miracle fibres—TERYLENE AND WORSTED in many new pleatings 55/-, TRICEL BLENDS 29/11 & 40/-.

See the full range of **St. Michael** fashions & **M&S** COMPANY ARCHIVE

Figure 2

present **St. Michael** fashions



St. Michael DRESSES beautifully made in fabrics you can rely on. COTTONS 50/-, MARSPUN 40/-, NYLON 57/6 . . . and, worth looking for, SAILCLOTH 57/6. There is a large variety of becoming styles to suit all ages—carefully graded sizes to fit the Average, the 5' 2" and the Fuller figures.

St. Michael FOR BOYS AND GIRLS IS FAMOUS.
★ Hard wearing—specially tested materials.
★ Generously sized—expertly styled.
★ Excellent quality—prices you can afford.
You must see for yourself the extensive variety of clothes for play and school for girls and boys of all ages.

St. Michael NYLONS satisfy millions

- ★ Over 20 million pairs were sold last year.
- ★ ST. MICHAEL nylons are PERFECTS
- ★ Made by leading makers to the high ST. MICHAEL specification.
- ★ Styles and fashion colours to meet your every need.
- ★ In finest sheers or practical service weight.

Skirts are shorter. Give your legs the lovelier look with ST. MICHAEL nylons. Some examples from the FULL FASHIONED range:
15 denier - - - 5/11
15 denier Superfit 6/11
Stretch Sheer - - 7/11
Pin Point - - - 8/6
Other ranges: neo-fashioned from 3/11

wear at your favourite **MARKS & SPENCER** **M&S** COMPANY ARCHIVE

Figure 3

M&S Advertisement - 1950's New Look Dress (Fig.2, Fig.3)

<http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/advertisement-1950s-new-look-dress/> [Accessed 24.01.18]

Form

The second M&S advertisements that I am analysing are from 1950 which promote the 'New Look Dress'. Christian Dior was the designer that caused the desire for this garment; he 'turned 1940s fashion upside down with his "New Look."' ¹⁵. These advertisements are taken from the Gender Archives Leeds Website, and are originally from the M&S company archive collection. They are in the form of posters. Around this time more and more households were receiving electricity, and technology advancements were beginning to take place. Although these gradual technological innovations were occurring, M&S continued to focus on the traditional form of advertising, using posters, perhaps because of their effectiveness. 'In terms of posters effectiveness as an advertising medium, they score highly for reach (a wide range of people see them) and frequency (those people see them often - perhaps everyday)' ¹⁶. Although M&S decided to advertise 'the New Look Dress' of 1950 through a poster, the oldest form of advertising, they in fact advertised fashion items of earlier years (such as 1932) through more up to date forms of advertising, such as magazines.

Garments

The garments advertised on the poster each have a similar aesthetic; each dress has an almost identical silhouette and structure. The bottom half of the dresses stick out dramatically. In my opinion, this is an effective technique as having similar garments presented on the same poster portrays the idea that all women should want this newly fashionable dress, suggesting popularity and trend, thus hopefully increasing the desire for this particular garment. This style was typical of Christian Dior; feminine shape and a nipped waist that accentuates the narrowest part of the woman figure. The waist bands of the garments sit above the waist and are tight fitting and the length of the skirts are forgiving, reaching below the knee. The 1950's was an era when women were expected to be housewives, and the men would be the ones to work and look after their families by providing the finance. 'Very few women worked after getting married; they stayed at home to raise the children and keep house' ¹⁷. In my judgement, the New Look dress would have been something that women wore after a long busy day, to an evening event. It is a very stylish and luxurious dress that when worn, would have made women feel confident and beautiful, contrasting to the way they would have felt when wearing their 'chore' clothes. The material of the

¹⁵ Sessions, D. (31.07.14) *What did women wear in the 1950s? 1950s fashion guide* <https://vintagedancer.com/1950s/1950s-fashion-women-get-look/> [Accessed 11.09.18]

¹⁶ Veksner, S. (05.01.15) *100 Ideas that changed Advertising Year* published: 2015. Publisher: King, L. Pg 8. [Accessed 12.04.18]

¹⁷ Castelow, E. (n.d.) *The 1950s Housewife* <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-1950s-Housewife/> [Accessed 11.09.18]

skirt appears trapped under the waistband, either pleated or gathered, and as it falls it sticks out and curves downwards. The curvature of the skirt could reflect the stereotypical curviness of women at the time.

Aesthetics

The aesthetics of these posters are bold and busy. The background consists of a baby blue (top) and pale yellow (bottom), which blend into each other at the half way point. The background is light, which helps emphasise the title and the black text. There is a slightly faded out image of the outside of an M&S store, simply to remind the viewer's of where to buy the garments. Although the window display is not shown, 'display and marketing was always a key element of the presentation of M&S fashion ranges. Before the days of mass advertising it was the window display that dominated; these were eye catching and innovative'¹⁸. These two posters are a pair, so the title is read across both. The large title draws the viewer's attention. The font used for the first half of the title becomes the font that M&S always uses, and is associated with the brand making it instantly recognised by the public. The second half of the title, informing the viewer of what M&S are advertising, is a softer italic font, and includes the St Michael brand logo, a brand introduced in 1928¹⁹. The images of the dresses are worn by models, and are the same size, in proportion to each other, and placed along a line. They are predominantly located in the middle of the page, but for aesthetic reasons, the line of the models gradually slopes upwards. This encourages the viewer to go from left to right, looking at each model and dress in turn.

Information

The first piece of information provided is the title stating 'Marks & Spencer present St Michael fashions'. Using just six words, and being in big font, the purpose of the poster is immediately obvious. At the bottom reads 'See the full St Michael fashions wear at your favourite Marks & Spencer', thus encouraging the viewer to go to the store and purchase these garments. The text directly under the title acts as an introductory piece of text. The first sentence states 'DRESSES, BLOUSES AND SKIRTS pictured here are examples of the beautiful variety of ever-changing ranges that await you at Marks and Spencer.' The first words are capitalised to make it very clear what is being advertised. The blocks of text around the poster present further information. It is interesting to note that the fabric names are in capitals, such as cotton, nylon and sailcloth. The significant emphasis on the fabric types suggests that fabric selection was of importance to customers during this time. Also, the use of personal pronouns such as 'you' and 'your' draws the viewer in, allowing them to believe the advertisements are targeted at them. Finally, there are various short snappy bullet points used to promote the garments. For example, 'Over 20 million

¹⁸ The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (07.18.15) *Fashion for the People: a history of clothing at Marks & Spencer* <https://rbkcclibraries.wordpress.com/2015/08/07/fashion-for-the-people-a-history-of-clothing-at-marks-spencer/> [Accessed 25.09.18]

¹⁹ Ibid.

pairs were sold last year'. This use of a statistic is taken as evidence by the viewer that these fashion items were highly popular, increasing their desirability.

Models

In total there are eleven different images of models. The images appear realistic, presenting correctly proportioned body sizes and true colours. The majority look the same, with the same style and size. There are a couple of exceptions including images of children and a model posing differently to the majority, enabling the garment to be seen at a different angle, providing the viewer with more information about the garment. The models appear to be posing in similar ways, with their legs shoulder-width apart. Almost all of the models are performing some kind of hand gesture, whether that is placing one or two hands on their hips, or holding their hand in a gentle, relaxed manner in front of the body or just below the chin. This emphasises the models' femininity, a trait that was important during this era.

Courtelle presents six good reasons to rush to Marks and Spencer this week.

Soft, warm, completely washable Courtelle and St. Michael quality mean unbeatable value. This week Marks & Spencer offers you all Courtelle's easy care qualities in skirts as well as knitwear. Choose from two bright new autumn

fashion colour themes, pink, blue and mauve or rust, brown and gold – here you see some of the exciting colours that promise to stay as bright as the day you bought them in Courtelle. Don't walk. Run to Marks & Spencer this week.



Figure 4

'Crimplene' Time with St Michael...

Time to discover the wonderful new world of St Michael fashions in carefree 'Crimplene'. Soft new textures and silky finishes, gay new patterns and colours.

All with the St Michael touch of quality. At Marks & Spencer now.

Dress £4.25

Tunic £3.25
Pants £3.99

Dress Junior Miss £3.99

... at Marks & Spencer

MARKS AND SPENCER
M&S
COMPANY ARCHIVE

Figure 5

M&S Advertisement - 1970's Easy Care Clothes (Fig.4, Fig.5)

<http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/advertisement-1970s-easy-care-clothes/> [Accessed 24.01.18]

Form

This 1970's M&S advertisement is promoting a variety of similar looking dresses and tunics. These advertisements are, again, taken from the Gender Archives Leeds Website, and are part of the M&S company archive collection. They appear to be part of a newspaper article. Newspaper advertising was invented in 1704, when the Boston News-Letter was distributed as the first newspaper advertisement²⁰. One would think that the advertising and marketing strategies of M&S would have developed more significantly from the 1950's to the 1970's. At this stage in my analysis, it is evident that M&S had not significantly changed their strategies in line with advertising trends and changes. This could potentially be the root of their 21st century problems in terms of struggling to know who their demographic is, who their products are targeted best at, and as a result lacking profit and popularity.

Garments

These advertisements show a range of shift-style dresses, tunics and other garments. These garments appear simple in structure and do not have much shape. Their lines are very straight and do not accentuate the female figure like the garments from previous years do. This style follows the trend for shorter length skirts, from the iconic 60's miniskirt in particular. The lengths of the dresses and sleeves have become shorter. However, the way the garment is worn on the models is casual, and it seems that M&S garments, over time, are becoming less statement, less stereotypical and more casual for practicality. This judgement is reinforced by the fact that more and more women of this time were entering the workforce²¹, which suggests that the clothes that they wore would have had to have been practical yet still feminine. Women wondered at the time of these changes in style, how they could be authoritative whilst remaining feminine²². This is achieved due to the garments being of appropriate length, shape, and colours. The colours are primary, but toned down which may have been because women wanted to appear classy and authoritative. Presenting a range of different but similar products is an effective marketing technique. It demonstrates to the consumer that there is a wide range to choose from and that, as customers, they can be unique and individual, and have 'more freedom to express themselves'²³

²⁰ Pishko, L. (26.09.16) *History of Newspaper Ads* <https://bizfluent.com/about-5366305-history-newspaper-ads.html> [Accessed 09.01.18]

²¹ Avila, T. (08.06.15) *To See How Far Women Have Come, Just Look at Their Work Clothes* <https://mic.com/articles/120163/to-see-how-far-women-have-come-just-look-at-their-work-clothes#.B2I9SRGmH> [Accessed 09.10.18]

²² Ibid.

²³ Pena, J. (20.06.18) *1970s Fashion Trends* <https://bellatory.com/fashion-industry/1970s-Fashion> [Accessed 09.10.18]

in what they decide to wear. But also, the similarities create awareness of what is popular and fashionable. It was the debut of this type of garment being advertised, and the intent was to promote easy care fabrics²⁴, popular amongst working women.

Aesthetics

Compared to the previous years, this advertisement has a more focused colour scheme with maroon reds, dusty yellows and a more effective composition. The layout clearly follows the rule of thirds. Although this technique is commonplace for photography, it works just as well for other compositions, such as advertisements. The 'rule of thirds involves mentally dividing up an image using two horizontal lines and two vertical lines, then the elements of the subject being composed are placed along the lines'²⁵. There are three models on each advertisement, and they occupy approximately the same amount of space. The main titles consisting of bold fonts take up the top third, the models' upper bodies take up the middle third, and their lower bodies as well as extra text, take up the bottom third. This makes the advertisement aesthetically pleasing and easy to read. The backgrounds are plain blocks of colour which further emphasises this. In previous advertisements, the backgrounds have included a real life scene, such as a home interior or the outside of an M&S store. Here, M&S have adopted a clear backdrop, allowing the viewer to see the garments and read the information more clearly. Similar to the 1950's posters, these two parts of a newspaper article belong together. The second part of the two advertisements includes the instantly recognisable St Michael brand logo, the same brand displayed on the 1950 advertisement.

Information

The title which states 'Courtelle presents six good reasons to rush to Marks and Spencer this week' and 'Crimplene' Time with St Michael'. The titles inform the viewer of the fabric types as that is what people were intrigued by, nevertheless the models are evidently showcasing the range of garments that can be created from the easy-care materials. Directly underneath the left-hand title is a small introduction of what the article is promoting. It repeats the fabric name 'Courtelle' as well as incorporating the brand name 'St Michael' and aims to promote the unbeatable value, easy care garments. Courtelle and Cripplene, the second fabric mentioned in the other part of the advertisements, are synthetic fibres, and were first launched, along with others, 'during the 60's'²⁶. These fibres became very popular around the time of their launch; they were particularly renowned for their ability 'to wash easily, drip dry, iron easily, and hold their colour or

²⁴ M&S Company Archives Collection. (n.d.) *1970's Easy Care Clothes* <http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/advertisement-1970s-easy-care-clothes/> [Accessed 09.10.18]

²⁵ Author: unknown. (n.d.) *Rule of Thirds* <https://www.photographymad.com/pages/view/rule-of-thirds> [Accessed 10.10.18]

²⁶ The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (07.18.15) *Fashion for the People: a history of clothing at Marks & Spencer* <https://rbkclibraries.wordpress.com/2015/08/07/fashion-for-the-people-a-history-of-clothing-at-marks-spencer/> [Accessed 25.09.18]

shape'²⁷. A difference to their previous advertisements is that the price of the garment is provided. The prices are noticeably very affordable: '£4.25', '£3.99', '£3.25'. Due to the company having the ability to 'deal directly with their manufacturers', they could 'keep their prices low' whilst maintaining the quality of the clothes being sold²⁸.

Models

Across the two advertisements, there are six models. These advertisements use photographs of real life people as opposed to fictional images. The use of technology in the form of photography was an advancement in M&S' advertising strategy. Photography-based advertising as a newly introduced form was initially used to 'simply clearly depict and explain the product and its benefits'²⁹, which is evident here. With the exception of one smaller image of a child, the models are similar-aged ladies of the same proportion and race. This is a significant point; referring to the previous advertisements, all the models are of the same race, suggesting the race and ethnicity issues of today had not yet been raised. Three of the models are smiling and looking directly at the camera, encouraging the viewer to read the article and discover more about M&S' brand and products. They are holding balloons which makes the advertisement more enjoyable to look at and draws in the attention of the viewer. The poise of the models is more casual than in previous years. Specifically, one of the models has a hand in her pocket. The casual alludes to the point made earlier about women wanting more authority and involvement within the workforce. Here, they are not presented as precious, prim and proper, like women of precious eras.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Rothkopf, E. (2014) *Photography-Based Advertising in the Digital Age: A New System of Meaning-Making* <https://blogs.commonsg.georgetown.edu/cctp-725-fall2014/2014/05/02/photography-based-advertising-in-the-digital-age-a-new-system-of-meaning-making/> [Accessed 11.10.18]



Figure 6

Complete outfit for
UNDER £100

Polyester Blouse
Sizes 8-20 **£12.99**
Colour: White

Synthetic Court Shoe
Sizes: 3-8 Incl ½ sizes
£12.99

Business suits in 100% gabardine Polyester - they not only look good, they are 100% machine washable to save time and money on expensive cleaning bills.

Double Breasted Jacket	£49.95
Sizes 8-20	
Skirt (24"/27"/29")	£19.99
Sizes 8-20	
Trouser (Short fit, Standard, Long)	£19.99
Sizes 10-20	

Figure 7

Stylish and easy to wear St. Michael blouses are available in a choice of Polyester and 100% pure cotton with twin needling detail for added strength. They are all machine washable, and easy to iron.

2

1,3. 100% Pure Cotton Blouse
Colours: White and Navy stripe
Sizes: 8-20 **£19.99**

2. Pleated Front Blouse
100% Polyester
Colour: White
Sizes: 8-20 **£14.99**

4. Shell Blouse
100% Polyester
Colour: White and Navy and White stripe
Sizes: 8-20 **£12.99**

100% Lambswool Cardigan
Colours: Black and Navy
Sizes: 8-20 **£25.00**

3

1

With Marks & Spencer you can create a full Corporate Image easily and without fuss.

Our range of Corporate clothes offers you unbeatable quality and value - with a host of other benefits that make purchasing Ladies Wear Corporate Clothing from Marks & Spencer so inviting:

- Expert help from trained advisors.
- A wide range of lengths and sizes.
- Classic styles available all year round.
- Machine washable clothes that save time and money.
- Fast delivery to the store within 48 hours.
- Your ladies wear corporate clothing advisor is on hand to help you at your nearest Marks & Spencer.
- **Marks & Spencer unique quality, value and service.**

4

3

Marks & Spencer Michael House
Baker Street London W1 9.92

M&S
St Michael
MARKS AND SPENCER
COMPANY ARCHIVE

Figure 8

M&S Advertisement - 1980's - 1990's The Corporate Image (Fig.6, Fig.7, Fig.8)

<http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/advertisement-1980s-1990s-the-corporate-image/> [Accessed 24.01.18]

Form

These advertisements are the final advertisements from the Gender Archives Website, initially from the M&S company archive collection spanning two decades. Although the actual date of this advertisement is unknown, the aesthetic and presentation of the advertisement suggests it is a more recent advertisement from the 1990's. They are in the form of a marketing leaflet³⁰, and are clearly promoting garments associated with office/work wear for women. Leaflets and handbills 'became a popular form of advertising by the early 1800s'³¹. They were being posted in town centres and given to people by hand in the street, attracting the attention of people passing through³². Leaflets as a form of advertising were, and still are, considered successful due to their 'directness and immediacy'³³. A hard copy advertisement handed directly cannot be ignored, and the rate of their production is 'quick and cheap'³⁴. This was made easier since the introduction of 'desktop publishing software in the 1990s'³⁵. This fact suggests that M&S were assertive and quick to respond when this new publishing software was introduced. However, leaflets are known to be an old form of advertising, just succeeding the poster which is the oldest form. With reference to the previous advertisement analyses, M&S appear to have opposed innovation with regards to forms of advertising and marketing changes, re-emphasising the issue of M&S' current day marketing struggles, lack of sales and struggling performance.

Garments

The garments being advertised are solely for office and work wear. They are worn by older women, in the 25-40 age range. The promotion of office and work wear was M&S' response to social changes; 'they spot the new market of professional women within the workplace'³⁶. The garments range from pencil skirts to cigarette trousers, with coordinating jackets. The collection promotes the fact that women were beginning to no longer be seen as inferior to men; that

³⁰ M&S Company Archives Collection. (n.d.) *Advertisement – 1960's – 1990's 'The Corporate Image'* <http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/advertisement-1980s-1990s-the-corporate-image/> [Accessed 02.11.18]

³¹ Veksner, S. (05.01.15) *100 Ideas that changed Advertising*. Year published: 2015. Publisher: King, L. Pg 14. [Accessed 12.04.18]

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ M&S Company Archives Collection. (n.d.) *Advertisement – 1960's – 1990's 'The Corporate Image'* <http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/advertisement-1980s-1990s-the-corporate-image/> [Accessed 02.11.18]

women wanted to prove their capabilities within the workforce. There are elements within the collection, such as the shoulder pads, that reflect a more masculine feel; 'these outfits combine aspects of 'masculinity' with 'femininity'³⁷. The article discusses the use of shoulder pads, and how this 'alludes to the presence of powerful, broad shoulders'³⁸. Then with reference to the feminine aspects, the inclusion of 'fitted skirts and tops highlight the curved female silhouette'³⁹. One can see that the suit combinations are worn quite loosely by the models. The garments' structures are bold and sturdy, with relatively straight lines. In addition, the use of buttons is evident across the whole range. The most significant buttons are those on the blazer jackets. They are bold, gold in colour, and run down the fastening lines of the jackets. The even spacing of the buttons and the linear placement down the blazers emphasises the simple structure of the garments, as the line of buttons is parallel to the lines of the garments. The colours of the garments are simplistic, consisting predominantly of black, white, blue and navy, which are classic looks. These colours represent sophistication and elegance, words that should be associated with office working women. Contrary to early year advertisements, here M&S promote a variety of different but similar products. The collection promotes the wearing of suits, such that if a consumer were to buy one of the garments, they are likely to buy the matching item. This is an effective marketing technique of combining a range of garments resulting in increased sales as consumers try to recreate the look for themselves.

Aesthetics

The backgrounds consist of pale colours; blue, pink and yellow. These light backgrounds draw attention to the images on top of the background as well as the adjacent black texts providing information about the images. The composition is very structured and minimalistic. The text, images and backgrounds are all separate from each other, making the leaflet easy to read and understand. For the front cover, a photograph of one of the models takes up the entire page. The only text provided is the title and the brand name. The title is bold and purple, immediately attracting the viewer's attention, and the brand name is strategically in the same font as previous advertisements. The minimal use of text on the front cover and the inclusion of just one image entices the viewer to open up the leaflet and read more. On the subsequent pages, there are more photographs per page, which are reduced in size in order to accommodate the text. The images are of varying size and located asymmetrically across the pages, which is more aesthetically interesting.

Information

The title, 'The Corporate Image' is in bold purple text on the front page, below the large image. It is important that the title, being the first thing people see, is eye-catching and entices the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

consumer to look through the remaining pages and read more. In addition, the bottom right hand corner of the title page states 'from Mark & Spencer' in the typical M&S font. The subsequent page consists of three photographs distributed across the page and three blocks of text filling the gaps. The text at the bottom and in the middle specifies the name and size of the garments. Like the advertisement analysed previously, the price is also presented. The prices range from £12.99 to £49.95 and are noticeably higher than those from the 1970's advertisement. This is likely due to inflation, with prices still rising now⁴⁰. 'The rise in prices is partly a reflection of generally positive economic growth. As demand expands, we tend to get a moderate amount of inflation'⁴¹. Also on this page is a block of text in the top right hand corner in a slightly larger font, with another reference to price: 'Complete outfit for under £100'. This phrase encourages the viewer to believe that M&S is offering value for money and also encourages them to purchase the entire suit. In addition to price information, the later pages include fabric names. This is a common marketing strategy for M&S, which suggests they know their customer profile and that fabrics and their properties are of high importance to their customers.

Models

Although there are nine photographs in the leaflet, there are only two models. Like the 1970's advertisement, the models are photographs of people, as opposed to drawings. Due to innovations and advancements in technology, M&S have continued to use photography of real models. This creates a more realistic presentation of the clothing and allows the viewers to relate to the images. Using real people means the body proportions are not overly exaggerated, and the shape and fit of the garments is more identifiable. It is interesting to note that only one out of the nine images is the model looking directly at the camera. In the 1970's advertisement analysis, it was noted that when the models look at the camera, it encourages the viewer to explore the advertisement. Although this is a valid point, the way M&S have presented their models in context, casually doing everyday things, such as walking in the street, talking on the telephone and hailing a taxi, is an insightful way to promote office wear that takes into account the lifestyle of women who work in offices and have to wear smart suits. As the photography is realistic and contextualised, the customer is able to relate to the advertisement and is likely to be persuaded to purchase the garments because of the positive effect it had on them.

⁴⁰ Pettinger, T. (01.12.17) *Why do prices always go up in an economy?* <https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/86/inflation/prices-go-up/> [Accessed 06.11.18]

⁴¹ Ibid.

HOLLY'S MUST-HAVES

The wait is finally over. Holly Willoughby's favourite pieces from our winter collection are online and in selected stores now. Shop them quick before they're gone

SHOP HOLLY'S MUST-HAVES



Figure 9

Everything you need for winter

Celebrating her love of style and appreciation of Marks & Spencer design, Holly's edit includes the essential pieces you need in your wardrobe for the season ahead, like the perfect winter coat.

"Coats can obviously be a bit of an investment – you want one that you can wear time after time, season after season. This is such a classic coat in a beautiful colour that you're going to keep for years"



Figure 10

GET THE LOOK



"A classic coat. It'll go with everything"

£69



"The button detailing at the sleeves is a really nice touch"

£25



"This is one of my favourite skirts to wear"

£39.50



"Every woman should have a pair of these in her wardrobe"

£39.50

Figure 11

M&S Advertisement - Holly Willoughby Celebrity Endorsement (Fig.10, Fig.11) and YouTube (Fig. 9)

<http://www.marksandspencer.com/c/women/holly-willoughby> [Accessed 25.09.18]
<http://www.marksandspencer.com/c/style-and-living/holly-willoughby-style-tips> [Accessed 25.09.18]

Form

This advertising campaign is directly from the M&S official website. In recent years, M&S have taken advantage of celebrity endorsements to raise brand awareness and to hopefully result in increased sales and a positive brand image. 'Celebrity endorsements are a well-established marketing strategy used since the late nineteenth century'⁴². Holly Willoughby is the latest celebrity to endorse M&S products. In September 2018, Holly revealed that she was M&S' latest ambassador⁴³. The initial was to promote 'Holly's Edit', part of the M&S 'Autumn Must-Haves' campaign of 2018. At the top of the website is a YouTube video on the M&S YouTube channel. 'YouTube is a social marketing medium whereby videos, television advertisements and photos are posted on the Internet'⁴⁴. YouTube is a particularly effective tool used for marketing within the fashion industry, which is the probable reason why M&S have chosen to use, and continue to use, this effective strategy. YouTube as an advertising platform is unarguably a more modern and innovative way of advertising. It is effective as it involves videography so the viewer can see the garments from all angles, and it features Holly, who discusses the collection, aiming to encourage people to want the same clothes that a popular celebrity likes, wears and speaks so enthusiastically of.

Garments

Comparing this innovative advertising strategy with previously explored advertisements, there is a much wider range of garments for selection and purchase. It is evidently a website that enables online shopping, a form of electronic commerce. Online stores often use search features, enabling the consumer to find specific items or models, which in itself is an innovation compared to the previously explored advertisements. Holly's appearance and clothing preferences on the website are used strategically. There is an image of her wearing a fully put together outfit, then underneath are separate images of the different garments with relevant information. M&S are promoting a range for winter. The garments include a beige high neck jumper and a classic beige top coat. Although Holly may sometimes dress more casually, this particular outfit is styled glamorously, in

⁴² Knoll, J. Matthes, J. (12.10.16) *The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements: a meta-analysis* <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11747-016-0503-8> [Accessed 20.11.18]

⁴³ Hosie, R. (13.09.18) *People are loving Holly Willoughby's M&S edit* <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/holly-willoughby-m-and-s-collection-marks-and-spencer-autumn-collection-must-haves-a8535596.html> [Accessed 20.11.18]

⁴⁴ Bickle, M, C. (10.01.10) *Fashion Marketing Theory, Principles and Practice* Year published: 2010. Publisher: Fairchild Books. Pg 87. [Accessed 12.04.18]

line with her 'super glam'⁴⁵ reputation. To coordinate with the beige jumper and coat, she is wearing a checked skirt that falls just below the knee and completes the sophisticated winter outfit with a pair of matching nude heels.

Aesthetics

Considering this is a website, the information has to be concise and displayed in a way that is not too overwhelming or confusing for the viewer. For instance, the background is white which enables the black text on top, including the title, several quotes from Holly, and descriptions and prices of the garments, to be seen without difficulty. The font is the same throughout which is very effective and professional. As this is the Home page, there is limited information here.

Undoubtedly there are links on the Home page that would enable the viewer to access different aspects of the website that provide more detailed information about specific elements, such as garment descriptions. The YouTube video at the top is the first thing viewers see. Underneath is a photograph of Holly walking in the street wearing her winter outfit, and the adjacent text presents a brief overview of the collection. There are additional smaller images of the outfit Holly is wearing enabling the consumer to view each garment individually. Overall, this is a great, effective lay-out which is not confusing for the viewer, it is aesthetically pleasing and efficiently displays information encouraging people to browse and ultimately purchase the garments.

Information

The title, 'HOLLY'S MUST-HAVES', straight-away influences the viewer, highlighting the collection's endorsement by Holly. Directly underneath the title, the smaller font provides two short sentences setting the scene for the viewer. Stating 'the wait is finally over' encourages an impulse purchase, and suggests the scarcity of the collection such that people should be eager to acquire. It also states 'shop them quick before they're gone', which has the same affect. This technique is used to make consumers feel like they should be quick to buy the garments within the collection, and that if they delay their decision they will miss out. Adjacent to Holly's photograph is a brief overview of the collection. It begins with 'Celebrating her love of style and appreciation of Marks & Spencer design...' and finishes with a quote from Holly where she states that 'the classic coat is in a beautiful colour that you're going to keep for years'. The final information on the Home page is the 'GET THE LOOK' section where each garment is separately displayed. Underneath each image is a persuasive quote from Holly, encouraging the viewer to click on the garment to discover more information and subsequently buy. Underneath these quotes is the price of the garments. In contrast to some of the historical advertised prices (.99, .25, .95 etc), the prices are whole numbers or with .50. M&S pricing strategies have evidently changed as they have evolved from using a psychological pricing strategy, which involves setting the price slightly below a round figure to make the price seem more attractive than it actually is, to using prices that would undoubtedly be similar to competitors (such as Next and Debenhams)

⁴⁵ Mellin, H. Richardson, H. (14.11.18) *Holly Willoughby: 31 facts you need to know about the This Morning star* <https://closeronline.co.uk/celebrity/news/holly-willoughby-facts-this-morning/> [Accessed 20.11.18]

which is known as competitive pricing. This shows that prices are of high importance to customers of the modern day.

Models

Unlike the other advertisements where M&S used unknown models to promote their products, for this particular marketing strategy, the celebrity is the only model. Considering this is the Home page, it is important that the viewer quickly finds what they are looking for. Given the prominence of the YouTube video, M&S have carefully chosen the video frame, which disappears once the video plays, revealing Holly standing in the centre with open arms. This is appealing to the viewer and motivates them to play the video. Once the Play button is pressed, the video commences and Holly introduces herself, informing the viewer that she is about to showcase her 'must-haves'. Holly's role is to entice people into buying pieces from her collection, so the way she presents herself on the YouTube videos and her appearance on the photoshoot images is highly important. For the YouTube video, she is wearing a simple but glamorous outfit, consisting of a pale pink turtle neck jumper and a contrasting black leather skirt. Throughout the video, she remains in the same place; dominating the centre of the picture frame. Behind her is a beige backdrop. Its simplicity prevents the viewer from being distracted from Holly and what she is saying and showing. To her left is a small sofa with subtle striped cushions, which adds a homely, relaxing feel, and to her right is a small clothing rail, displaying her favourite items. The format and setting of this YouTube video is effective with the selection of a creative and simple scene. The way Holly speaks, smiles and engages with the viewer is natural and persuasive. In the photograph of Holly wearing her beige outfit (checked skirt, beige coat and nude heels), she appears to be walking casually through a quiet London street. This choice of location enhances the authenticity of the marketing campaign. If her photograph had been taken in a professional studio with bright lights and intense backdrops, this could be perceived as artificial and unnatural. Ultimately, Holly is promoting a winter collection for normal, every day, mature women, so this choice of a street scene and her demeanour is effective.

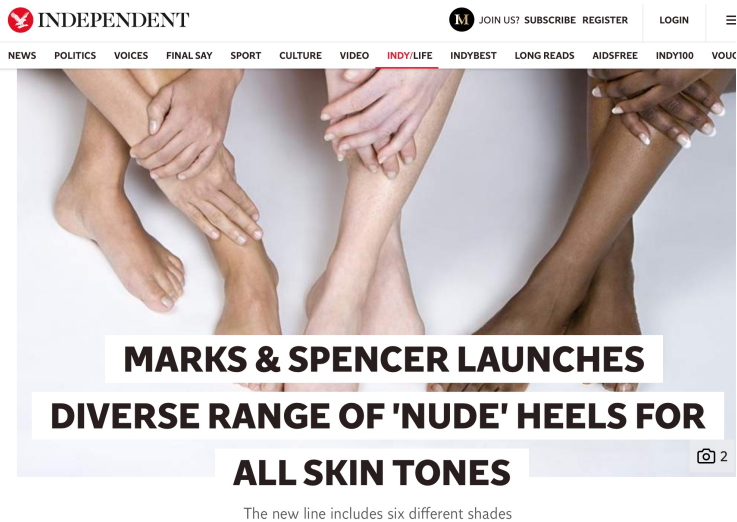


Figure 12

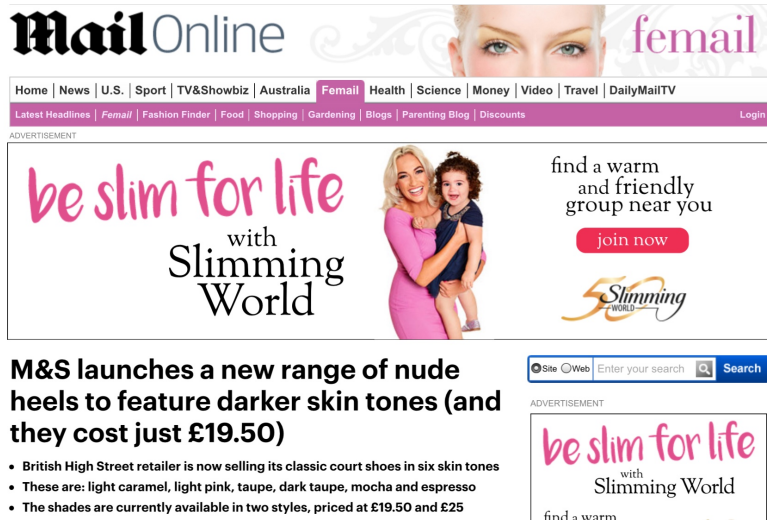


Figure 13

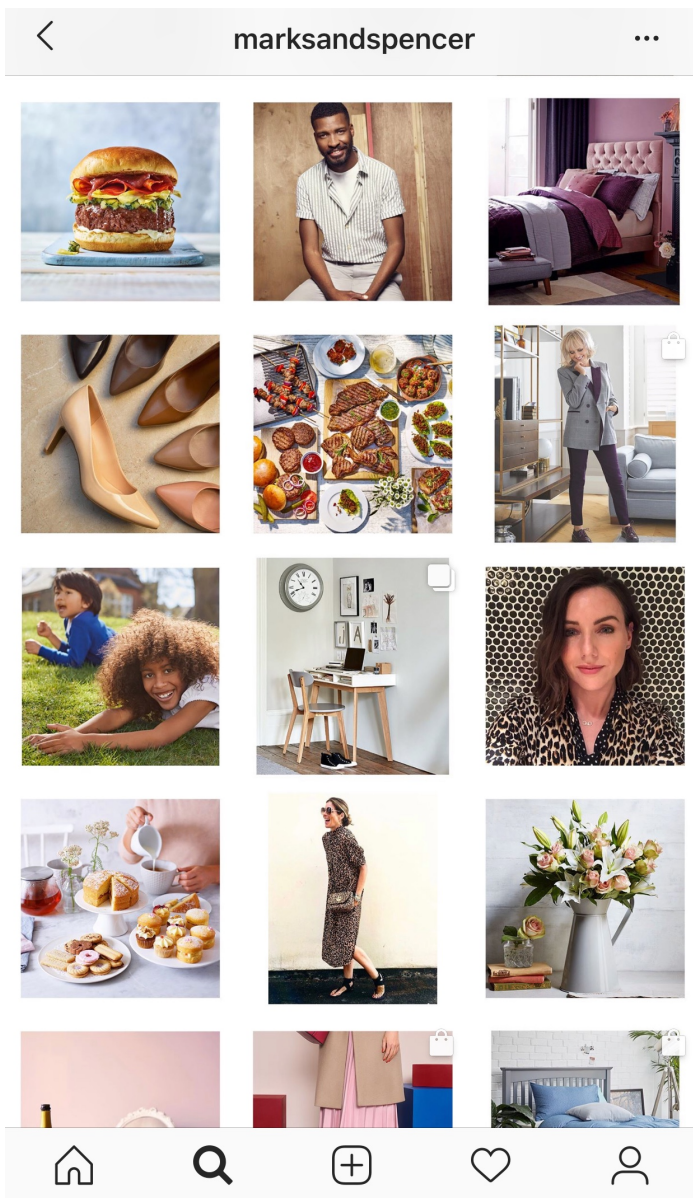


Figure 14



Figure 15

M&S Advertisement for Nude Heels - Instagram (Fig.14, Fig.15) and Press Coverage (Fig. 12, Fig. 13)

<http://www.instagram.com/marksandspencer/?hl=en> [Accessed 03.01.19]

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/marks-and-spencer-nude-heels-launch-inclusive-skin-tones-a8475601.html> [Accessed 25.09.18]

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-6023887/M-S-launches-new-range-nude-heels-feature-darker-skin-tones-cost-just-19-50.html> [Accessed 03.01.19]

Form

For this advertisement analysis, I am focusing on M&S' recent launch of their 'diverse range of 'nude' heels for all skin tones'⁴⁶. From the 'Kate Effect' back in 2012, where the Duchess of Cambridge had the 'Limited Collection caramel courts' being bought 'every two minutes'⁴⁷, four years later M&S decided to launch 'a new range of heels to feature more inclusive skin tones'⁴⁸. Their TV advertisement hit the screens in Autumn 2012, which created the initial awareness and popularity of the nude-style heels. M&S responded to this trend and created a new, diverse collection. This era also sees M&S innovating their marketing and advertising strategies; the 2018 nude heel range is promoted in areas other than television, including social media (specifically Instagram) and online national press. 'Social media refers to the methods that people use to share things on the internet'⁴⁹. It is widely understood as being 'more conversational'⁵⁰ than traditional advertising methods, meaning 'brands can enter into a dialogue with consumers'⁵¹. M&S have used, and continue to use, Instagram as the main social media platform to promote their products. Instagram is 'mobile-friendly, easy to navigate', and it 'helps businesses engage current customers and attract new ones'⁵². The layout of the M&S Instagram page is unique with each image or video having a regular white border around the edge. This consistency throughout the posts increases the effectiveness of the Instagram page, and makes it readily identifiable; a key business strategy to distinguish yourself from your competitors. Interestingly, despite M&S only

⁴⁶ Young, S. (03.08.18) *Marks & Spencer Launches Diverse Range of 'Nude' Heels for all Skin Tones* <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/marks-and-spencer-nude-heels-launch-inclusive-skin-tones-a8475601.html> [Accessed 25.09.18]

⁴⁷ London, B. (24.10.12) *Kate Effect: M&S sell one pair of Duchess of Cambridge-style nude courts every TWO MINUTES* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2207889/Kate-Middleton-Effect-M-S-sell-pair-Duchess-Cambridge-style-nude-courts-TWO-MINUTES.html> [Accessed 03.01.19]

⁴⁸ Young, S. (03.08.18) *Marks & Spencer Launches Diverse Range of 'Nude' Heels for all Skin Tones* <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/marks-and-spencer-nude-heels-launch-inclusive-skin-tones-a8475601.html> [Accessed 25.09.18]

⁴⁹ Veksner, S. (05.01.15) *100 Ideas that changed Advertising*. Year published: 2015. Publisher: King, L. Pg 176. [Accessed 12.04.18]

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Villegas, F. (11.02.18) *Ten Reasons to Adopt Instagram as a Marketing Tool* <https://getlevelten.com/blog/felipa-villegas/ten-reasons-adopt-instagram-marketing-tool> [Accessed 03.01.19]

posting one photograph of the newly launched nude heels, the post has been highly successful, being one of the most 'Liked' on their pages (9,030 'Likes' compared to the more usual 2-3,000). However, this simple strategy was accompanied by a significant number of press articles including The Independent, Cosmopolitan, Metro and Mail Online. It can be speculated that it was the intention of M&S to adopt an indirect marketing approach. This indirect strategy explains the lack of posts on their social media platforms; instead they let the national press and online news articles do the talking, resulting in raised brand awareness through multiple channels as well increased sales from the highly popular nude heels.

Garments

'For a long time the term 'nude' or 'skin colour' has been used to describe a shade which could only be worn by people with white skin'⁵³. It has really only been since the M&S launch that this perception has changed. The heels can be purchased in six different colours - 'light caramel, light pink, taupe, dark taupe, mocha and espresso'⁵⁴. 'The shades are available in two of the store's best-selling styles, the Stiletto Heel Pointed Skin Tone Court Shoes' and the 'Stiletto Heel Platform Skin Tone Court Shoes'⁵⁵. The pointed heels are priced at £19.50 and the platforms are priced at £25. The vast colour choice now includes darker colours as opposed to just a 'white' skin colour. M&S' intentions were to cater for darker skin tones, responding to the criticism faced by other retailers offering limited colours in products such as lingerie and tights, for darker skinned people. In addition to the colour diversity, M&S have described their new nude heels as 'the perfect leg lengthening accessory' and they also include 'patented Insolia technology to help stop your feet from getting sore'⁵⁶; these also being unique selling points. Through this launch, M&S are responding to social issues and changes; they want to demonstrate that they are a retailer that respects diversity in contrast to other retailers.

Aesthetics

As mentioned, the only self-marketing technique M&S have used for the nude heels is the single photograph on their Instagram page. The other marketing techniques such as press coverage, identification of celebrities wearing the shoes, and word of mouth marketing mean that M&S is not able to control how the shoes are positioned. Moreover, many of the online articles are written by members of the public and are therefore not planned or created by associates of M&S. The only Instagram post incorporates one shoe of each colour. One shoe is lain on its side against a marble

⁵³ Young, S. (03.08.18) *Marks & Spencer Launches Diverse Range of 'Nude' Heels for all Skin Tones* <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/marks-and-spencer-nude-heels-launch-inclusive-skin-tones-a8475601.html> [Accessed 25.09.18]

⁵⁴ Chan, E. (03.08.18) *M&S launches a new range of nude heels to feature darker skin tones (and they cost just £19.50)* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-6023887/M-S-launches-new-range-nude-heels-feature-darker-skin-tones-cost-just-19-50.html> [Accessed 03.01.19]

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

floor enabling the viewer to see the shoe from a side angle, including the width of the sole and the height of the heel. The other five colours dominate the top right corner. These shoes are standing up, and are evenly spaced in an arc surrounding the central heel. The birds-eye view accentuates the pointed toe of the heel, each of which points creatively to the shoe the middle. The photograph is square with a white border, which aligns with the other posts on the Instagram page.

Information

The information presented in the indirect marketing and advertising strategies obviously differs from that on the M&S-owned social media platforms. Evidently, the information in the online articles is not produced by M&S, re-emphasising the fact that M&S do not have control of what other people say about them. Often press articles are very biased, and speak either positively or negatively about a particular subject. To M&S' advantage, their nude heel launch has had a very positive reaction from the national press and general public. In addition to strong opinions, these articles state basic facts including the specific colour names of the heels and prices. Depending on the style heel, the prices are either £19.50 or £25. These appear to be reasonable prices for well manufactured, classic heels. Similar to the items promoted in Holly Willoughby's Must-Haves collection, the prices are either whole numbers or ending with .50, in contrast to psychological pricing strategies employed by some retailers. This is an evident change from the historical advertisements where the prices appeared to be quite low and where M&S may have adopted a predatory pricing strategy, setting a low price to force competitors out of the market. Therefore, it can be seen that, over time, M&S have established their identity and have recognised the importance of customer loyalty, so do not have to focus on pricing strategies that prioritise gaining market share or forcing competitors out of the market.

Models

Notably M&S have not used any models for these products. The Instagram post consists of the shoes placed on the ground with no feet inside them, and even on the website there are no models. M&S may have made this decision for various reasons. Considering they are shoes, it is unnecessary to have a model wear them to promote them. M&S are also renowned for having a diverse range of nude lingerie, and arguably using models to show lingerie is more beneficial than having them model shoes. M&S may have simply wanted the shoes to speak for themselves. If they had used models, in particular in a full body shot, there is potential that the model's outfit or face could detract attention from the primary focus of the shoes. Another probable reason is that the range is sensitive to people's views and opinions. Obviously, the purpose of the collection is to enable people of all different skin tones to feel they can purchase a pair of heels that perfectly matches their skin tone. If M&S were to use models, it is likely that they would have to use models with skin colours corresponding to the different coloured shoes. However, this could be perceived as telling the public/customer what shoes they have to buy based on their skin colour. Who is to say that a white-skinned person should be discouraged from buying a darker coloured pair? And

vice versa. With the absence of the models, M&S are at less risk of being stereotypical. Previous marketing campaigns have been socially aware and this campaign is no different in that regard. M&S are fundamentally aware of the social issues affecting their customers and are sensitive to not creating perceptions that could be seen as prejudiced or socially insensitive.

Conclusion

Within this dissertation, I believe that I have succeeded in providing conclusive responses to my title. My dissertation has not required me to answer a yes or no question. Instead, it has encouraged me to explore the evolving M&S' marketing and advertising strategies, and find out the strategies used to reflect society. The form of the advertisements can be easily identified, but the reasons behind the choice of form are less obvious. Completing this dissertation has enabled me to use my own judgement as well as my research skills to find out why. I analysed 'historical' 20th century advertisements, and then contrasted them to 'modern day' advertisements from the 21st century. Completing the dissertation in two sections has enabled me to compare and contrast M&S' marketing and advertising strategies for different eras, to identify any changes M&S made to reflect external changes. When analysing the historical advertisements, I identified a number of similarities and differences. It was interesting to see if M&S continued to use any of these strategies in their current day advertisements.

The first similarity in the historical advertisements is that the models promoting the garments appear to be of the same age, approximately 25-35 year olds. This is most likely due to M&S recognising their demographic of that time being women of a youngish age, and that if the models were of a similar age, the consumers could relate to them, and be encouraged to purchase the garments. In these advertisements, all of the models seem to be everyday, normal women. This can be contrasted with some of M&S' more recent marketing strategies where they are endorsed by celebrities, Holly Willoughby in particular. Although Holly may be slightly older than the models M&S have used previously, the same effect is intended in that consumers would want to own items that are liked and worn by a celebrity. This is not to say that M&S no longer use ordinary models in other forms or marketing strategies, but celebrity culture and social media influencers have become a pervasive component of today's society - to which M&S has successfully reacted.

An evident similarity is that all five historical advertisements spanning sixty years are hard copy, as I had initially expected. This could be due to technology still being relatively basic. It could be argued that hard copy advertisements are in some ways more effective than more recent advertising strategies such as TV advertising. This is due to the fact that hard copy advertisements ultimately cannot be ignored due to being handed out/seen directly. It is possible that M&S were confident with this idea, hence they continued to use these older forms of advertising for so long. However, I did not expect to discover that each advertisement was an older form of advertising than the previous one. One would think that the advertising and marketing strategies of M&S would have innovated. However, it appears that M&S chose not to change their strategies in line with advertising trends. This led me to consider that this lack of innovational mindset could be the root of their 21st century problems, in terms of struggling to know who to target their products at; ultimately resulting in issues with profitability, popularity and negative publicity.

M&S used older forms of advertising for many years, and may have been a little slow to adapt to digital forms, but they did adapt eventually. They have even shown individuality and differentiation with regards to their Instagram page layout; each of their posts have white borders around them. This not only separates the posts and makes the page easier to view, but is also a unique feature making M&S stand out compared to other retailers that use Instagram in a more basic way. On both the website and social media pages, there is nothing that is overly distracting or overwhelming for the viewer. This simplicity is effective as it encourages the customer to stay and research further into the available products.

The most obvious change in marketing strategy is M&S' use of digital methods such as the website, celebrity endorsements, YouTube, social media and online press coverage. This is evidence that M&S have identified innovations in technology and used them to market their own products. Most importantly, M&S have adopted a complete range of digital forms of marketing. This diversity allows viewers to consistently see M&S products across a range of platforms. It is also evidence that M&S is a strong company, prepared to invest in modern marketing strategies to attempt to increase sales.

It is interesting to note that throughout each advertisement, there is great emphasis on the types of fabrics used to create the garments. For the historical advertisements, the emphasis on the fabric types suggests that fabric selection was of importance to customers during this time. For over 30 years, M&S did not include prices on their advertisements. They consistently only stated fabrics, garment names and sizes. From 1970 they began to include prices. M&S' exclusion of price information suggests that in those times, fabric type was more important than price.

An evident difference in the M&S historical advertisements is that they decreased the numbers of models wearing the exact same thing, but increased the variety of garments on offer. This suggests that fashion was becoming more unique and individual, and the garments on offer could be tailored to customer's specific tastes. This is also evident in the modern day advertisements where people are encouraged to buy garments that reflect their individual style. M&S still promote trendy and in-fashion garments in order to remain competitive but their current marketing and advertising strategies allow them to easily promote a variety of garments, from clothes to shoes and accessories, due to its diversity. This ultimately means M&S can reach a wider audience and attain higher sales and profits as a result of consumers having multiple channels to find products they like.

For all of the historical and modern day advertisements, the garments being promoted have clearly reflected social times and changes. This was identifiable in the first advertisement that I analysed, the '1932 Christmas Catalogue'. The garments being promoted were long maxi style dresses that were simplistic, modest and consisted of muted colours. At this time, 'the world was

in the terrible economic event known as the Great Depression, with a 25% unemployment rate'⁵⁷. 'The simpler lines in the garments could reflect the simpler lives of the public'⁵⁸, and the muted colours could reflect the moods that society as a whole was feeling. The notion of reflecting social times and changes was identifiable again in the 1970 advertisement where the garments were clearly more casual than previous years. It was at this time where more and more women were entering the workforce, suggesting the clothes they wore had to be practical to some degree. The idea of more women working was continued into the 1990 advertisement, where the garments incorporated shoulder pads for example, adding a masculine feel, whilst remaining a feminine product. Another example was the use of a celebrity, Holly Willoughby, to promote their products, tapping into the modern day celebrity culture. However, their most notable reflection of society is the nude heel range. The positive response to the nude shoes highlights that M&S has successfully adapted their marketing and advertising strategies to reflect changes in consumer demands resulting from social changes.

⁵⁷ Monet, D. (03.08.17) *Fashion History - Ladies' Fashion Designs of the 1930s* <https://bellatory.com/fashion-industry/FashionHistoryLadiesFashionDesignsofthe1930s> [Accessed 17.09.18]

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