

Provide a detailed analysis of the impact of ICT on internal and external communication of the business.

Marks and Spencer need to communicate with a range of individual and organisations including customers, their suppliers, as well as their own employees. Marks and Spencer business rely on modern technology to communicate. The new methods make communication more versatile, more targeted, more reliable, quicker and more convenient. Nowadays technology has made many changes to businesses, for example the internet is world-wide network of computer systems. The Internet can be used to send e-mails to another user and also messages can be received. Without this modern technology communication will not be so effective. This has had a huge impact in businesses including M&S, which will be describe later.

I will discuss the forms of communication in Marks and Spencer. There are two types internal and external. Internal is a communication between workers and supervisors, managers and their staff. External communication is between customers, other businesses and suppliers.

The internal methods of communication in Marks and Spencer areas follows:
Internal telephone calls or e-mail, face-to-face contact, memos.

Internal telephone involves verbal communication and it is a quick form of communication as the message is received immediately. The advantages of using a telephone are that you can have two way communication, if the message is not understood it can easily be explained straight away, The disadvantages are the message might not be passed on accurately as the sender cannot be seen who is giving the information. Facial expressions aren't seen and so there can be misinterpretation. This is a formal communication.

E-mail can be used internally as well as externally. E-mail can be sent amongst staff so that they can understand what to do at what time.

Face-to-face is used in conversation or to make presentation in Marks and Spencer. Used to make suggestions and request and to carry out briefings. Users need to adopt the correct tone and to be familiar with the content of the message.

Memos are used between staff. Memos are intend to be informal between colleagues. The messages are kept to the point and ere very brief. In Marks and Spencer memos are put into staffs pigeon hole which clearly explains them what should they do. The advantages of memos are, they are quick and strait to the point. The disadvantages are they can get lost and also the message might not be read.

Some of the methods of external communication in Marks and Spencer are as follows: fixed telephone system, fax letters and e-mail.

Fixed telephone system are used externally if a customer wants to contact the business, also is used to contact suppliers etc. This allows, for example, automatic queuing system. Phone answer machines can tape callers' messages, which can be played back from a distance by calling the number and typing in a pre-set code.

Fax machines are now essential office equipment. They are used to transmit and receive copies of documents using a telephone line. The advantages are if machines are left on all the time, faxes can be received at any time and high speed compare with letters. The disadvantages are the telephone connection is sometimes lost and fax machine can sometimes run out of paper at a crucial time. This is usually formally used.

E-mail is the transfer of text, graphics and other information between computer users. Communication may be one-to-one, a person sending private message to another person, or one to many, in which one person sends a message to many people connected to the network. The advantages of e-mail are the same message can be sent immediately to many people, fast and efficient, complete files can be sent/downloaded with any message. The disadvantages are can result in junk —mail where the wrong people receive the message, no face-to-face or verbal contact with business colleagues.

The impact of ICT on internal and external communication in Marks and Spencer

Internal

Better management information possibly leading to more effective control and decision making.

Greater use of electronic media.

Quick dissemination of information, e.g. through e-mail.

Less reliance on face-to-face meetings.

Effect on management.

Effect on staff e.g. fewer staff needed amount of training required.

External

Level of customer satisfaction

Impact of junk mail

Relations with suppliers

Speed of response to enquiries

Quick access to centrally held information through database