



M&S at a Crossroads: Tradition vs. Trend

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is a well-known brand aiming to restore its position in the global retail market. M&S's revenue is about \$18 billion USD (£13.8 billion), with 90% coming from the UK. M&S operates in over 400 stores across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, aiming to expand its reach and improve customer loyalty.

Marks & Spencer's brand philosophy is based on five enduring principles—**quality, value, service, innovation, and trust**, which are expressed as “doing the right thing” for customers, suppliers, and society.

Key elements

- *Quality + Value in balance* – every product must deliver superior craftsmanship at a fair price, the “twin stars” that have guided the brand since its penny-bazaar origins.
- *Customer-first approach*– stores, online channels and the “Your M&S” app are designed to create seamless, welcoming experiences that keep shoppers engaged.
- *Continuous innovation* – M&S invests in new ideas so it can offer accessible, premium quality products to build loyalty.
- *Sustainability* – the retailer treats environmental and social responsibility as non-negotiable, targeting net-zero by 2040 and embedding more than 1,000 green projects across its supply chain.
- *Integrity and community* – transparent reporting, ethical sourcing, and annual multimillion-pound donations to local causes reinforce its aim “to become the world’s most trusted retailer”.

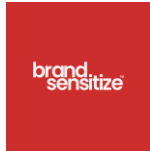
M&S manages its century-old brand by continually re-interpreting those core values for modern consumers while never abandoning the promise of trusted quality at accessible prices.

Marks & Spencer's current technology leader is Rachel Higham, who serves as Chief Digital & Technology Officer (CDTO).

From a brand perspective, the way forward is clear: enhance cyber resilience, increase transparency, accelerate digital execution, and ensure rock-solid operations comparable to those of leading premium brands.

M&S struggles to attract younger shoppers because its style remains formal and traditional instead of fresh, casual, and trend-focused.

M&S faces a crucial brand moment in 2025, as it rebuilds trust following a major cyberattack that disrupted sales, supply, and customer communication.



M&S is restoring operational reliability to prevent service lapses that erode loyalty, all while managing a primarily UK-centric footprint that limits global reach.

However, in 2025, M&S faces challenges as a brand due to three interconnected reasons. First, a recent cyberattack severely disrupted online orders, in-store payments, and supply chains for several days, causing emotional distress, damaging market value, forcing refunds, and eroding trust as services gradually recovered and communications remained limited. Second, the incident exposed weak controls over third-party vendors and issues with digital resilience, prompting customers to turn to competitors during the blackout and revealing gaps in providing reliable, secure omnichannel experiences. Third, since much of M&S's growth relies on e-commerce for clothing and home goods, the outage occurred at a critical time, resulting in revenue losses and damaging its reputation during an important seasonal period.

M&S's core tech ecosystem combines strategic scale with customer insights. Key partners include TCS, the main technology partner leading digital transformation and retail tech operations; Ocado, which supports online grocery fulfillment and last-mile delivery; Microsoft, enabling AI-driven store, customer, and operations transformation; and First Insight, providing voice-of-customer analytics across Clothing & Home.

What do you think about how old-school brands like M&S are changing in today's retail scene?