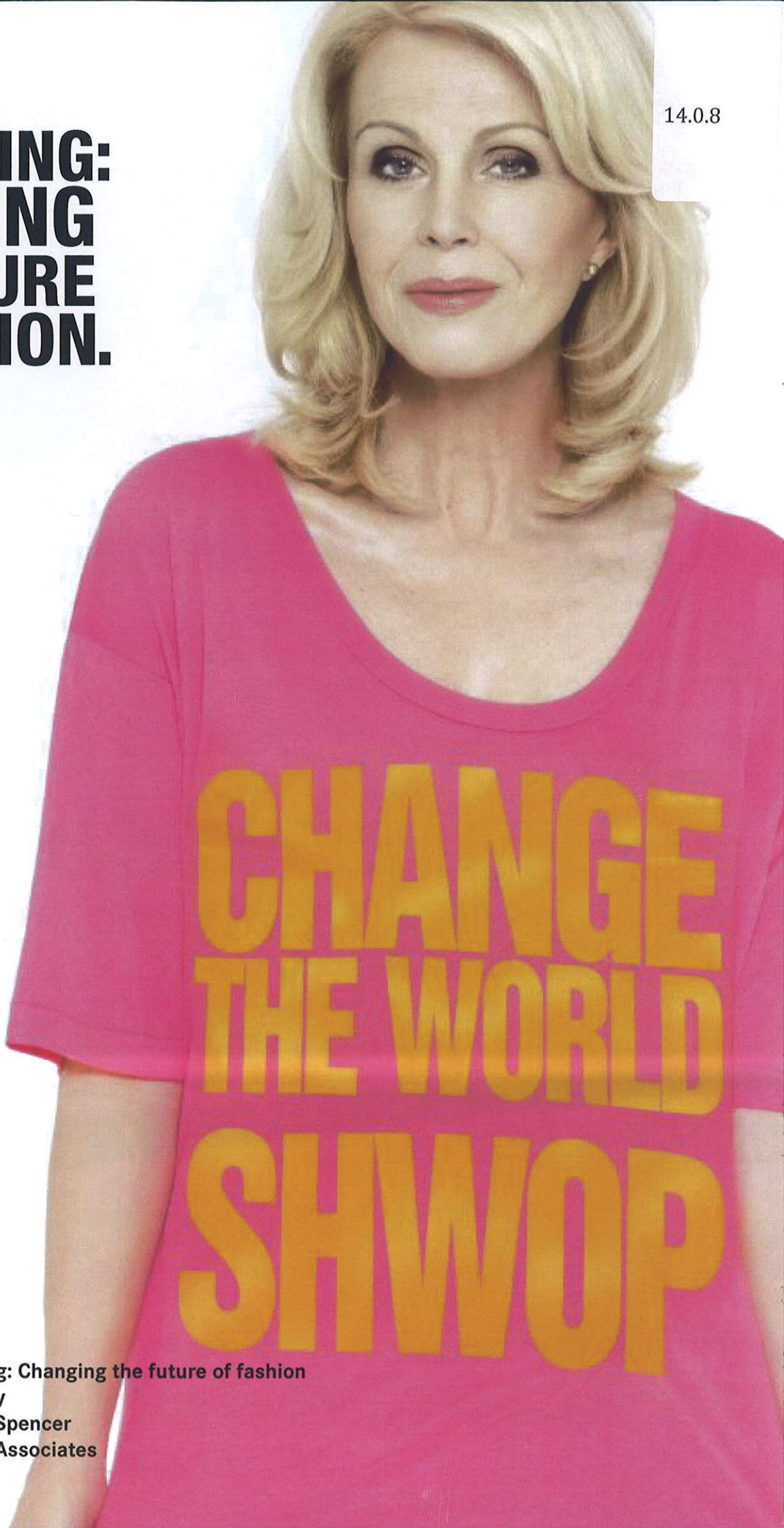


M&S

**SHWOPPING:  
CHANGING  
THE FUTURE  
OF FASHION.**

14.0.8



**CHANGE  
THE WORLD  
SHWOP**

Project title: **M&S Shwopping: Changing the future of fashion**

Category: **Design for society**

Client company: **Marks and Spencer**

Design consultancy: **Landor Associates**

Current date: **11 July 2013**



Sale



## Executive SUMMARY

With over 700 stores throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland and serving over 20 million customers every week, M&S is by far one of the largest high street retailers in the UK. However M&S recognised that it had a greater responsibility as a high street retail leader and set themselves the ambition of being the world's most sustainable retailer by 2015.

M&S had already topped all charts for sustainability amongst the experts, but found it incredibly hard to be distinct and different from the consumers' perspective; all retailers do bags for life, sustainable fishing, support British farmers and so on.

The challenge for M&S was therefore not to do more "good", but to find new impactful, creative and relevant ways that would be understood, appreciated and engaging by/to the consumers. In brand language they needed to 'demand reconsideration'.

During a fifteen-month partnership with M&S, we helped make many fundamental changes to their brand strategy, architecture and product packaging and store presentation. We were tasked with finding a way to drive increased perception of M&S's social responsibility activities.

Our solution was to create a new CSR initiative that would not be peripheral to the organisation but central to its activities. We set out to kick start a new circular economy on the UK high street that would require a shift in consumers' shopping behaviour, where recycling clothes would be an integral part of the shopping experience. We called it Shwopping. With 3.6 million items of clothes being Shwopped to date, £2.2 million raised for partner Oxfam, more than half of M&S customers stating they plan to take part, new Shwopping initiatives being rolled out and other high street retailers beginning to set up similar initiatives. It's fair to say this new concept is beginning to take foothold across many UK high streets.



"The best fashion idea since the invention of jeans."  
M&S Marketing Director Steve Sharp

"Why didn't we think of it earlier! It's such an obvious, but brilliant, idea."  
Internal research group

# THE BEST FASHION IDEA SINCE THE INVENTION OF JEANS

M&S Marketing Director, Steve Sharp



# Project OVERVIEW



## BACKGROUND

M&S operates across two main categories, food and retail; where carrying out "good" initiatives is an assumed expectation by the general public and where new initiatives only added to the "soup of goodness" that exists.

M&S is different from its competitors. It is highly regarded amongst NGOs & CR experts and had won over 50 awards for its CSR activities. In the food sector, M&S had a number of highly successful initiatives already up and running. However, the opportunity was to create a new initiative in the retail sector that would increase M&S's perception, especially amongst consumers. Particularly when we discovered that M&S had a huge ambition to tackle the issue of one billion items of clothing ending up in landfills every year.

## KEY CHALLENGE

Fashion is important to us as individuals, it is part of who we are, and of course it is ever changing. The problem is that every year one billion items of clothing end up in landfill in the UK alone; that's nearly 10,000 items every 5 minutes, 33 every second. And the more fashion changes, the deeper the holes we need to dig. Over the years we have inadvertently created a system that shores up our self-esteem at the expense of our planet.

## OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

The brief was simple; Change the perception of M&S's sustainability credibility amongst consumers.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

Throughout a number of discussions with M&S we concluded that we needed to:

- Develop a sustainability concept that would drive reconsideration and differentiation amongst consumers
- Implement it through M&S, gain acceptance and enthusiasm
- Drive the scale of ambition (100% reuse) and its positioning in the market
- Create a campaign concept and name

But there's more, for there are millions of people in the world short of adequate clothing to stay warm and dry or to protect them from extremes of weather. For them clothing is less an issue of self worth and more one of self-preservation. Our system is fundamentally flawed.

To solve such a large issue there was a momentous task of challenging the social norm and shopping behaviours of many. Fortunately there is a growing appetite to change the current wasteful approach to consumption. We believed that we needed to at least start the journey towards a social expectation that recycling clothes should be an integral part of the joy of shopping.

"Not many years ago, people would have been incredulous at the idea of routinely recycling bottles and plastic, yet this is now commonplace behaviour. We want to try to achieve that same shift of behaviour with our Shwopping campaign, and make recycling clothes a habit."  
Steve Sharp

# TO SOLVE SUCH A LARGE ISSUE WAS A MOMENTOUS TASK OF CHALLENGING THE NORM

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# Project OVERVIEW

## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

After an analysis of what M&S did in this arena compared with what issues most concerned consumers, we concluded that we needed to bring two existing initiatives together and find a way of driving their relevance and emotional engagement.

The first was M&S's already existing, unique closed distribution system that took everything from the stores and where nothing went to waste. This was a unique enabler that needed to be leveraged. The second was to build on the success of the on-going Oxfam Clothes Exchange scheme, where customers are rewarded with a £5 M&S voucher for taking their unwanted M&S clothes to an Oxfam shop, as well as the three One Day Wardrobe Clear-outs held over the previous years. This scheme reuses, recycles and reclaims almost every item and those few remaining help create electricity; it's a zero waste system. Therefore the seeds of a new ambitious scheme existed within M&S.

The scale of the ambition would determine the scale of the success. Having established that the infrastructure existed, the question was what might the mechanics of the scheme be and just how ambitious we could be. The scheme was to simply take the existing infrastructure and use it in such a powerful way that it would force people to pay attention and to change behaviours. As for the ambition, if we start as we did with the premise that the fashion eco-system is flawed then we needed a big, bold, mind altering change. Our view was that as M&S sell 350 million garments a year, we had to set the target for recycled clothes at 100%, 350 million items.

This simple idea was then followed by many weeks of exploration of the mechanics, the incentives, the use of which stores, how to market, what the positioning might be and so on.

## ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

For customers, waste reduction was a pressing concern, but we needed to make any solution that involved their contribution, easy to implement: something that could fit in seamlessly with their everyday lives. To succeed, we had to convince customers to significantly change their shopping behaviour – to swap one old item of clothing for every new item they bought, which we would then give to Oxfam. In turn, Oxfam could sell, reuse or recycle the clothing. This would ensure that not a single item of clothing would end up in landfill and, along the way, raise money and create jobs for people living in poverty.

The difference with this new enterprise was that customers were motivated almost entirely by the idea of shopping more responsibly whilst making money for a worthwhile cause rather than being financially rewarded for their participation.

Another point of difference was that customers would also be able to donate any unwanted clothes (not just M&S items), plus they'd be able to take them along to an M&S store at any time throughout the year – making the opportunity to recycle clothes even easier.

## THE NAME

We explored a range of go to market strategies and named the initiative 'Shwopping'. The name was chosen partly for its simplicity and quirkiness – we knew it would be a talking point. We also wanted a name that was memorable, somewhat self-explanatory and one that would be a 'call to positive action'. Our ambition was to create a new verb that could become part of common vernacular and that stood for a fun brand initiative, rather than a worthy corporate phrase.

## LAUNCHING CAMPAIGN

Shwopping found its perfect ambassador in the form of Joanna Lumley. Joanna's mix of good humour and gravitas both humanised the initiative and injected passion into the communications, helping customers more readily identify with the cause.

An integrated campaign was launched that included TV, print and digital. With great emphasis placed on hosting a community online, primarily on Facebook, to allow the campaign to shift from monologue to dialogue. This was also supported by 'stunts', such as transforming a London street into 'ShwopStreet' by dressing it with 5 minutes worth of waste; 9,513 items of clothing. There was also a 'ShwopLab', to engage alpha-influencers and much more to turbo-charge an already ambitious and engaging idea.

## DIGITAL SUPPORT

With 625,000 fans and 78 million friends on Facebook, the campaign continues to run through text mechanics and QR codes which allow customers to register their Shwops in-store and this, in turn, enters them into a weekly prize draw to win M&S gift vouchers, encouraging their Facebook engagement. A store's unique text code and the QR code's geo-mapping facility mean that the number of Shwops per store can be monitored, giving a snapshot of the best Shwopping stores.

## PROJECT LAUNCH DATE

The campaign was launched in April 2012.





# Summary of RESULTS

## MEDIA IMPACT

- Shwopping was featured in 15 national print (one front page), 6 national and 3 international TV broadcasts, 4 major radio broadcasts, 5 consumer magazines and 21 national online, with a variety of regional coverage. Shwopping was also named 'Campaign of the Week' in Retail Week magazine
- The Shwopping manifesto film has been watched over 583,000 times on-line alone
- Social media results showed 4.6million impressions on Facebook and three trending topics on launch day with a potential reach of 18.3 million during the first month
- 64% recognition of M&S Advert (of a typical M&S womenswear figure of 30%)
- M&S app Downloaded over 27,000 times, average use per month 35,000.



## SHIFT IN BEHAVIOUR

- 36,000 items were shwopped in the first week and 3.6 million items of clothing have been shwopped in the first year.
- £2.2 million raised for partner Oxfam
- More than half of M&S customers say they plan to take part and new Shwopping initiatives are being rolled out
- 'Shwop at Work' was launched with Business in the Community, making it easy for companies to help recycle their employees' clothes in their offices during a one-day eco drive. Over 100 organisations have already signed-up
- Shwopping has been extended to M&S Simply Food stores and other multi-channel routes will come on line later.

## BROADER

No other high street retailer has launched an initiative with the same magnitude and authority as shwopping. Other retailers may have participated in their own charitable events, but none with the scale or long-term basis on which shwopping is built.

## M&S SAY

Shwopping is more than just a campaign. It's a long-term commitment to change the way people shop, with the ultimate aim of recycling the same amount of clothes that we sell each year.

## CUSTOMER VERBATIMS

"It would attract a new cohort of people to go to their wardrobe and recycle their clothes, which can only be a good thing.

"It feels right for the times."

"I like the idea that a huge retail company is willing to do that and get behind it."

"I do associate M&S with ethical issues and this is another stage in their ethical initiatives."

## OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

There was a large appetite for change within M&S and a sizable marketing push was laid out.

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

- [www.resource.uk.com](http://www.resource.uk.com)
- Client data

# 583,000

THE AMOUNT OF TIMES THE  
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# £2.2M

RAISED FOR PARTNER OXFAM

# 4.6M

IMPRESSIONS ON FACEBOOK



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