

Marks & Spencer – The Business Case for Plan A

Heiko Spitzeck, 2009

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is one of the UK's leading retailers, with over 21 million people visiting M&S stores around the country every week./ The company offers clothing and home products, as well as food to its clients in 35,000 product lines and employs over 71,000 people in the 622 UK stores. Marks & Spencer's global supply chain includes 2,000 factories, 20,000 farms and 250,000 workers.

Switching on his computer at 08.15am on Thursday 10 July 2008, Richard Gillies, Director at Marks & Spencer for Plan A – the Group's ambitious sustainability strategy, finds an email from the CEO titled "Create the business case for Plan A" in his inbox. One day before, investors challenged the Plan A activities at the Annual Meeting in London especially because of the grim economic outlook for the next year. Richard is further asked to prepare a short input for discussion on the economic benefits of Plan A held at the CEO's office in the afternoon.