

# M&S ARCHIVE

## Birth of a Brand



M&S

EST. 1884

## Graphic Design

# Birth of a Brand

The story of M&S began in 1884 with a market stall in Leeds, since then this world-famous brand has evolved to meet the needs of customers for over 135 years. The M&S Archive collection of advertising and packaging design is a rich resource. Using primary sources from the archive collection, explore past and present branding and advertising at M&S.

## Learning Objectives

- Understand how the M&S brand has changed over time
- Identify use of colour, tone, line, composition, typography and imagery in commercial packaging and advertising
- Analyse use of graphic design elements to engage and/or communicate with target customers

## Resources provided with this pack:

- PowerPoint slides
- M&S Archive image packs
- Films: 'Your Marks & Spencer Store' and 'This is not just food... This is M&S food'

We've provided a resource overview on the next page, feel free to select content and activities to create your own plan.

# Resource Overview

Page	Activity	Content	Resources
3	Starter	<p>What is a brand? What visual design elements make up a brand?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity ideas</li> </ul>	Slides 2-3
4	The M&S Brand	<p>What does M&amp;S branding convey at different periods?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity ideas</li> </ul>	Slides 4-6, Logos and Branding image pack, M&S.com website
6	Food Packaging and Advertising	<p>Food packaging and advertising from the 1930s to 2020s.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion points, activity ideas and information on sustainability at M&amp;S.</li> </ul>	Slides 7-17, Food Packaging and Advertising image pack, cinema and TV adverts (films)
9	Case Study 1	<p>Celebrating 125 Years, Quality Worth Every Penny campaign from 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion points and activity ideas.</li> </ul>	Case Study 1 image pack, Logos and Branding image pack
10	Case Study 2	<p>Archive-inspired design with early 20<sup>th</sup> Century photographs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion points and activity ideas.</li> </ul>	Case Study 2 image pack, Food Packaging and Advertising image pack
11	Plenary	Self evaluation prompts.	
12	Useful information	Useful links to further resources	

## Starter

To get started, consider these questions. Turn over for some answers or places to look for more information.

**Q: What is a brand?**

**Q: What visual design elements make up a brand?**

**Q: How do those elements convey messages about the brand to customers?**

# Starter

## **Q: What is a brand?**

It's actually quite difficult to define what a brand is!

At one level, a brand is a logo or design, however how we feel and think about brands goes beyond this to include emotional responses.

What is your definition of a 'brand'?

You can find a variety of definitions from different sources online.

## **Q: What visual design elements make up a brand?**

Logo, colour palette, imagery, font and more.

## **Q: How do those elements convey messages about the brand to customers?**

Colour, tone, line, composition, typography and imagery can be used to create a 'brand personality' that connects with customers.

## **Activity ideas**

- Create alternative taglines for well-known brands
- Identify the customer base of a selection of brands based on their brand personality

# The M&S Brand

M&S is one of the best-known brands in the UK. Our branding has changed over time, evolving to meet the needs of the business and our customers.

We've had sub-brands within M&S since the 1920s when Marspen was introduced on homeware and books.

The St Michael brand was created in 1928 by Simon Marks, son of Michael Marks who was the founder of M&S. Only products made to M&S specifications carried the St Michael branding, so it became known as a quality mark. Probably our most famous sub-brand, St Michael was phased out in 2000.

**You will need:** Logos and Branding image pack

**Q: What does M&S branding convey at different periods ?**

- Compare the St Michael logo from 1940s to 1950s
- Compare 1980s Marks & Spencer branding to 2010s Your M&S and Only at Your M&S logos

**Q: What do you notice when comparing the examples?**

**Q: Why do you think those changes were made?**

## Activity ideas

- Look at the Logos and Branding image pack, choose a decade and analyse the branding – what are the main messages and how are they communicated.
- Design a new M&S logo and strapline.
- Look at M&S.com and the [Ocado M&S pages](#) for examples of how branding is used consistently across product ranges.

# Food Packaging and Advertising

We've sold food from the earliest days of M&S in the form of packaged dry goods like flour and sugar. In the 1930s food departments were introduced in all stores, selling a wide range of products. By 1958 all our food products carried the St Michael brand, and the following decades saw food advertising evolve with the use of photography and film.

**You will need:** Food Packaging and Advertising image pack, 'Your Marks & Spencer Store' and 'This is not just food... This is M&S Food' films.

**Q: Why did M&S create such elaborate window displays in the 1930s?**

**Q: Watch the 'Your Marks & Spencer Store' 1950s cinema advert. Why were M&S adverts shown in cinemas?**

**Q: What do you notice about the advert in comparison to today's TV or online advertising?**

**Q: 1970s – Which image is most similar to current advertising, and which is the most different?**

**Q: 1980s – What graphic design techniques can you identify?**

**Q: 2000s – Why was the 'This is not just food... This is M&S Food' TV campaign so successful?**

**Q: 2020s – Chooses two examples. Which design elements do you notice first? List all the elements you notice in order.**

**Q: What does this tell you about how visual hierarchy is being used?**

# Food Packaging and Advertising

We've sold food from the earliest days of M&S in the form of packaged dry goods like flour and sugar. In the 1930s food departments were introduced in all stores, selling a wide range of products. By 1958 all our food products carried the St Michael brand, and the following decades saw food advertising evolve with the use of photography and film.

**You will need:** Food Packaging and Advertising image pack, 'Your Marks & Spencer Store' and 'This is not just food... This is M&S Food' films.

**Q: Why did M&S create such elaborate window displays in the 1930s?**

- It was a key form of advertising at the time, people shopped for food daily so shopping areas were always busy.
- Window displays were sometimes changed every day to showcase different products.

**Q: Watch the 'Your Marks & Spencer Store' 1950s cinema advert. Why were M&S adverts shown in cinemas?**

- Most homes wouldn't have had a TV, people would go to the cinema to watch films and would also see news reels and adverts before and after the feature.
- **Q: What do you notice about the advert in comparison to today's TV or online advertising?**

**Q: 1970s – Which image is most similar to current advertising, and which is the most different?**



# Food Packaging and Advertising

**Q: 1980s – What graphic design techniques can you identify?**

**Q: 2000s – Why was the ‘This is not just food... This is M&S Food’ TV campaign so successful?**

- This was a totally new way of advertising food. The close-up and slow-motion shots of the products, the iconic voiceover and music were all attention-grabbing in their slow pace and appealed to the senses, making the food the star.
- Sales of the Chocolate Melting Middle Pudding increased by 3000% after the advert first aired.

**Q: 2020s – Chooses two examples. Which design elements do you notice first? List all the elements you notice in order.**

- **Q: What does this tell you about how visual hierarchy is being used?**
- Consider; colour, composition, contrast, size, symmetry, repetition, proximity, texture, white space.

# Food Packaging and Advertising

## Activity ideas

- Using slide 15, can you find these design elements in the Food Packaging and Advertising image pack? Make a note of any other details you notice.
- Use the images on slides 16 and 17. Draw in the missing elements or invent new elements to fill the spaces.
- Select a decade and analyse the designs for use of colour, tone, line, composition, typography, imagery.
- Compare and contrast 1930s window displays with current visual merchandising.
- Can you guess the date of images based on their design features?

## Sustainability

M&S believes that caring about our impact on tomorrow's world as well as today's is not just good citizenship, it's good business. We launched our eco and ethical programme, called [Plan A](#), in 2007.

In 2021 we reviewed our approach to sustainability and outlined our path to becoming a net zero business by 2040. Net zero means that we're not adding any more carbon to the atmosphere than we can remove.

We've already taken big steps to reduce waste from packaging, and there is more to come. Find out more about what we're doing with [plastics and packaging](#).

# Case Study 1: 2009

## Celebrating 125 Years, Quality Worth Every Penny

**You will need:** Case Study 1 image pack, Logos and Branding image pack

In 2009 we celebrated our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Celebrating 125 Years campaign ran across clothing, home and food departments with a new graphic identity, new products and the strap line 'Quality Worth Every Penny'.

M&S was established in 1884 by Michael Marks, his first market stalls were called Penny Bazaars. When he went into partnership with Tom Spencer in 1894 our shops became known as Marks & Spencer Penny Bazaars.

### **Q: In what ways do the 125 campaigns reference M&S history?**

- Compare the Celebrating 125 Years graphics with the Logos and Branding image pack.

### **Q: How do the Quality Worth Every Penny adverts use visual hierarchy to capture and maintain customers' interest?**

### **Activity ideas**

- Create a graphic identity for a retailer's milestone celebration eg M&S - 140 years in 2024. Apply your design to window display, logo, product and advertising.
- Combine aspects of design from a previous decade with current graphics to create a heritage-inspired identity.

# Case Study 2: 2022

## Archive-inspired design with early 20th Century photographs

**You will need:** Case Study 2 image pack, Logos and Branding image pack

For our Christmas 2022 food gift range M&S packaging designers looked to the Archive's collection of store photographs for inspiration.

**Q: What techniques have been used in the designs to communicate that these are luxury products?**

**Q: What features of the photographs have been left out of the graphic design? Why do you think this is?**

**Q: Compare the designs on pages 1 and 2 to the tin on page 4. What do you notice about how the photographs have been interpreted by the designers?**

- The tin design on page 4 contains elements from several sources, whereas the designs on pages 1 and 2 are more faithful to the original photographs.

### Activity ideas

- Create a food packaging design to apply to a range of luxury products, inspired by archive images or designs from the image packs.

# Plenary: Evaluate

## Self Evaluation

Evaluate your own work by thinking about

- What went well?
- What would improve your work further?
- What I really like about this work is...
- This piece would be even better if...
- Something that really stands out is...
- This piece shows... really well
- Something that I'm finding difficult to understand is...

# M&S ARCHIVE

## Useful information

M&S Archive Home Educators

<https://archive.marksandspencer.com/learning/home-educators>

M&S Timelines and online exhibitions

<https://archive.marksandspencer.com/discover>

M&S Archive with My Learning

<https://mylearning.org/collections/the-mands-company-archive>

## Contact us

[archive@mands.com](mailto:archive@mands.com)

02087182800

# Resource Evaluation Form

We hope you've enjoyed using this resource. To make sure that we're providing the best resources that we can, we'd be grateful if you could answer the following questions and let us know how we're doing.

## **Date you used the resource:**

How did you find out about the resource?

How does this resource link to your learning activities or planning?

What did you like most about the resource?

What would you change?

Would you recommend the M&S Archive resources?

Why?

## **Thank you for your comments**

Please email your answers to [archive@mands.com](mailto:archive@mands.com)

or post to M&S Archive, Michael Marks Building,

University of Leeds, LS2 9JT

