

John Lewis Partnership – Mobilising leadership for change

The Challenge

Rabid competition from the “cost-cutters”, the challenge of rapid digitising in all dimensions and a legacy culture of avoiding conflict meant that the people leaders, in this unique organisation of 78,000 partners, now needed to grasp the nettle of change and modernisation. The organisation required much higher levels of flexibility, innovation and agility and the leaders needed to recognise the urgency and shift their understanding, from their roles as steady-state managers to leaders of more rapid and responsive innovation.

The Solution

Eight regional large group interventions for 400 leaders were designed, developed and delivered with in-house facilitators prepared to support each one. The tone and style were:

- Highly participative and interactive
- Immersive, using the space to create movement and energy
- Creating clarity – providing leaders with a high level of clarity about the what it means for you as leaders and for your Partners’ and ‘how’ you can successfully lead throughout the organisation
- Exploratory – spending time on what Modern Waitrose means for the leaders role in execution and for their people

Following the success of these large group interventions, and against the dramatic backdrop of unprecedented announcements in the business, we designed and facilitated an event for the more





senior Waitrose leaders to launch the most dramatic change to business operations that they and the organisation had ever experienced.

Gathering the network's leadership of 50 at The Museum of Brands over two-days, with the objectives of create the space, outside of operational focus, to stop and think more creatively about their stewardship of their iconic brand in the context of its past, present and future:

- To agree principles for how they would lead the future changes
- To create an opportunity for the leaders to be involved in shaping imminent plans
- To consider how they will collectively bring the future to life in terms of:
 - › *Their enterprise-wide leadership responsibility*
 - › *New Culture*
 - › *New thinking*
 - › *New ways of working*

The Result

Despite their own roles being at risk in impending restructuring, these leaders moved from independent territorial performers to a cohesive and aligned team, mobilised in their collective mission.

Taking away explicit individual and collective responsibilities and actions, the teams' impact has been demonstrated in the delivery of network wide retail innovations and successful programme of digitisation. Sales revenue growth was maintained at the same rate as previous years, despite massive market share inroads by their voracious cost-cutting competitors.