

TITLE OF THE CASE STUDY: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Name of the organisation: Mercadona

Country and sector of the organisation: Spain. Supermarket

Type of organisation:

- Business company
- Public organization
- Private organization
- NGO
- Other:

Size of the organisation:

- small
- medium
- large

Brief description of the organisation:

Mercadona is a family business, founded by Juan Roig and his wife, Trinidad Alfonso, in 1977. It is one of the main physical and online supermarket companies in Spain, whose aim is to supply customers with food, personal hygiene, household cleaning and pet care products. Based in Valencia, Mercadona is distributed throughout Spain with 1654 supermarkets and a staff of 90,000 workers. It also has a slight presence in Portugal with 16 supermarkets and 900 workers.

Short description of the case study (500 characters)

Mercadona approaches the values of happiness and toxic relationships in its areas of work in a transversal way, that is, by achieving other values such as diversity, inclusion, respect, integrity, transparency, equality and trust. Through these values, the company tries to guarantee the well-being of all its personnel and healthy relations between them, with the final objective of achieving effective results for the company and above all, to guarantee customer satisfaction.

Numerous experts and media, such as the Huffington Post, assure that one of the factors of Mercadona's success "is the satisfaction that employees have in working in that company". To achieve this satisfaction, the company, as indicated in its 2019 Annual Report, is based on a philosophy of "first

give, then take", i.e. that when employees begin their contract, the company assures them permanent employment, training plans, an above-average salary, work-life balance and opportunities for personal and professional development. These conditions generate security and well-being in the workers, thus providing an ideal scenario to make them feel happy and comfortable with their jobs.

But this company not only promises stable employment, but also places great emphasis on establishing an inclusive and equal working environment, where socio-cultural diversity exists. Mercadona defends equal treatment and opportunities in all areas and does not admit any type of discrimination. This can be seen in the diversity of its staff, both in terms of gender, nationality and disability. In addition, Mercadona has recently signed an agreement with the ONCE Foundation to improve the labour inclusion of people with disabilities. The company thus meets three of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): gender equality, reduction of inequalities and alliances to achieve the objectives.

About toxic relations, as mentioned above, Mercadona places great emphasis on the creation of an egalitarian and inclusive working environment. To achieve this, awareness raising is very important, not only among workers themselves, but also among leaders and workers. As the company itself states in its 2019 Annual Report: "awareness is fundamental to promoting a cohesive working environment as it allows us to build healthy labour relations, prevent discrimination and generate united and competitive teams".

In short, the conditions that Mercadona establishes for its workers and for the working environment in general seem to be generally satisfactory and, consequently, generate happiness among its staff, as well as the absence of possible toxic relationships.

Key words: Happiness, toxic relationships, workers, staff, clients, transversal values, satisfaction, human resources, success factors, work environment, wellness, equality, total quality model, labour

BEST PRACTICE PROFILE

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In order to analyse and understand the way in which TIWA values are implemented in Mercadona, we must first look at the model of this company. Since 1993 Mercadona has based all its decisions on its Total Quality Model that seeks to satisfy equally the five components of the company: "The Boss", as the client is called internally, The Worker, The Supplier, The Society and The Capital. "The Boss" is at the top of this chain of components, as Mercadona's main objective is the continuous satisfaction of the client, so all decisions are focused on him/her. Bearing this in mind, The Worker constitutes the second most relevant component of the company since in order to satisfy the clients, Mercadona also seeks to satisfy the Worker. In fact, worker wellness is one of the factors of the great success Mercadona has experienced in recent years.

But how do TIWA's values relate to this worker satisfaction? Well, in this case, happiness and the absence of toxic relationships, indispensable values to give rise to TIWA, are implemented within Mercadona's work environment, although in a transversal way. In other words, the company ensures a series of specific values that are implemented through a set of concrete measures and tools. In turn, Mercadona seeks to create a work environment based on values that guarantee socio-cultural well-being, where understanding and empathy among workers must be a priority and this means that relations among them tend to be as healthy as possible.

Firstly, Mercadona seeks a model of Sustainable Talent within its Human Resources and to this end, the company promotes a policy based on transversal values such as: inclusion, respect, integrity, transparency, equality and trust. As Fernando J. Fuentes states in his article *Mercadona, success and bases of the strategy of the largest Spanish company*, "the commitment to its human resources, rewarded with stability and better remuneration than rival companies has been another of the bases of the business model, the workers are an integral part of the project and co-protagonists and participants in the success". In fact, as Fuentes points out, the creation of stable employment and salaries above the sector average are two of the main characteristics for which Mercadona stands out in terms of the working conditions it offers and which are of great benefit to the company.

This reflects the philosophy of "first give, then take", as the best way to achieve success for Mercadona is to generate the most ideal working environment possible. But stability and remuneration are not the only working conditions offered by the company. It is also important to highlight Mercadona's commitment to promoting the development and training of its workers, with the aim of strengthening their skills and knowledge and thus achieving a qualified, high-performance, motivated and cohesive workforce. It is also worth mentioning the facilities offered by the company to promote work-life balance, since it develops a labour policy which respects working hours and time management, and also promotes measures aimed at facilitating work-life balance for those workers who decide to have children.

Other great values on which Mercadona's business ethics are based are Equality and Diversity. As the company itself states in the aforementioned report, "Mercadona defends the principle of equal treatment and opportunities in all areas of its organisation, not admitting discrimination for reasons of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, race, political and religious convictions, trade union membership or any other kind". Women, for example, have a relevant role in the company since "they represent 62% of the staff, 849 of them have been promoted in 2019 and there are a total of 1,877 women in management positions". There is also great diversity in terms of nationalities and people with disabilities, as there are 57 different nationalities and 635 workers with disabilities on Mercadona's staff. Also, Mercadona has signed a collaboration agreement with the ONCE Foundation to work jointly with respect to the labour inclusion of people with disabilities. In this way, Mercadona fulfils three of the Sustainable Development Goals: Gender Equality (5), Restriction of Inequalities (10) and Alliances to achieve the Objectives (17).

All of Mercadona's commitment to improving the company's working environment is reflected in and is the result of a Collective Bargaining Agreement and Mercadona's Equality Plan 2019-2023, an

agreement that seeks to create an effective working environment based on the values mentioned above.

On the other hand, returning to the other issue that concerns us: toxic relations, and taking into account the working conditions that Mercadona implements and that have been exposed throughout this analysis, it could be said that the working environment that is generated is not very likely to give rise to toxic relations. Firstly, because the company considers it essential to use continuous training for its staff to promote a cohesive, productive and motivated atmosphere. Secondly, the company itself ensures that for the values of equality and diversity to be implemented, an awareness process is needed "for a cohesive working environment, as it allows healthy labour relations to be built" and for all workers to be united by working with passion, which translates into a direct increase in efficiency and productivity.

In short, Mercadona is a company that stands out for having an exemplary working environment, thanks to its commitment to Human Resources and generous working conditions. The company has tools and resources at its disposal, such as its Equality Plan or a wide range of training courses.

RATIONALE

The reasons behind the working conditions and the measures Mercadona takes to improve the working environment in the company are related to its objectives. Since 1993 Mercadona has had its own business model, the Total Quality Model, which contains the company's principles and values. This model places the client at the highest point of the company's component chain and, therefore, client satisfaction is Mercadona's main objective and all decisions are taken together in that direction. The next link in this chain are the workers and therefore Mercadona has an important focus on them. As the company itself states, "whoever satisfies the client must be 100% satisfied".

GOALS

- Mercadona aims to create a productive, effective and cohesive working atmosphere to achieve what is the main objective of the company: customer satisfaction.
- For Mercadona, the satisfaction of all its staff is directly linked to the satisfaction of the clients, who are the centre of all the company's decision making.
- Therefore, investing in the improvement of working conditions and a productive working environment is equivalent to investing in the improvement and future of the company.

IMPACT

In the short term, the staff will be in the process of training, adaptation and awareness of Mercadona's values. To this end, the training given by the company is totally relevant, as it will determine the motivation and the willingness with which its components work. However, there is a possibility that some of the employees will not adapt to the conditions that, although beneficial to improve the working environment and the future of the company, do not fit in. For example, one of the applicants for a job at Mercadona said: "we were told that we would have to do everything: a cashier could support a stock boy; bakers could help maintenance workers". Although Mercadona has continuous training for the different work areas, there are many employees who do not feel comfortable performing all these different tasks. However, they are only a minority and, as mentioned above, the training is aimed precisely at that, to prepare them to face the different requirements of the company and to make them aware of the value of what they do.

In the long term, the working environment will be much more productive and cohesive, since through the training courses everyone has acquired the same vision of the company's values and of the important role that each of them has when it comes to achieving Mercadona's objectives. The satisfaction that the different training and working conditions have generated in the employees will determine the good working atmosphere and, as a consequence, the satisfaction of the customers that in turn will lead to the success of the company.

LESSONS LEARNED

Firstly, all Mercadona's staff acquire specific skills thanks to the continuous training provided by the company with the aim of generating talent among its workers and encouraging a passion for their work. This generates an increase in the motivation of the employees, as they need to continuously demonstrate their acquired knowledge when carrying out their tasks.

Secondly, both leaders and employees acquire skills linked to the company's values and ethics. Mercadona considers it essential to make all its staff aware of the values that make the working environment of this company a factor in its success. In this way, Mercadona's leaders and employees acquire skills to work on the basis of respect, trust, transparency, equality and non-discrimination. In short, values that generate a positive, satisfactory and productive work environment.

MATERIAL

Modelo de Calidad Total



TOTAL QUALITY MODEL

- “El Jefe”: “The Boss” (clients)
- El trabajador: The Worker
- El proveedor: The Provider
- La sociedad: The Society
- El Capital: The capital

Source:

[Mercadona — Modelo de Calidad Total - Mercadona](#)

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