

## High tech behind the scenes.



THE exciting new-look business conference took four months to prepare and involved hiring nearly £500,000 worth of equipment when it was staged at The Brewery, London, last month.

The conference was organised and co-ordinated by publicity group's presentation department and store operations in conjunction with the buying group's sales management teams.

### Presentations

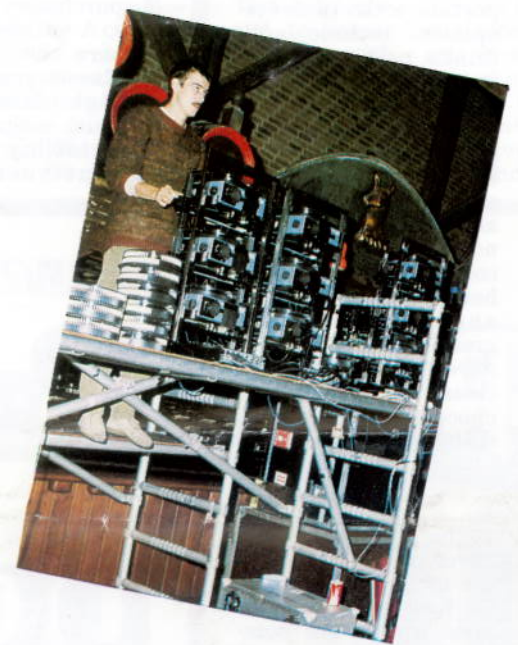
The presentations were made by members of the board who used videos and multi-slide projections to illustrate the changes taking place in the company.

In fact, during each conference, eight videos were shown and over 6,000 slides used.

"It was a mammoth task" said senior publicity manager Barry Hyman. "But it was very worthwhile as I'm confident that it was the best medium to get an exciting message across."

### Backstage

St Michael News went backstage to see some of the modern technology involved. From banks of monitors, TV screens and tapes (top) which controlled the screening of the videos to the computer (middle) which was programmed to control the 18 projectors (middle) used to fill the 21 foot screen during the presentations and the sound console (bottom) which moni-



tored the conference. "This example of cooperation between many different aspects of the business augers well for the future" said presentations manager Mike Levett. "Now, among other things, we're preparing for the end-of-year presentation to the media and drawing up plans for the next business conference which will be in spring 1987".

Chairman's rousing message to managers:

# 'This is our way ahead...'

**MARKS and Spencer must move with the times to ensure the company continues to prosper and grow, said Lord Rayner.**

This means change — and, the chairman believes, managing this change successfully provides M&S with one of its greatest challenges in today's dynamic and highly-competitive commercial world.

### Future needs

However, Lord Rayner said that change is not always popular, some prefer a continuation of the past. "Such preferences are highly desirable" he said "when they ensure that we adhere to the principles of the business." These principles, however, had to be translated into policies which reflected our future needs. He added that others would welcome change and indeed were impatient for it. However, he said that "we must take into account that Marks & Spencer is a large and successful business and in facing up to the challenges of the future, we must ensure that we bring with us our staff, suppliers and customers."

## Management of change — the greatest challenge

Marks and Spencer has the resources, the talent and the will to withstand all challenges and to stay ahead of the opposition. In its 'armoury' the company possesses:

- immense buying power;
- best suppliers in the world;
- first-class merchandise;
- excellent stores; and a
- fund of customer loyalty.

A formidable list. However, said Lord Rayner, Marks and Spencer's greatest asset remains its staff.

### Progress

Prospects for the company appear bright, the chairman continued, encouraging M&S to spend more than £500 million on modernisation over the next two years.

More immediately, sales are ahead in all groups, including ladieswear and childrenswear which had both been causing some concern.

In administration, progress has been made in giving managers more responsibility, together with the information they need to operate more effectively.



Lord Rayner

Investigations into ways of improving efficiency within the company are continuing, said Lord Rayner, while on the selling front the board's opposition to Sunday trading remains.

He also pledged that the proposed development of large out-of-town stores will not be at the expense of investment in the high street.

The introduction of Chargecard, Lord Rayner conceded, had given rise to some handling problems — with card holders now numbering nearly one million. Nevertheless, he added, Chargecard would make a significant contribution to the business.

A further major development for the company is likely in mod-

ern multi-user warehousing facilities to improve the flow of goods from manufacturers to stores.

### Development

The business is also becoming more computerised, providing swifter and more accurate information both to M&S and to its suppliers, many of whom are developing compatible systems.

Overseas, Canada is now moving into profit and stores in Europe also continue to forge ahead.

### New-style

The chairman's rousing keynote address set the tone for the company's new-style Business Conference, held at Whitbread's historic Brewery in the City.

Aim of the one-day event was to give managers latest news of plans for future investment, together with an outline of new opportunities and challenges ahead.

A total of 900 store and head office management attended. They heard presentations from directors of all the company's main business areas.

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