

“...without the **are you connected?**<sup>®</sup> survey, we would have lost key new leaders.”

– VP Executive Development, TJX Companies

## Connect the Dots Case Study



**TJX**<sup>®</sup>  
THE TJX COMPANIES, INC.

## The TJX Companies are you connected?<sup>®</sup>

### Quick Shot

#### Company Name

The TJX Companies  
<http://www.tjx.com>

#### Industry

Retail: American  
Apparel & Home Goods

#### Key Challenges

- ▶ Onboarding senior leaders from the outside, particularly for merchandising roles, was very challenging
- ▶ There was not a consistent methodology to gather and deliver the feedback to those leaders

#### Solution and Services

- ▶ Developed and customized an early feedback survey tool which effectively helped analyze and deliver the survey report's results

#### Solution Highlights

- ▶ Customized an early feedback survey while maintaining the integrity of the survey
- ▶ Customized TJX's certification process to meet the HR needs
- ▶ Measured 24 leader onboarding behaviors by using 5 point scale

#### Key Benefits

- ▶ A unique and proven tool that surfaces early feedback and allows HR Partners and hiring managers provide new leaders with specific and actionable early feedback
- ▶ New and promoted leaders understand how well-aligned their stakeholders believe they are with TJX's culture factors

### Leadership Transition: Early Feedback For Leadership Contributes to Massive Growth

The TJX Companies, Inc. is an American apparel and home goods company based in Framingham, Massachusetts. It is one of the largest international apparel and home fashions off-price department store chain in the United States. The company started as the Zayre discount department store chain, founded in 1956, and opened its first branch of T.J.Maxx in 1976. They opened their first BJ's Wholesale Club in 1984. In 1988, Zayre sold its name to rival Ames, and T.J.Maxx was renamed "The TJX Companies, Inc."

The Framingham-based TJX Companies Inc. has been astoundingly successful, growing its store base by 198 to 3,800 total stores in 2016. It is celebrating four decades in business, and the parent company of T.J. Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods and Sierra Trading Post.

connect  
the dots

The TJX Companies Inc. is pursuing aggressive growth and as a result, needs leadership that can move fast and accomplish ambitious goals with minimal obstacles.

To succeed in the retail industry, companies must anticipate trends, identify driving forces and assess the impact they will have on the industry. Having the right leadership to flow the right merchandise at the right time is crucial to strong merchandise margins.

## The Challenge: The Need for Consistent Leadership

TJX has a unique and purposeful culture. Its leaders are expected to exhibit leadership behaviors that are consistent with the culture. Newly hired and promoted leaders need to understand how to successfully navigate that leadership culture.

TJX has a strong track-record of internally promoting their leaders. Human Resources partners support the new leaders through their transition and onboarding process.

However, the Human Resources partners need to have the skills to effectively deliver early feedback. Early feedback is crucial for assessing the strengths and gaps of a new leader so they can continue to receive the guidance they need.

The Global Talent Management leadership team (GTM) needed a tool to provide its new and transitioning leaders with early feedback (within the

first 4 months in role) regarding how well they understand their role and the organization and are managing their transition. Connect the Dots (CTD) was contacted to help with the *are you connected?*® tool, a 360° survey that met TJX's need.

As the company continues to grow, mature and acquire new retail brands, the type of leader needed for competitive advantage has evolved. TJX's succession plan clearly spoke to the need to develop and recruit and develop this new type of leader.

TJX found that bringing senior leaders in from the outside, particularly for merchandising roles, was very challenging for both the new leaders and the organization, often taking up to two years to complete the transitioning process. To meet the demands of their changing business, it was critical to create a consistent process that surfaced the culture quickly and engaged the HR Partner and Hiring Manager in supporting the new leaders' success.

TJX also had another challenge. To collect and deliver feedback to transitioning leaders in a culture that is agreeable and additionally, those unfamiliar with receiving such direct assessment were uncomfortable. The HR leaders knew that transitioning leaders needed this feedback to be successful in the complex culture. However, there was not a consistent methodology to gather and deliver the feedback. In addition, the HR team did not have the expertise to determine the appropriate behaviors to measure.

## The Solution: Onboarding and Transition Support Produces Stronger Leadership

CTD has a long-term relationship with the TJX Global Talent Management (GTM) team who is responsible for providing leaders with onboarding and transition support.

Based on its research and expertise in supporting transitioning leaders, CTD developed an early feedback survey tool that met TJX's need. In addition, CTD designed a certification process that builds internal capacity and provides HR Partners with the skills and tools required to effectively analyze and deliver the early feedback survey report.

CTD customized their early feedback survey while maintaining the integrity and validity of the survey. In addition, CTD customized their certification process to meet the unique needs of the TJX human resources partners.

The early feedback tool was a natural extension of TJX's leadership onboarding process. *are you connected?*® is a web-based, multi-rater survey that collects both quantitative and qualitative feedback. *are you connected?*® captures data as to how stakeholders experience and observe the new leader during his/her first 60 days.

It also measures 24 leader onboarding behaviors by using a 5 point scale and giving the stakeholders the opportunity to provide comments to support their ratings. CTD and the TJX GTM customized the survey process to meet the organization's needs.

<http://www.connectthedotsconsulting.com/contact.htm>

*Our coaching and feedback processes give your leaders and teams "real-life" situations to work through. We apply your organization's needs to our approach which takes the guess-work out of the how to translate new ideas and behavior changes in a real world setting. Contact us to get started.*

## Early Feedback on Leadership Training Provides Clarity and Direction

Today's successful organization doesn't have time to waste. This is especially true of an industry leader like The TJX Companies Inc. They needed a reliable system for leadership transition that would allow them to quickly reach benchmarks and achieve their goals.

The TJX GTM leaders provided the HR Partners and new leaders with a unique and proven tool that surfaces early feedback and allow HR Partners and hiring managers to provide new leaders with specific and actionable early feedback.

TJX has an HR community who is skilled at interpreting early feedback survey reports as well as effectively facilitating the feedback discussion with the new leader and his or her manager.

New and promoted leaders understand how well-aligned their stakeholders believe they are with TJX's culture factors—a critical component of the new leader's ability to be successful.

The TJX Companies Inc. now has leaders who are equipped to advance the organization's goals, confident they understand the parameters of their key performance indicators. And the GTM team has robust data that provides insight into the organization's leadership onboarding practices, as well as how leaders in each division, and at multiple levels, are transitioning into their new role.