

Case Study 4.2

The Co-operative Group

The Co-operative Group, headquartered in Manchester, England, is the UK's largest consumer co-operative.¹ Operating across multiple industries and with revenues of £13.7bn in 2010, the group is one of the most successful retail co-operatives in the world. The group has operations in the food, financial services, travel, pharmacy, funeral care, legal services, electrical goods, and motor vehicles industries. Outlined below are some of the business' key statistics:

Group revenue	£13.7bn
Pre-tax profit	£545.7m
Member dividends	£150.2m
No. of members	5.8m ²
No. of outlets	> 5,000
No. of employees	110,000

Central to the success of the Co-operative Group is the collective ownership structure of the business, whereby only those who trade with the co-operative can be owners. And as owners, members are entitled to a share of the profits generated by the business based on their patronage.

¹ Co-operatives UK. *The UK Co-operative Economy 2011: Britain's Return to Co-operation* (Manchester: Co-operatives UK, 2011), p. 24.

² Reports from 2011 place this figure closer to 6.5million.

