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**Greggs Strategic Marketing Environment Analysis**

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# Executive Summary

In the complex global economic situation, Greggs is facing numerous opportunities and challenges. This report uses the PESTEL analysis, SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces model and the VRIO framework to conduct an in-depth and critical evaluation of Greggs' external environment and internal environment.

Through analysis, it has been discovered that Greggs' advantages in brand recognition and the number of stores, it also faces challenges. For instance, numerous competitors and insufficient supply chain stability. In terms of the external environment, economic fluctuations, the increasing awareness of consumer health and the intensity of market competition pose challenges to Greggs. At the same time, the rise of the takeaway business and the development of new technologies present new opportunities for growth. This report proposes suggestions for optimizing supply chain management, promoting product innovation and implementing other related strategies, aiming to help Greggs achieve sustainable development in global economic challenges.

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# 1.0 Introduction

As a renowned fast-food chain enterprise in the UK, Greggs operates over 2,000 stores in the UK. The brand is popular in the market for its affordable prices and a wide range of products. In recent years, Greggs has also introduced more healthy food options to align with the trend of healthy eating among modern consumers. Moreover, the brand actively participates in social welfare activities, such as establishing a special fund to support cancer patient groups and providing free breakfasts for primary school students (Greggs, 2025a), which enhanced Greggs' market competitiveness. Greggs's core competitive advantages are reflected in its outstanding brand power, social influence and product innovation capabilities.

Currently, the fast-food chain industry has encountered numerous opportunities and challenges in its development. This report aims to conduct an in-depth critical analysis of Greggs' external and internal environments and to provide solid theoretical support for its strategic decision-making. This report uses PESTEL analysis, SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces model and the VRIO framework to comprehensively analyze Greggs. The findings aim to provide

strategic recommendations for Greggs to address global challenges, thereby promoting its sustained development.

## **2.0 External Analysis**

### **2.1 PESTEL Analysis**

Rahman and Mishra (2023) found that the PESTEL analysis is a strategic instrument used to evaluate the impact of the macro-environment on enterprises or organizations. It analyzes enterprises by examining political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors (Zaurez Afshar & Hussain Shah, 2025) . The objective is to help companies gain a comprehensive understanding of their external surroundings.

#### **2.1.1 Political**

Reported by Pestel (2024) , political including government policies, taxation and political stability, which has a decisive impact on Greggs' sustainable development. The British political environment is covered with uncertainty due

to Brexit. Shepotylo, Du and Yuan (2025) found that Brexit has increased the uncertainty of trade policies, affecting Greggs' supply chain and production costs, such as changes in import tariffs for raw materials and flour.

Furthermore, the UK government's strict regulation of the food industry has promoted the improvement of Greggs' product quality and brand image. And due to the implementation of the sugar tax policy (GOV.UK, 2023), Greggs has had to adjust the recipes of traditional British baked goods to reduce sugar content, offering consumers more healthy options. Meanwhile, it is also important to note the potential risks that political instability poses to long-term operations.

### **2.1.2 Economic**

Economic factors have inflation rate, exchange rate and interest rate, which directly influence an enterprise's cost structure and revenue level (Dalirazar&Sabzi, 2023).Yusop (2018) pointed that due to economic uncertainty, consumer spending patterns may change.Especially for

non-essential items such as bakery products, which directly affects Greggs' revenue (Liu, 2024). Additionally, inflation may give Greggs the opportunity to raise product prices and increase profits (Office for National Statistics, 2024). As long as price adjustments are acceptable to consumers, the impact on sales may be limited.

### **2.1.3 Social**

Buye (2021) states that social factors involve stakeholders' values, lifestyles and education levels that significantly influence consumer demands and behaviors.

Currently, the pursuit of healthy eating is on the rise and consumers tend to favor low-sugar and low-fat foods. Greggs' traditional British foods, its high-calorie, high-fat characteristics may become a limiting factor for sales volume (Hoenink *et al*, 2024). Although Greggs' products meet the demand for convenient ready-to-eat meals, catering to customers' fast-paced lifestyles. If they cannot adapt their product range to the trend of healthy eating, they may

end up ceding market share to healthier food brands.

#### **2.1.4 Technological**

Makvandi (2024) states that technological factors including innovation, R & D activities, automation and information technology, which impact an enterprise's production efficiency and competitiveness.

In the digital age, consumers are accustomed to shopping online. Greggs can improve customer experience by enhancing its online ordering and takeaway platform services. Additionally, Greggs can utilize automated equipment to increase production efficiency and reduce labor costs (Lukita et al, 2023).

Although it will bring operational pressure to Greggs in the short term, it can promote its long-term development and provide Greggs with a competitive advantage. Li, Ji and Huang (2022) state that technological advancements also bring threats, such as customer information leaks due to various factors at Greggs, which may affect brand image and consumer trust. It is necessary that should improve its consumer information protection system.

### **2.1.5 Environmental**

Leach, Mearns and Scoones (2025) found that environmental protection and sustainable development have become a global consensus. This has prompted Greggs to adopt more environmental protection measures. For instances, using sustainable packaging materials and reducing carbon emissions. The company can also optimize its energy use strategy to lower the carbon footprint of its stores and strive to achieve net - zero carbon emissions ahead of schedule (Greegs, 2024; Greegs, 2025b). Although these actions may increase operating costs, they contribute to enhancing the brand image (Kumar *et al*, 2021).

### **2.1.6 Legal**

Dauchy (2021) states that legal factors have labor laws, consumer protection laws and others, which affect an enterprise's compliance and risk management .

As a legally company, Greggs must strictly compliance with regulations

regarding minimum wage standards, employee rights protection and food safety quality assurance (GOV.UK, 2024). In its advertising and promotion activities, Greggs also needs to comply with advertising laws. Zawadzka (2023) states that Greggs ensure the authenticity and accuracy of publicity content, avoiding misleading consumers and maintaining a good corporate image. In conclusion, the legal environment plays a crucial role in Greggs' business strategies and legal compliance is the bedrock of its long-term and stable development.

Greggs has a strong brand advantage in the UK fast-food industry but faces significant challenges from the economic, political and other factors. It must adapt flexibly to external changes to ensure stable revenue in a highly competitive market.

## **2.2 Porter's Five Forces Analysis**

Reported by Frederick and Parappagoudar (2021), the model determines the competitive landscape and profitability of the industry and focuses on

analyzing the competitive conditions and competitive positions among companies within a specific industry.

### **2.2.1 Rivalry among Existing Competitors**

Reported by Rashid (2023), the intensity of competition among existing competitors has a substantial impact on enterprises. Greggs faces fierce competition from numerous rivals in the UK fast - food chain industry, including Subway, McDonald's and Costa Coffee. Although Greggs is known for its affordable prices and positive brand image , its competitors also possess competitive advantages in product diversity, pricing strategies and promotional activities(Lambie - Mumford & Kennedy, 2025). The high density of fast - food restaurants in the UK has further intensified industry competition. Therefore, Greggs needs to continuously innovate its product line to attract and retain a broader customer base.

### **2.2.2 Threat of New Entrants**

Greggs faces relatively low entry barriers in the fast-food chain industry.

However, it is challenging for new businesses to match Greggs' market influence in the short term. Greggs has established a mature supply chain, operational system and sales channels, making it difficult for new entrants to compete in these key areas (Collin-Lachaud et al., 2024).

Nonetheless, some new businesses might leverage social media marketing and product collaborations to quickly attract consumers, posing a threat to Greggs. Overall, while identifying its own strengths, Greggs must also recognize the threats posed by new businesses to its development, thereby addressing its weaknesses and maintaining a competitive edge.

### **2.2.3 Threat of Substitute Products or Services**

Substitute products and services pose a significant threat to Greggs. The wide variety, low price and good quality of substitutes exacerbate this threat. Greggs' products face competition from other industries. For instance, Lidl and Sainsbury's offer similar baked products at lower prices. Figure 1 and Figure 2 shows that the prices of doughnuts sold in supermarkets are generally lower

than Greggs' doughnuts. So supermarkets are more likely to be substitute providers, posing a potential threat to Greggs' sales (Wood *et al*, 2021).

Furthermore, Balasubramanian and Konar (2022) have both shown some restaurants focus on vegetarian and low-sugar diets of products, attracting a large number of health-conscious consumers. Greggs losing some of its customers. Therefore, Greggs must continuously innovate to address the competitive threat posed by these emerging dietary trends.

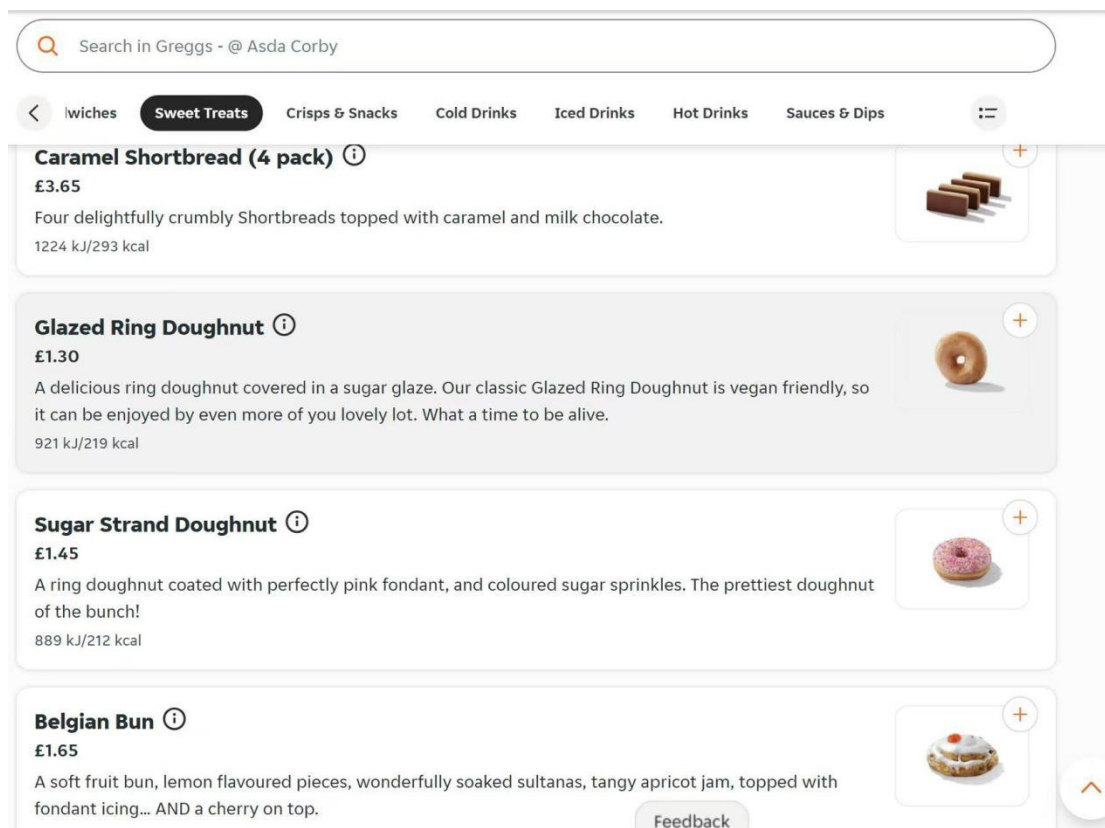


**Figure 1:** The price of Greggs'Doughnut

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[https://www.just-eat.co.uk/restaurants-gregggreggsasdacorby-gretton/menu#category\\_1bfc3beb-7e0d-4223-9e50-0100e5d8f5a5](https://www.just-eat.co.uk/restaurants-gregggreggsasdacorby-gretton/menu#category_1bfc3beb-7e0d-4223-9e50-0100e5d8f5a5)

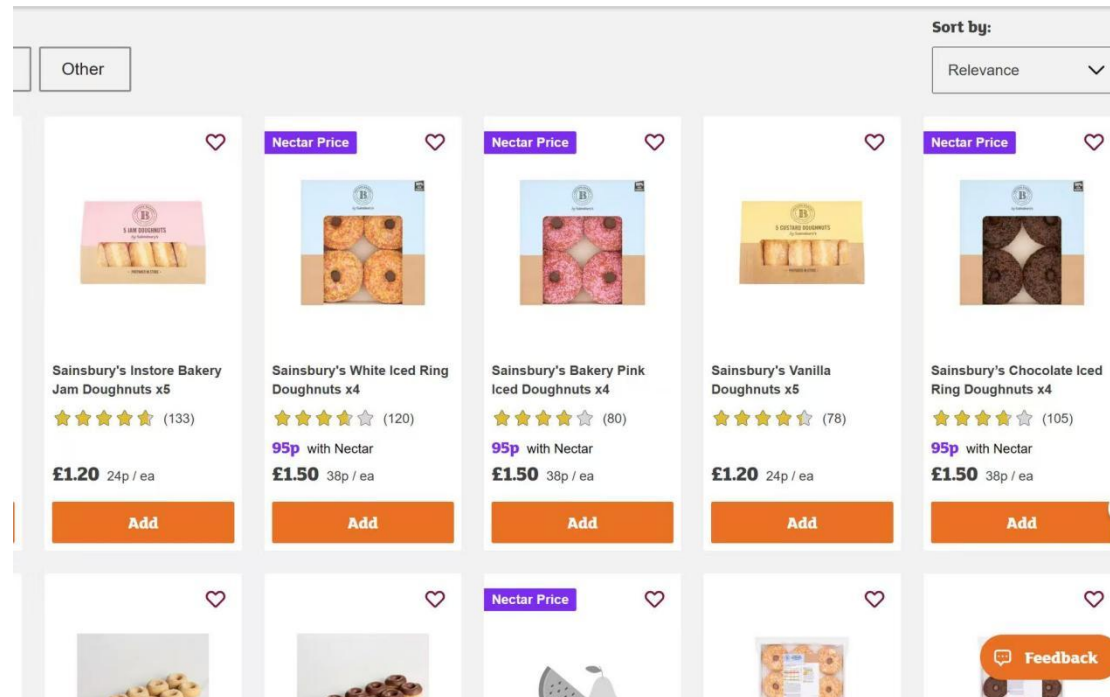


**Figure 2:** The price of Sainsbury's Doughnut

**Sources**

<https://www.sainsburys.co.uk/gol-ui/groceries/bakery/doughnuts-cookies-and-muffins/doughnuts/c:1018817>

## 2.2.4 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Suppliers have a significant influence in the fast-food industry. Especially after Brexit, Greggs faces the issue of supplier instability and the bargaining power

of suppliers has increased significantly. This has directly led to a decline in Greggs' profits. For instance, after Brexit, the import cost of flour has risen and logistics has become more delayed and unstable (BBC, 2021). Greggs has to turn to local suppliers, but they offer higher prices and their product quality is inconsistent. Evidently, the bargaining power of suppliers is relatively high, having a profound impact on Greggs' operations.

### **2.2.5 Bargaining Power of Buyers**

Buyers play a significant role in the fast-food industry. The increasing number of fast-food brands and substitutes has given consumers more choices, which strengthened their bargaining power. Greggs needs to adopt various promotional strategies to attract customers. Moreover, the growing health awareness among consumers has further enhanced their bargaining power, prompting Greggs to develop healthier fast - food options, such as low - fat and low - sugar products (United Nations, 2022). This not only increases Greggs' operating costs but also gives consumers more choices in product selection. Consequently, the bargaining power of buyers is on the rise in the fast-food

industry, influencing Greggs' marketing strategies and product lines.

In summary, Greggs faces multifaceted competitive pressures in the UK food retail and fast-food market. Despite its advantages in brand and scale, it still needs to continuously adjust its strategies and actively respond to various competitive challenges in the complex market environment to achieve sustainable development.

## **3.0 Internal Analysis**

### **3.1 VRIO Analysis**

McCall (2024) found that the VRIO framework is widely used to evaluate the value, scarcity, inimitability and organization of internal resources and capabilities within Greggs. To determine whether these factors can lead to sustainable competitive advantages.

### **3.1.1 Value**

Morris (2023) found that value indicates whether a company's resources and capabilities can help it capture market opportunities or resist threats, thus appreciating corporate value. Greggs has provided consumers with a rich variety of affordable baking products, meeting the public demand and winning consumer trust, thereby enhancing its competitive advantage. (Celik, 2022). However, as consumer health awareness increases, the demand for high-calorie baked goods may decline. If Greggs does not adjust its product positioning in a timely manner, it could affect its brand value.

### **3.1.2 Rarity**

Rarity focuses on analyzing whether an enterprise's core resources are scarce (Hilmi,Nandang&Yusuf,2024).Greggs is well-known in the UK fast-food chain industry and has numerous stores.Compared to new entrants, Greggs can use its store advantage to quickly reach consumers.However, with the rapid expansion of other large chain brands in the UK, such as Subway,Starbucks and McDonald's.The advantage of Greggs stores is gradually being reduced.

### **3.1.3 Inimitability**

It refers to the difficulty of imitating an enterprise's core capabilities or resources (Kim & Park, 2024). For Greggs, its unique business model, product features and brand reputation are the result of long-term accumulation. These are difficult for new competitors to copy in the short term. Its core product, such as the well-known Sausage Roll, which have a certain degree of uniqueness. However, the uniqueness is insufficient in some innovative products, making it easy for other competitors to imitate. It is difficult to become a lasting competitive advantage.

### **3.1.4 Organization**

A recent study (Putri, Syarief & Asnawi, 2023) has shown organization refers to whether the organizational structure, processes and culture of a company can maximize the potential of its core resources. Greggs demonstrates a mature organizational structure. To provide high quality food, it is committed to building a transparent supply chain system with suppliers. Realizing information exchange and sharing by the Greggs SAP Ariba platform. Greggs also trains

employees on moral values to enhance the customer consumption experience (Greegs, 2021). This shows that Greggs has a well developed organizational structure and process system, which is conducive to effectively utilizing enterprise resources and promoting its development.

Overall, Greggs has both advantages and challenges in various aspects. Greggs needs to fully recognize its status in all dimensions of VRIO, use its strengths, make up for its shortcomings and enhance its competitiveness and sustainable development capabilities in the market (Table 1).

**Table 1 Competitive Advantage Evaluation Table of Greggs**

| <b>Resource/<br/>Capability</b> | <b>Value</b> | <b>Rarity</b> | <b>Inimitability</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Impact on<br/>sustainable<br/>competitive<br/>advantage</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 |              |               |                      |                     |                                                                |

|                                                   |     |     |     |     |                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Abundant products and attractive prices.</b>   | Yes | No  | Yes | Yes | Realized temporary competitive advantage   |
| <b>Widely distributed stores</b>                  | Yes | No  | No  | Yes | Realized competitive parity                |
| <b>Unique business model and brand reputation</b> | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Realized sustainable competitive advantage |
| <b>Core products(sausage roll)</b>                | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Realized sustainable competitive advantage |

## 3.2 SWOT Analysis

### 3.2.1 Strengths

Henry (2021) states that strengths represent the positive elements within an organization's internal environment. Greggs has a favorable brand image and a stable consumer base. Its affordable prices and high - quality products attract a large number of middle - income consumers. The product diversity of Greggs is another significant strength (Figure 3). Besides traditional sausage rolls and baked products, it also offers sandwiches, desserts and salads, satisfying a broader range of consumer demands.

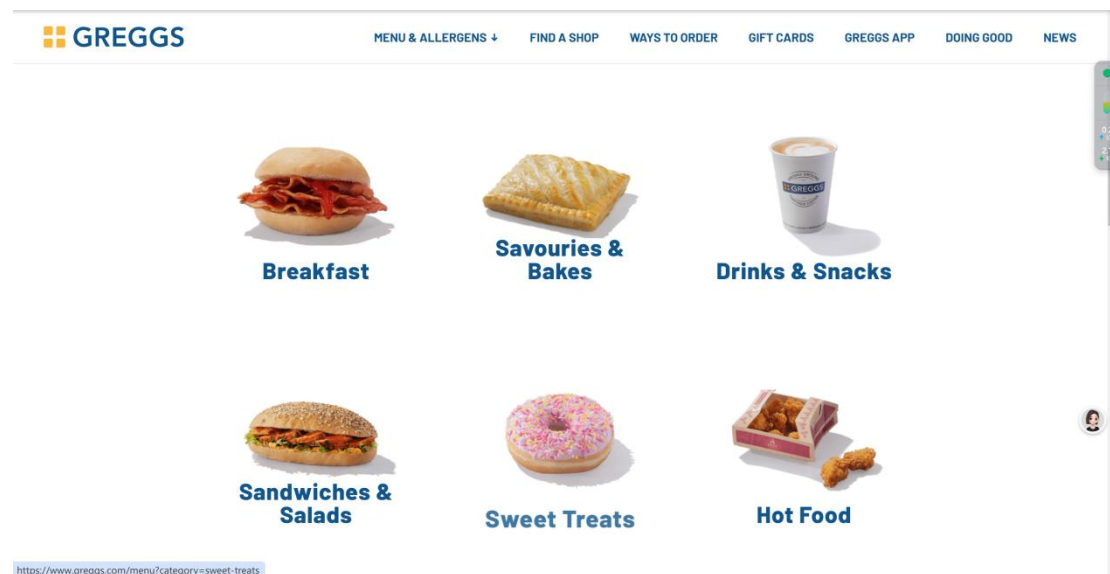


**Figure 3:** Greggs's products

**Sources:** <https://www.greggs.com/>.

### **3.2.2 Weakness**

As can be seen from report (Yusuf, Saiyed & Sahala, 2022), weaknesses refer to the negative factors that an organization or individual encounters in the internal environment, which may impede the organization's success. Greggs has several weaknesses. For instances, its products have faced health-related controversies. Despite launching a healthy food series, its baked products are still perceived as high-calorie and high-sugar, not in line with the trend of healthy eating (Butler, 2017).

### **3.2.3 Opportunities**

Organizations can utilize favorable external factors to achieve its objectives. Greggs' market is mainly concentrated in the UK. It can consider expanding into international markets to attract a wider customer base and reduce its dependence on the UK market. Reported by Ahuja et al (2021), Greggs can also fully leverage online sales and e-commerce platforms to attract modern

consumers, especially the younger generation who prefer online shopping and ordering.

### **3.2.4 Threats**

Threats denote the external factors that may affect an organization's development. In the UK , fierce fast-food market competition is a significant threat. Greggs must contend with competition from McDonald's, KFC and Costa. Moreover, the UK government's regulatory policies on high-sugar and high-fat foods impact the sales of Greggs' traditional products (Soegoto, 2021).

Overall, Greggs has advantages in brand and store, but also has the disadvantage of a product health image. Facing market expansion and digital opportunities, it also needs to deal with the threat of fierce competition. Greggs should fully use its strengths, improve its weaknesses, seize opportunities, respond to threats and formulate a reasonable development strategy.

## 4.0 Conclusion

This report conducts a strategic marketing environment analysis of the UK fast-food chain brand Greggs using PESTEL Analysis, Porter's Five Force Model, SWOT Analysis and VRIO framework.

Through PESTEL analysis, it is evident that Greggs is under pressure from Brexit, government regulation, inflation and the trend towards healthy eating. However, technological advancements, the legal and environmental awareness have also brought business opportunities to the Greggs. Furthermore, Porter's Five Forces model indicates that Greggs faces competitive pressures from existing competitors, new entrants, substitutes, suppliers and consumers in the market.

In terms of the internal environment, Greggs' competitive advantages are affected by the number of stores, the lack of uniqueness in some products and the presence of numerous market competitors. However, mature organizational structure, strong brand image and the development of digital platforms provide Greggs with competitive advantages.

In summary, while Greggs possesses certain brand and advantages within the UK fast-food industry, it also faces complex internal and external challenges.

## **5.0 Recommendation**

Firstly, Greggs should strengthen supplier management. It can diversify its suppliers and sign long-term cooperation framework agreements with suppliers to avoid supply risks from a single region and keep the risk of supply disruption to a minimum, ensuring the stability and reliability of the supply chain.

Secondly, Greggs can attract more innovative talents by cooperating with universities or research institutes, which innovate products by analyzing the needs of health-conscious consumer groups. Thereby, attracting more consumers.

Thirdly, Greggs should carry out diversified marketing activities to enhance brand awareness and reputation. Greggs could also delve into the brand story

to create a distinctive brand image, driving Greggs' global development.

Fourthly, Greggs should increase investment in food delivery platforms, digital technology and automation machinery, utilize e-commerce platforms to improve brand visibility. It also strengthen cooperation with logistics to increase delivery speed and customer satisfaction.

Finally, Greggs can adopt environmentally friendly packaging, develop a sustainable development strategy and increase investment in charity projects such as helping children with cancer, which help Greggs achieve long-term sustainable development in the global market.

(2704 words)

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