

Strategic Management for Business

Individual Report

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Executive Summary

Sassy Scents is a fast-growing UK brand based in Bristol that makes home and personal fragrances. Starting with wax melts, it now offers a wider range of affordable luxury scent products, sold online to a loyal and engaged customer base.

The business stands out for its authentic brand, strong community, and distinctive, long-lasting scents, but faces challenges like limited resources, a narrow product range, and intense competition in a market that is easy to enter.

To stay competitive, Sassy Scents should focus on expanding its scent range into new product formats and carefully entering new markets. A medium-term plan with clear goals, better digital tools, and data use will help increase customer loyalty. Growth should be managed gradually to protect brand quality and ensure sustainable success.

Introduction of Sassy Scents

Sassy Scents is a UK-based small and medium enterprise specializing in handcrafted home fragrance products. Founded in Bristol in 2017 by Keely Parsons, the company quickly grew from a kitchen start-up into a reputable brand known for combining luxury, creativity, and affordability in home scents. Sassy Scents serves a large and loyal customer base largely built through digital engagement and social media outreach. (Sassy Scents, 2025) The products of Sassy Scents include room sprays, wax melts, whipped soaps and sugar body scrubs. (Sassy Scents, 2025)

All products are handmade or hand-finished in the UK using a unique wax blend and strong, long-lasting fragrances, with many scents created exclusively for the brand. The company emphasizes eco-friendly soy-based waxes, vibrant colors, and unique scents that aim to shift mood and reset the day.

Sassy Scents runs as a direct-to-consumer e-commerce business, selling through its own website and leveraging social media communities to drive demand. The brand has scaled from kitchen production to a 5,000 sq ft facility, employing a small in-house team that designs, makes, packs and ships products directly to customers. (Scramble, 2021)

Its model centers on:

Online sales, subscriptions, and repeat purchases for home fragrance “top-ups”.

Community-driven marketing via Facebook groups, Instagram, and word of mouth, with tens of thousands of followers and highly engaged fans.

A broad scent library and frequent new launches to keep customers returning and trying new fragrances. (Sassy Scents, 2025)

Sassy Scents differentiates itself by combining strong, long-lasting premium fragrances with playful branding and an emphasis on mood and self-care. Its products are positioned as affordable luxury, with exclusive scent formulations, bold names, and visually distinctive designs that stand out from traditional wax melt and candle brands. (Scramble, 2021)

Appraisal of the current strategic direction and goals including Vision, Mission and Objectives

Sassy Scents' current strategic direction is to grow from a niche wax-melt brand into a broader, community-led home and personal fragrance company that "connects people and memories through the love of fragrance", using strong online channels, subscription models and product innovation to scale primarily in the UK and then beyond.

Vision

The Vision of Sassy Scents is to fill homes nationwide with mood-enhancing, memorable fragrances, ensuring customers associate it with sensory comfort and identity. Sassy Scents wants to be recognized for innovating home fragrance and creating a lasting emotional bond with its customers.

Mission

Across its website, LinkedIn and subscription box materials, Sassy Scents defines its mission around making life "smell incredible" while creating memorable, mood-lifting moments through bold, addictive scents. More specifically, it aims to infuse customers' lives with favorite scents in unexpected ways, blending beauty and science in vegan, cruelty-free products that feel like affordable luxury for everyday routines.

Strategic objectives

The current objectives include:

- To broaden Sassy Scents' portfolio, capture new customers needs, and unlock incremental revenue opportunities.

- To expand Sassy Scents' online store, subscription model, and social community to deepen loyalty and boost profitable scale.

- To strengthen its position as a leading UK wax and fragrance brand by nurturing large, engaged online groups and using customer feedback to guide new product development and service improvements.

The focus on category and product expansion is strategically sound because it leverages existing brand equity, manufacturing capabilities and a loyal community to cross-sell into adjacent categories, although it risks diluting the original wax-melt niche if not clearly managed. A digital-first, subscription-heavy approach aligns well with its mostly online origins and high-engagement audience, supporting predictable revenue and data-driven personalization, but it also creates dependence on platform algorithms and the need to carefully manage shifts such as exiting TikTok Shop. (Bartucz, 2024)

Environmental scan and Analysis of Sassy Scents competitive positioning(Internal/External Environment)

Sassy Scents runs in a growing but highly competitive UK home-fragrance and wax-melts market, competing on strong scent performance, playful branding, and direct-to-consumer relationships in an industry with low entry barriers and many niche rivals. The brand's internal strengths in product quality, community and e-commerce are offset by high competitive rivalry, imitation risk (dupe scents) and increasing expectations for sustainability and innovation.

Analysis of Sassy Scents competitive positioning

Internal environment – SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

Strong, long-lasting, handmade soy-blend products with wide scent variety, including on-trend “dupe” fragrances that mirror popular perfumes and fabric softeners. (Sassy Scents, 2025)

Loyal online community and thousands of positive customer reviews.

Weaknesses:

Product range is concentrated in wax melts and closely related formats, limiting diversification versus larger home-fragrance players with candles, diffusers, and gift channels.

Low switching costs in the category mean customers can easily trial rival brands or supermarket alternatives, making Sassy Scents vulnerable to price promotions and novelty from competitors.

Opportunities:

Fast-growing global and UK market, driven by home-comfort, self-care, and décor trends.

Rising use of home fragrance across UK households and demand for sustainable, eco-friendly, vegan products, which fits Sassy Scents’ soy-based, handmade positioning.

Threats: Intense competition from indie wax-melt brands, proved candle and diffuser companies and low-cost imports, all innovating on scent variety and packaging. Technological shifts such as smart diffusers and IoT-enabled scent systems that could reduce demand for traditional melts if Sassy Scents does not invest in new formats. (Prime Consulting, 2025)

External environment – PESTEL Analysis

Political: UK product-safety, CLP labelling, and chemicals regulations apply to fragranced wax products, requiring ongoing compliance and testing that can be more onerous for small brands.

Economic: Cost-of-living pressures can push consumers towards cheaper supermarket or discount-store melts.

Social: Rapid growth in home-fragrance use, with a large share of UK adults using candles, diffusers or wax melts, and a lifestyle focus on cosy, mood-enhancing homes and self-care routines that directly supports Sassy Scents’ value proposition.

Technological: Growth of smart home scenting (app-controlled diffusers, IoT devices) and data-driven marketing offers both partnership and innovation opportunities but raises the bar for digital experiences.

Environmental: Consumer scrutiny of wax sources, packaging waste and carbon footprint is increasing, favoring soy-based and eco-messaging but exposing any gaps in sourcing transparency or recyclability.

Available Strategic growth choices for SMEs in markets and Proposal of a new strategy

SMEs like Sassy Scents can grow by deepening share in existing markets, developing new products, entering new geographic or segment markets, or diversifying into new product–market spaces, usually guided by tools such as the Ansoff Matrix, Porter’s Generic Strategies and Bowman’s Strategic Clock. For Sassy Scents, a focused differentiation strategy built around product development and selective market development is the most sustainable option because it reinforces its brand strengths, avoids a damaging price war, and fits its resource constraints as an SME.

Strategic growth choices for SMEs

Using the Ansoff Matrix, SMEs have four main options: market penetration (sell more of current products to current markets), product development (new products to current markets), market development (current products in new markets) and diversification (new products in new markets). These moves can be combined with Porter’s generic strategies- cost leadership, differentiation and focused differentiation- to decide whether to compete mainly on price or uniqueness, and whether to target broad or niche segments.

Bowman’s Strategic Clock refines this by mapping positions around price and perceived value, highlighting that long-term advantage usually comes from strong differentiation or focused differentiation, not from low-price, low-value strategies that are easily copied. SME guidance stresses that, given limited resources, smaller firms should align growth paths with their distinctive capabilities and avoid over-stretching into high-risk diversification too early.

Recommended strategy for Sassy Scents

For Sassy Scents, the most sustainable route is a focused differentiation strategy (Porter/Bowman) combined with product development and selective market development (Ansoff). This means continuing to target a defined segment of “scent-obsessed” consumers who value strong, playful, mood-boosting fragrances, while expanding the range of products (for example more personal-care products, diffusers, candles) and gradually entering new but related markets such as selected EU countries or new online marketplaces.

Concretely, this could involve:

- Deepening product lines that use existing fragrances (matching sets across melts, soaps, sprays, diffusers) to raise spend per loyal customer.

- Carefully testing new channels/regions where UK-style home fragrance is growing, using digital-first market development rather than heavy physical retail investment.

A focused differentiation/product-development strategy is sustainable because it builds on Sassy Scents’ distinctive capabilities (scent creation, branding, online community) rather than competing on cost in a market with many low-price rivals. Theory and evidence on Porter’s and Bowman’s frameworks show that firms which sustain clear differentiation for a defined segment tend to enjoy stronger brand loyalty, higher margins and less price sensitivity, all critical for SME resilience.

Combining this with disciplined Ansoff-style product and market development allows incremental growth- reusing fragrances, brand equity and digital infrastructure across more formats and territories- spreading risk without the leap in uncertainty associated with full diversification. This approach fits SME advice that long-term survival depends on focused innovation, controlled expansion, and continuous refinement of a distinctive value proposition, rather than chasing volume through discounting or unrelated diversification.

Stakeholder Analysis and Evaluation of the expectations

For Sassy Scents, the most suitable long-term strategies will be those that satisfy powerful internal owners and staff, meet customer expectations on value and experience, and remain possible within SME resource limits while complying with regulators and platform rules. Using Mendelow's Matrix and RACI helps clarify which stakeholders must be managed most closely when choosing and implementing growth options such as focused differentiation and product/market development.

Main stakeholder groups for Sassy Scents are:

Founder-owners and senior team: expect profitable, scalable growth, brand integrity, and control over strategic direction.

Employees: expect job security, fair pay, a safe workplace, and clear roles in a growing, creative SME.

Customers/community: expect strong scent performance, fair prices, consistent quality, fast delivery, and responsive support. (Bartucz, 2024; Scramble, 2021)

Suppliers and logistics partners: expect predictable orders, prompt payment, and collaborative planning.

Regulators/local authorities: expect compliance with product-safety, labelling, employment, and environmental rules.

Digital platforms/partners (email, web, social, marketplaces): expect compliant use of tools, stable volumes and good user experience.

Mendelow's Matrix – power vs interest

Using the power–interest grid for a strategy such as “focused differentiation with product and market development”:

High power / high interest (Key players – manage closely)

Founder-owners and senior management: can approve or block strategic moves, capital allocation, and risk appetite.

Core employees in production, marketing and fulfillment: while formal power is lower than owners, in a small, craft-based SME their involvement is critical to quality, innovation and execution.

Regulators on product safety and labelling: can stop sales, require recalls or impose fines if standards are not met.

High power / low interest (Keep satisfied)

Key suppliers (wax, fragrances, packaging) and logistics partners: can disrupt operations if relationships fail but are less invested in brand-level decisions.

Major digital platforms and payment providers: can change algorithms, fees or policies that affect visibility and conversion.

Low power / high interest (Keep informed)

Customers and social-media community members: individually low power, but collectively influence reputation, reviews and word-of-mouth. (Bartucz, 2024; Scramble, 2021)

Local community and small partners care about ethical conduct and mutual support.

Low power / low interest (Monitor)

Wider public and distant observers who are only occasionally aware of the brand.

This mapping suggests that any new strategy must be intensively co-designed and communicated with founder-owners, critical staff and regulators, while ensuring customers and communities understand the value created and see no erosion of quality or ethics.

Key Strategic Recommendations for Sassy Scents for future developments and implementation

RACI view – roles in strategy implementation

Sassy Scents should pursue focused, data-driven growth built on its existing digital strengths, strong brand and community, while tightening execution disciplines that many SMEs struggle with (resources, skills, and consistent implementation). The recommendations below address both future development and the practical challenges of making strategy happen in a small, fast-growing business.

Sharpen strategic focus and planning

Translate the overall “fragrance haven” ambition into a 3-year plan with a small number of measurable priorities (for example, revenue, repeat-purchase rate, subscription share, and two or three new product lines).

Create an annual strategy cycle (plan–execute–review) with brief but regular reviews so day-to-day trading does not crowd out longer-term decisions, a problem that affects many SMEs.

Deepen digital and data capabilities

Build on existing Shopify, email automation and on-site optimisation work (such as the OptiMonk popup programme that lifted conversions to about 25%) to widen testing into pricing, bundles, and customer journeys.

Invest gradually in analytics skills or tools to track customer lifetime value, cohort behaviour and product performance, which helps small firms allocate scarce marketing spend more effectively.

Product and experience innovation, not price competition

Prioritise product development that reuses existing scent IP (for example, layering the same fragrances across melts, soaps, sprays and gift sets) to raise basket size without diluting positioning.

Focus on perceived value (strength, longevity, storytelling, sustainable ingredients) rather than pushing deep discounts, which can erode margins and brand equity and are hard for SMEs to sustain.

Strengthen organizational capacity and roles

Address typical SME constraints—limited people, skills and time—by clarifying who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed (RACI) for major initiatives like new launches, tech implementations and market entries.

Selectively upskill or hire in key areas such as digital marketing, product compliance and operations management, reflecting evidence that lack of expertise and misaligned resources are major stumbling blocks in SME strategy execution.

Manage risk in scaling and diversification

Use staged experiments for new channels (for example, chosen marketplaces or international shipping zones) with clear go/no-go criteria, rather than committing large capital up front.

Formalize basic risk management around supply chain, cash flow and regulatory change, since many small firms report resource shortages and change-management difficulties when implementing new strategies.

Build resilient community and brand affinity

Continue to nurture the online community and email list as core strategic assets, using content, early access and feedback loops to co-create products and maintain loyalty amid rising competition.

Communicate clearly how the brand is addressing sustainability, ingredient choices and responsible growth, which increasingly shape consumer expectations in home fragrance and can differentiate niche brands over the long term.

Taken together, these recommendations support a sustainable path where Sassy Scents grows through focused differentiation and disciplined execution, while directly tackling SME challenges of limited resources, uneven planning capability, and the risks of scaling too fast without structure.

Conclusion

Sassy Scents is in a busy but attractive home-fragrance market, so it needs to stay focused instead of trying to do everything. Its strengths in product quality, brand personality and online community should guide its future, rather than competing on low prices.

Sassy Scents should clearly define roles, improve planning and data use, and manage risks in supply, regulations, and sales channels. With these basics in place, plus ongoing innovation and community engagement, it can grow as a strong, distinctive fragrance brand in the UK.

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