

Developing a Sustainable Business Strategy for Hastings Freight Ltd.

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Abstract

This study explores Hastings Freight Ltd.'s strategy. Company strategy, environmental and internal studies, stakeholder expectations, and growth and sustainability initiatives are examined. The suggestions must keep Hastings Freight Ltd. competitive and sustainable. The investigation begins with the SME's history and emphasises the necessity for sustainable business strategies in today's dynamic business climate. Hastings Freight Ltd.'s 1983 founding and transportation dominance are highlights. Strategic direction analysis evaluates company vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives. This assessment compares the strategy to the SME's goals and market position.

The report identifies corporate opportunities and limits using comprehensive business environmental scanning. PESTEL assesses political, economic, social, technical, environmental, and legal variables. The SWOT analysis of Hastings Freight Ltd. contains internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

VRIN studies identify the organization's rare, unique, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources and capabilities for sustainable business plan formulation. The essay suggests a new Hastings Freight Ltd. approach using Porter's Generic Strategies and Ansoff Matrix. Green logistics, worker development, supplier connections, regulatory compliance, and community engagement are emphasised.

These projects are monitored with KPIs for success. The KPIs monitor environmental impact, workforce development, supplier collaboration, regulatory compliance, and community participation. The paper suggests SMEs include sustainability in strategic planning. Today's companies need sustainable solutions to manage risks, seize opportunities, and compete. Sustainable practises can assist SMEs navigate challenging business and improve their future.

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Introduction

SMEs drive economic growth and innovation in today's dynamic commercial climate. SME success requires navigating complicated hurdles and opportunities. Developing a sustainable business strategy is crucial. This research examines how Hastings Freight Ltd., a transport and logistics SME, can create a sustainable business strategy (Muñoz Meneses et al., 2022). Alan Hastings created Hastings Freight Ltd. in 1983, and it has a lengthy history. Initially, the company was a general haulier with a small but focused workforce. Hastings Freight changed significantly over time, defining its industry position. Hastings Freight joined Palletways in 1994, a strategic decision that helped business grow. This partnership allows the company to offer South Yorkshire and Derbyshire businesses and individuals a cost-effective and efficient shipping alternative (Hradílek, 2020). The company became a specialised transportation operator by specialising in palletized delivery. Over the past 20 years, Hastings Freight has grown rapidly. Due to its growth, the company moved to a strategic location near M1 junction 30 to improve operations. Hastings Freight joined the United Pallet Network (UPN) in 2021, boosting its palletized freight services. Our brand and capacity have been shaped by these strategic agreements with Palletways and UPN. George and Claire Hewitt, a husband-wife pair, took over Hastings Freight in 2021. Their leadership gives new ideas for the company's future. Hastings Freight Ltd. is a leading transportation company that moves coal, trees and small parcels. The company specialises on palletized goods, enabling same-day collections and overnight delivery. This research will examine Hastings Freight's strategic direction, analyse its business environment, provide sustainable strategic growth options, and critically assess stakeholder expectations and impact. It will finish with critical recommendations for the company's future development, taking into account the unique challenges and opportunities SMEs like Hastings Freight have on their journey to sustainable growth and success. Sustainable business practises are no longer optional for SMEs seeking to succeed in today's complex and changing business climate.

Literature Review

Due to shifting global economic dynamics and environmental concerns, SMEs' sustainable business methods have grown in popularity. Scholars like Konstantinos Biginas and Stavros Sindakis (2022) stress the importance of innovation and adaptation for SMEs in uncertain external

situations. In their Industry 4.0 study, Barreto, Amaral, and Pereira (2017) noted the logistics industry's growing environmental awareness. Transportation SME Hastings Freight Ltd. faces a difficult and changing business environment. Aligning organisational strategy with sustainability goals is supported by research. Dekker, Bloemhof, and Mallidis (2012) advocate green logistics to reduce environmental effect. Alexandros Psychogios and Prouska (2019) found that SMEs must adapt to stay competitive in chaotic environments. Juergensen, Guimón, and Narula (2020) emphasise the necessity of impact assessment and responding measures in the COVID-19 pandemic. Kumar (2007) analyses SMEs' important success elements, which apply to Hastings Freight Ltd.'s sustainable strategy development.

Supplier collaboration and regulatory compliance are key to sustained company. Johnson (2019) on competitive advantage and Chan and Kumar (2007) on global supplier development demonstrate these. Their focus is on long-term agreements and laws. According to Sahin (2017), strategy creation requires stakeholder analysis. Strategic options must reflect stakeholder expectations and power. Hastings Freight Ltd. needs diverse perspectives to create a sustainable plan that tackles environmental issues, adapts to a changing terrain, and satisfies stakeholders while complying with regulations. Literature's diverse approach helps the SME's strategic sustainability journey.

Current Strategic Direction of Hastings Freight Ltd

Hastings Freight Ltd., a transport and logistics SME, has had a fantastic journey since 1983. Company growth and success depend on its strategic direction—vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives. This portion of the report critically evaluates Hastings Freight's strategic orientation against its goals and market position.

Vision, Mission, Values

Hastings Freight Ltd.'s strategy is based on its vision, purpose, and values. They steer company actions and choices with a defined goal (Muñoz Meneses et al., 2022). Hastings Freight wants to be a transportation and logistics leader known for reliability, efficiency, and sustainability. This vision represents the company's growth and industry leadership goals. A specialist in palletized distribution, Hastings Freight offers affordable and efficient transportation options. The company serves businesses and individuals in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire, according to its mission. Hastings Freight strives on reliability, customer-centricity, sustainability, and innovation (Mayho et al., 2023). The company's culture and business style depend on these ideals.

Goals and objectives

Hastings Freight Ltd.'s aims reveal its strategic priorities and expected outcomes. These goals help evaluate the company's performance.

1. **Operational Excellence:** Hastings Freight aims for operational excellence. This includes optimising logistics, delivering on time, and cutting expenses. To remain a trusted and affordable option for customers (Cleaver et al., 2022).
2. **Market Expansion:** Hastings Freight aims to grow outside South Yorkshire and Derbyshire. The company wants to expand into new markets while focusing on palletized distribution.
3. **Sustainability:** Hastings Freight priorities sustainability (Mellahi and Frynas, 2015). The company uses eco-friendly methods to reduce its environmental impact. Recycling and fuel-efficient transportation are examples.
4. **High client satisfaction** is crucial to Hastings Freight's strategic direction. Through effective and reliable services, the company strives to exceed consumer expectations.

5. Strategic Partnerships: Hastings Freight aims to deepen relationships with networks like Palletways and UPN (Bowman and Raspin, 2018). These collaborations expand the company's reach and services.

Current Strategy Alignment

Hastings Freight's strategy matches its goals and market position. Operational excellence supports the company's aim of cost-effective and efficient transportation. Hastings Freight strengthens its logistics reputation by optimising its operations and being reliable. The company's strategic agreements like Palletways and UPN support market expansion. These networks allow Hastings Freight to serve more customers and develop beyond its regional basis. As a strategic strength, the company's palletized distribution services meet the needs of numerous enterprises and individuals. Sustainability demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to industry and environmental responsibility (OECD, 2023). Hastings Freight's eco-friendliness can boost its brand and competitiveness as businesses and customers respect sustainability. The company's approach emphasises customer satisfaction. It reflects its client-centric ideals and keeps the organisation sensitive to changing customer needs. Strategic partnerships like Palletways and UPN boost Hastings Freight's market position. These collaborations give the organisation access to large networks, better technologies, and more services, boosting its competitiveness competitiveness (Konstantinos Biginas et al., 2022). Overall, Hastings Freight's strategic orientation is well-planned and linked with its vision, purpose, values, goals, and objectives. The transportation and logistics company's focus on operational excellence, market expansion, sustainability, customer happiness, and strategic partnerships prepares it for growth.

Business Environmental Analysis

PESTEL Analysis

Organisational strategic planning requires a thorough awareness of the business environment. The PESTEL analysis evaluates Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal issues affecting the transportation industry and Hastings Freight Ltd.

1. Political factors: Governments and political institutions affect business. In transport, various political factors matter:

- Regulations and Compliance: The transportation business is highly regulated, including vehicle emissions, safety standards, and driver certifications. Regulations can affect Hastings Freight's operations and costs (Kumar, 2007).

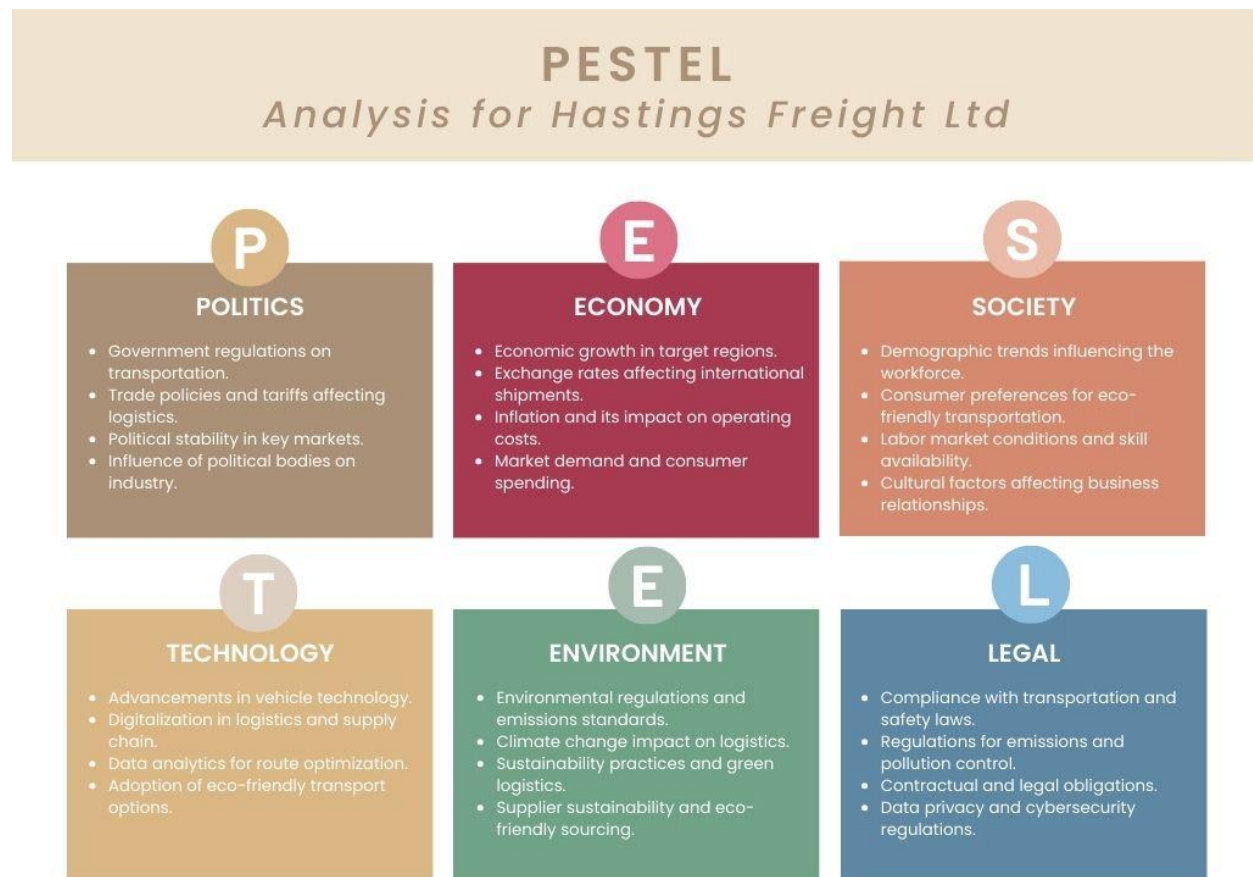


Figure 1: PESTEL Analysis (Self-made)

- Government policies: Government policies on infrastructure development, trade agreements, and taxation can considerably impact the transportation industry's growth and profitability.
2. Economic Factors: Economic conditions and trends can affect a company's operations and finances:
 - Economic Cycles: The transportation business is affected by economic cycles. Economic expansion increases transport service demand, while recessions decrease it (Latour, 2022).
 - Fuel Prices: Fuel price fluctuations affect logistics companies' operating costs. Cost variations must be managed and mitigated (Muñoz Meneses et al., 2022).
 3. Social Factors: Demographics and trends affect corporate activities:
 - Consumer Behaviour: E-commerce growth and shifts towards sustainable transportation present potential and challenges for Hastings Freight.
 - Labour Force: Demographics and skilled labour availability impact transportation sector staffing and operations.
 4. Technological Factors: Innovation and technology affect the industry:
 - The transport industry is undergoing a digital transition. For productivity and customer service, GPS tracking, route optimisation, and telematics are crucial.
 - The development of electric and autonomous vehicles has the potential to transform the transportation business. Companies must adopt new tech to compete (Muñoz Meneses et al., 2022).
 5. Environmental Factors: Ecological and sustainability issues affect environmental factors:
 - Environmental laws on emissions and sustainability are gaining importance. Green practises and carbon reduction are becoming industry standards (Wright et al., 2020).
 - Consider adopting alternative fuels like natural gas or electric vehicles to accord with environmental aims.
 6. Legal Factors: Laws and regulations affect the industry:
 - Transport laws: Adherence to safety standards, permits, and laws is crucial for legal operations and avoidance of penalties.
 - For logistics organisations involved in international shipping, trade laws and customs restrictions can affect the flow of commodities and cross-border activities.

Finally, the PESTEL study shows the transportation industry's complex business environment. Hastings Freight Ltd. must monitor political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal variables for strategic decision-making. Addressing regulatory changes, adopting new technologies, and embracing sustainability will shape the company's future. SWOT, VRIN, strategic growth choices, stakeholder analysis, and key strategic suggestions to improve the company's sustainable business plan will follow in this report.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analyses show an organization's internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Hastings Freight Ltd. can use this research to make transportation industry strategic suggestions (Konstantinos Biginas et al., 2022).



Figure 1: SWOT Analysis (Self-made)

1. Strengths:

Hastings Freight's membership in Palletways and United Pallet Network (UPN) enhances its ability to easily connect with wider markets. This expands its consumer base and service reach. The company's proximity to Junction 30 on the M1 offers convenient access to key roads and rapid delivery. Hastings Freight has decades of industry experience, boasting a history dating back to 1983. Customer trust and operational efficiency benefit from this experience (Magno Oliveira Macambira et al., 2022). The company's adaptability and flexibility in transporting various commodities, from coal to smaller shipments, are evident.

2. Weakness:

Regulatory Compliance: Hastings Freight must comply with several regulations in the transportation industry. Compliance difficulties can cause penalties, delays, and operational disruptions. To address environmental concerns, the corporation must invest in sustainable practises, which can be costly and difficult (M. Sebnem Ensari and Meltem Kiygi-Calli, 2017). Hastings Freight competes with other logistics companies in the highly competitive transportation sector. Competition can increase prices and demand for innovation.

3. Opportunities:

E-commerce growth drives demand for efficient logistics services. Hastings Freight can capitalise on this trend by tailoring services to e-commerce enterprises. The drive towards sustainability and green transport offers an opportunity to invest in eco-friendly cars and practises, appealing to environmentally sensitive clientele. The organisation may improve operational efficiency and customer service by integrating innovative logistics technologies like route optimisation and real-time tracking.

4. Threats:

In the post-pandemic recovery phase, economic uncertainty can reduce demand for transport services, thereby affecting the company's revenue. Fuel price volatility has a significant impact on logistics companies' profitability by affecting operating costs (Latour, 2022). **Regulatory Changes:** Transport and trade rules may require operational modifications and compliance costs. The

competitive transport industry requires high-quality service and ongoing pricing pressure to retain and attract clients.

Finally, Hastings Freight Ltd.'s SWOT analysis shows its position in the transportation business. The company can create a sustainable business strategy by leveraging its strengths like network memberships and strategic location, addressing weaknesses like regulatory compliance and environmental concerns, capitalising on opportunities like e-commerce growth and sustainability, and preparing for threats like economic downturns and regulatory changes. The VRIN analysis, strategic growth choices, stakeholder analysis, and key strategic recommendations to guide the organization's future development and implementation will follow in this report.

VRIN Analysis

VRIN analysis helps discover the organization's resources and competencies that can sustain a competitive edge. Let's evaluate Hastings Freight Ltd.'s VRIN resources and capabilities:

1. Valuable Resources and Capabilities:

Hastings Freight's Palletways and UPN memberships provide access to vast networks and marketplaces. This gives the company a large consumer base and an industry edge (Porter, 2019). Strategic location: The company's proximity to Junction 30 on the M1 is advantageous. The excellent access to main transportation networks makes deliveries cost-effective and timely.

2. Rare Resources and Capabilities:

Hastings Freight is unique in being a member of both Palletways and UPN, unlike other logistics companies. Due to its rarity, the company offers unique service coverage. Long-standing experience: Born in 1983, the company's expertise is unusual. This much experience is hard to mimic.

3. Inimitable Resources and Capabilities:

Operational Flexibility: Transporting varied cargo, from coal to small items, is unique. Competitors struggle to match this flexibility (Pim den Hertog, 2020). Unique knowledge and expertise gained through years of operation are hard to replicate. Understanding consumer needs and effective logistics are included.

4. Non-Substitutable Resources and Capabilities:

Strategic Location: The company's location near Junction 30 on the M1 is irreplaceable. Other logistics businesses may choose key locations, but this one is unique and can't be replicated. Dual Network Membership: Palletways and UPN is not interchangeable. Each network has unique benefits and client reach (M. Sebnem Ensari and Meltem Kiygi-Calli, 2017). Hastings Freight Ltd. has multiple VRIN traits. Network memberships and strategic location are rare assets. Inimitable elements include operational flexibility and knowledge, whereas non-substitutable resources include location and dual network participation. A sustainable business strategy that capitalises on the company's strengths and positions it for long-term transportation sector success requires identifying these VRIN qualities.

Strategic Growth Choices for Hastings Freight Ltd

Any company needs strategic expansion to succeed, and SMEs like Hastings Freight Ltd should carefully assess their choices (Juergensen, et al., 2020). Let's examine Hastings Freight's strategic growth options and offer a new one based on academic models and theories.

Market Penetration: Hastings Freight can enhance its market share in existing areas. This could involve increasing marketing, extending services, or acquiring smaller regional competitors. Due to the company's strong network memberships, this method may increase incrementally.

Market Development: Expanding to new geographies is another growth opportunity. With its wide network, Hastings Freight may enter unexplored local and international markets to attract new customers.

Product Development: Hastings Freight could expand its logistical services. To satisfy changing client needs, it may invest in enhanced tracking, warehousing, or transportation solutions (Noémie Dominguez, 2018).

Diversification: Expand into similar fields. The company might expand into logistics consulting, helping other logistics firms optimise operations equipment (Cleaver et al., 2022).

Proposed New Strategy: Differentiation through Sustainability

Hastings Freight Ltd. may differentiate via sustainability in a competitive and ecologically sensitive society. This method follows Porter's Generic Strategies' academic model, "Differentiation."

Differentiation Strategy:

Hastings Freight can stand apart by offering greener logistics. The transportation industry is under pressure to decrease its carbon impact, and customers want greener solutions. This strategy can be implemented:

- Adopt eco-friendly cars like electric or hybrid trucks for transportation. It decreases emissions and establishes the organisation as a sustainable logistics supplier.
- Provide carbon-neutral transport services. Hastings Freight might analyse its emissions and buy carbon offsets (McKee, 2022).
- Promote sustainable packaging and efficient cargo loading to reduce waste by partnering with customers.
- Utilise cutting-edge route optimisation to reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

Bowman's Strategic Clock Analysis:

Bowman's Strategic Clock classifies this strategy as "Hybrid". It incorporates "Differentiation" and "Low Price." Hastings Freight adds value to clients and may lower operational expenses by concentrating on sustainability.

Advantages of sustainability:

- Eco Friendly: Offering eco-friendly logistics services might attract environmentally concerned consumers who value sustainable supply chain management.
- Compliance and Regulation: Proactively adjusting to future environmental legislation and emissions requirements helps prevent compliance concerns for the company (Kumar, 2007).
- Cost Savings: Initial expenditures may be needed, but lower fuel usage and operational efficiencies can lead to long-term savings (Garrido, 2022).
- Reputation: Commitment to sustainability can distinguish a company from competitors and improve its brand image.

Finally, Hastings Freight Ltd. can grow sustainably by distinguishing itself via environmental responsibility. This strategy corresponds with industry trends, consumer preferences, and future

regulatory requirements, preparing the organisation for long-term profitability and a greener future.

Stakeholder Analysis for Hastings Freight Ltd

Stakeholder analysis is essential to sustainable corporate strategy. Hastings Freight Ltd. must comprehend stakeholder expectations, authority, and influence to make strategic decisions.

Customers:

- why Customers prioritise quick and cost-effective transportation services. Recently, eco-friendly and sustainable logistics solutions have become more expected.
- Customers' relative power is moderate due to their ability to choose among different logistics providers.
- Increased demand for sustainable logistics services impacts the company's differentiating strategy. Customer retention and attraction depend on meeting these expectations.

Employees:

- Employee expectations include fair compensation, a safe workplace, and career advancement possibilities. They may also appreciate the company's sustainability (Aleksy Poczowski, Pauli and Alicja Miś, 2020).
- Skilled drivers have modest power due to their expertise and labour shortages.
- Fair wages and green technology investments boost staff morale and retention.

Suppliers:

- Suppliers want prompt payments, transparent communication, and long-term collaborations. They may expect Hastings Freight to be environmentally friendly.
- Suppliers have relative power over the company by changing resource availability.
- Strong supplier connections can improve terms and provide access to sustainable resources.

Regulatory Bodies:

- Regulatory authorities expect strict adherence to transportation and environmental standards. They may promote or require sustainability.
- Regulatory authorities have significant power due to legal consequences and fines for non-compliance.
- Anticipating and adhering to environmental standards is crucial to avoid legal issues.

Local Communities:

- Local communities expect responsible corporate citizenship. Hastings Freight may be asked to reduce its environmental and infrastructure effect.
- Local government actions and public opinion can indirectly influence the enterprise.
- Sustainable practises, such as decreasing emissions, can improve the company's image and reduce community worries, influencing strategy.

Proposed Strategic Options Based on Stakeholder Analysis:

1. Green Logistics Certification: Hastings Freight Ltd. can show its commitment to sustainability by getting certifications or endorsements from environmental organisations. This strategy meets customer and community expectations and favourably impacts regulators.
2. Employee Development: The organisation might provide training programmes to improve skills and promote career progression. Hastings Freight can satisfy employees and boost retention by empowering them.
3. Partnership: Long-term supplier partnerships, particularly those offering sustainable solutions, can improve resource availability and exceed stakeholder expectations. These partnerships can meet regulatory and community needs.
4. Environmental Compliance: Adopting green practises and complying with environmental standards can reduce legal risks and gain regulatory favour.
5. Community Engagement: Conducting environmental impact studies and public relations with local communities can improve corporate image and meet their expectations for responsible citizenship.

Finally, Hastings Freight Ltd. should create a sustainable company strategy by meeting stakeholder expectations. The organisation may improve its reputation and long-term success by aligning strategic options with customer, employee, supplier, regulatory, and community needs.

Key Strategic Recommendations for Hastings Freight Ltd

Hastings Freight Ltd. should examine these essential tips to continue growth and competition in the transportation sector. These stakeholder analysis-based recommendations follow report-discussed academic paradigms and theories.

1. Green Logistics Integration:

Hastings Freight Ltd should prioritise incorporating green logistics practises into operations. To reduce carbon emissions, invest in fuel-efficient vehicles, alternative fuels, and route optimisation. PESTEL analysis and regulatory requirements can lead the company's green practises.

2. Workforce Development:

To meet employee expectations and maintain a trained and engaged staff, the organisation should prioritise workforce development. Training, career progression, and competitive pay are included (Alexandros Psychogios and Prouska, 2019). Human Resource Management theories in the literature review emphasise engaged and skilled workers.

3. Supplier Cooperation:

Forming long-term connections with sustainable suppliers helps ensure access to essential resources and ethical sourcing. Collaboration with suppliers meets regulatory and supplier expectations (Ivanov, Dolgui and Sokolov, 2019). This attempt can be guided by scholarly supplier management practises.

4. Regulatory Compliance:

Hastings Freight Ltd must comply with transportation and environmental requirements. It should invest in monitoring systems and audits to avoid legal issues. This technique meets regulatory requirements and prevents fines and legal concerns (Dey, 2016).

5. Community Engagement:

Engaging with local communities is crucial for a favourable image and meeting expectations. The company can examine environmental impacts, attend community events, and promote local disruption reduction. Academic community involvement and corporate social responsibility models can guide these activities (Magno Oliveira Macambira et al., 2022).

Challenges and Considerations:

As a SME, Hastings Freight Ltd. faces several obstacles implementing these recommendations. Limited resources, competition, and market volatility:

Limited Resources:

SMEs often face budget constraints. The organisation should prioritise investments by ROI to solve this difficulty. Focus on high-impact projects like green logistics and workforce development.

Competition:

The transport sector is highly competitive. Hastings Freight Ltd. could highlight its sustainability and service quality. Green logistics, supplier collaboration, and community participation can boost competitiveness.

Market Volatility:

Economic swings and market dynamics impact the transportation business. To reduce market volatility, the corporation should diversify its services. This can involve entering new markets, adding transit services, or forming strategic relationships.

These suggestions should help Hastings Freight Ltd. stay competitive and sustainable. The corporation can react to industry difficulties, meet regulatory obligations, and maintain a positive corporate image by matching its strategies with stakeholder expectations and academic models. To succeed long-term, balance limited resources, competition, and market instability with a strategic strategy.

Implementation Plan for Hastings Freight Ltd

For sustainable growth and competitive advantage, Hastings Freight Ltd. must implement the indicated tactics (Umadia Sr. and Kasztelnik, 2020). This plan details each strategy's steps, dates, and considerations:

Strategy	Steps	Timeline	Considerations
1. Green Logistics Integration	- Conduct a thorough audit of the current fleet to identify opportunities for fuel-efficient vehicles and alternative fuels. - Collaborate with logistics experts and vehicle manufacturers to assess the feasibility of adopting eco-friendly transport options. - Develop a clear roadmap for route optimization to minimize carbon emissions. - Invest in telematics and tracking systems to monitor and improve fuel efficiency.	- Year 1: Audit and assessment of fleet. - Year 2: Implementation of eco-friendly transport options. - Year 3: Full implementation of route optimization. - Ongoing: Continuous monitoring and improvement.	- Allocate a budget for vehicle upgrades and technology investments. - Ensure employee training and awareness on green logistics. - Regularly update the green logistics plan based on evolving technologies and industry standards.
2. Workforce Development	- Identify skill gaps and training needs among employees. - Develop training programs, including technical skills and soft skills training. - Establish career development paths and provide opportunities for growth. - Review and update compensation and benefits packages to remain competitive.	- Year 1: Skill gap assessment and training program development. - Year 2: Implementation of training programs. - Year 3: Launch of career development initiatives. - Ongoing: Regular reviews of compensation packages.	- Allocate a training budget. - Foster a culture of continuous learning and development. - Regularly survey employees for feedback and improvement opportunities.
3. Supplier Collaboration	- Identify key suppliers and potential partners for sustainable sourcing. - Establish communication	- Year 1: Supplier identification and communication. - Year 2: Agreement	- Allocate resources for negotiations and monitoring. - Align supplier expectations

Strategy	Steps	Timeline	Considerations
	channels for collaboration. - Negotiate long-term agreements and commitments. - Monitor supplier performance and sustainability efforts.	negotiations. - Year 3: Full integration of sustainable suppliers. - Ongoing: Continuous supplier evaluation.	with sustainability goals. - Ensure legal and ethical compliance in supplier partnerships.
4. Regulatory Compliance	- Appoint a compliance officer or team responsible for monitoring regulations. - Invest in regulatory monitoring tools and software. - Implement regular audits and reporting mechanisms. - Develop clear protocols for addressing compliance issues.	- Year 1: Appoint a compliance officer and acquire monitoring tools. - Year 2: Implementation of audit and reporting systems. - Ongoing: Continuous monitoring and improvement.	- Allocate a budget for compliance management. - Ensure all employees are aware of compliance protocols. - Establish crisis management plans in case of non-compliance.
5. Community Engagement	- Conduct environmental impact assessments to identify community concerns. - Participate in local community events and initiatives. - Communicate sustainability efforts to the community through various channels. - Collaborate with community leaders and organizations for mutually beneficial projects.	- Year 1: Impact assessments and community event participation. - Year 2: Communication and collaboration initiatives. - Ongoing: Regular community engagement activities.	- Allocate resources for community engagement initiatives. - Foster strong relationships with local stakeholders. - Track and report on the positive impact on the community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Hastings Freight Ltd. must monitor and evaluate strategy performance and effectiveness to ensure sustainability activities are on track and achieving outcomes (McKee, 2022)..This section describes how the company measures strategy impact.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Measurement Metrics and Methods
Environmental Impact Metrics	
KPI 1: Carbon Emissions Reduction	Measure the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through eco-friendly vehicles and route optimization.
KPI 2: Fuel Efficiency	Monitor and compare fuel consumption and efficiency before and after adopting green logistics practices.
KPI 3: Route Optimization	Evaluate the percentage reduction in miles driven and corresponding cost savings through route optimization.
Workforce Development	
KPI 4: Employee Satisfaction	Conduct regular employee surveys to assess satisfaction with training, career development, and compensation.
KPI 5: Skill Enhancement	Track the progression of employee skills and competencies as a result of training programs.
KPI 6: Employee Retention	Measure the staff turnover rate before and after introducing new workforce development initiatives.
Supplier Collaboration	

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Measurement Metrics and Methods
KPI 7: Supplier Sustainability Rating	Establish a rating system to evaluate supplier performance in terms of sustainability, ethical practices, and compliance (Alkis Thrassou et al., 2020).
KPI 8: Cost Reduction	Calculate cost savings achieved through long-term agreements with sustainable suppliers.
Regulatory Compliance	
KPI 9: Compliance Score	Develop a scoring system to track and report on the organization's compliance with regulations.
KPI 10: Legal Issues Resolution	Monitor the time and efficiency of resolving compliance-related legal matters.
Community Engagement	
KPI 11: Community Impact	Measure the social and environmental impact of community engagement initiatives through surveys and feedback from local stakeholders.
KPI 12: Public Perception	Evaluate changes in public perception of Hastings Freight Ltd based on community outreach efforts.

Regular Assessment Procedures:

1. Assessments: Conduct monthly assessments of key performance indicators to ensure strategy alignment. Disagreements can be resolved quickly.
2. Audit: Conduct quarterly audits to assess strategy implementation and identify changes from the original plan. Make adjustments as needed.
3. Annual Reports: Create thorough reports that showcase the organization's sustainability efforts. These reports should highlight KPIs, successes, and areas for development.

4. Benchmarking: Compare performance to industry standards and best practises to find improvement possibilities.
5. Feedback: Establish feedback channels for employees, suppliers, and the community to obtain information and suggestions for improving sustainability projects.
6. External Audits: Hire third-party auditors to review and report on sustainability standards, regulatory compliance, and impact assessments.

Hastings Freight Ltd. may track and assess its sustainability strategy using these KPIs and assessment methods. Data-driven decision-making, progress tracking, and continual improvement will help the organisation achieve its long-term sustainable business goals.

Conclusion

Finally, this paper examined Hastings Freight Ltd., a transportation SME, to establish a sustainable company strategy. The research revealed the company's strategic orientation, environmental and internal strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks, valuable resources, and stakeholder landscape. Given these observations, numerous strategic recommendations were made to boost sustainability and growth. This paper emphasises the necessity of connecting company strategy with sustainability goals, especially for SMEs in the dynamic and competitive transport sector. Green logistics, worker development, supplier connections, regulatory compliance, and community engagement are stressed in the recommendations.

These suggestions can differentiate Hastings Freight Ltd. from competitors and boost its reputation as an environmentally and socially responsible company. Successfully addressing these issues will minimise carbon emissions, improve employee skills and job happiness, supplier cooperation, legal compliance, and community image. These findings and recommendations affect SMEs beyond Hastings Freight Ltd. Sustainability is becoming increasingly important in business due to environmental awareness, legal challenges, and customer expectations. SMEs that deliberately adopt sustainability measures can reduce risks and boost long-term growth and competitiveness. By integrating sustainability into strategic planning, SMEs can adapt and capitalise on a greener future. Thus, SMEs must understand and implement sustainable business strategies.

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