

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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SECTION 1: STRATEGIC ANALYSIS REPORT

1. Organisational Context and Overview

1.1 History and Organisational Development

What started as a door-to-door bakery became one of the most established foods on the go companies in the United Kingdom. Twelve years after the business was established in 1939, Greggs of Gosforth opened in Newcastle upon Tyne, selling fresh bread and traditional bakery products. Since then, the company has expanded across the UK and progressively adapted its product portfolio in response to changing consumer preferences (Greggs plc, 2026). This evolution has helped Greggs establish itself as a leading operator in the UK food-to-go market, offering savouries, sandwiches, hot food, beverages and snacks through an extensive retail network and a growing range of digital ordering channels. In 2025, Greggs reported total sales of £2,151.2 million and increased its share of the UK food-to-go market to 8.6%, despite wider pressures affecting customer visits across the sector (Greggs plc, 2026).

1.2 Mission, Vision and Value Proposition

Greggs' contemporary strategic identity is centred on providing freshly prepared, accessible food at affordable prices. The company positions itself as a food-on-the-go retailer "for everyone", seeking to make its products available wherever, whenever and however customers choose to purchase them (Greggs plc, 2026). This value proposition combines affordability, convenience and familiarity, enabling Greggs to appeal to a broad mass-market customer base rather than limiting itself to a narrow demographic AHDB reported that UK food-to-go is expected to grow by almost 40% by 2028 compared with 2019 levels, while lunch remains a major food-to-go occasion, with 71% of food-to-go customers purchasing for lunch in the first quarter of 2024 (AHDB, 2024). Its continued expansion into delivery, digital ordering and alternative retail channels further demonstrates how the company has adapted its traditional bakery model to meet contemporary expectations of convenience and accessibility.

1.3 Business Model and Distribution Channels

Greggs' business model is underpinned by vertical integration, operational efficiency and value-based pricing. The company manufactures a substantial proportion of its food within its own production centres, manages its logistics internally and distributes products across its national shop estate. This integrated structure provides greater control over production costs, product consistency, availability and supply-chain

performance, thereby supporting the company's ability to maintain relatively affordable prices. Greggs reaches customers through company-managed shops, franchise partners, delivery platforms, wholesale and grocery partnerships, Click + Collect services and the Greggs App (Greggs plc, 2026). In 2025, company-managed shops generated £1,897.2 million in revenue, while business-to-business channels, including franchise and grocery partnerships, contributed a further £254.0 million (Greggs plc, 2026). These figures demonstrate that physical shops remain the core of the business, although alternative channels are becoming increasingly important to Greggs' growth and market reach.

1.4 Strategic Importance of the Vegan Sausage Roll

Although Greggs is associated with several iconic products, the Vegan Sausage Roll has emerged as one of its most distinctive and strategically significant offerings. Officially described as a vegan and pork-free savoury roll, the product was developed to reproduce the familiar characteristics of Greggs' traditional sausage roll through a seasoned Quorn filling encased in approximately 96 layers of puff pastry (Greggs plc, 2026). By extending an established bestselling format into the plant-based category, Greggs was able to innovate without introducing excessive operational complexity. The product could be manufactured, distributed and sold through the company's existing vertically integrated infrastructure while appealing to both existing customers and new consumer segments.

The Vegan Sausage Roll also reflects Greggs' responsiveness to wider changes in dietary preferences and consumer attitudes towards meat consumption. Research by GFI Europe (2025) found that 41% of UK adults were either actively reducing their meat consumption or following a meat-free diet, while 56% consumed plant-based products at least once a month (GFI Europe, 2025). These findings suggest that demand for plant-based products extends beyond strict vegans and vegetarians to include a broader flexitarian market. Consequently, the Vegan Sausage Roll represents more than a simple product-line extension. It illustrates how Greggs has combined product innovation, mass-market affordability and operational simplicity to respond to evolving health, ethical and sustainability-related expectations while retaining the familiarity and convenience associated with its core brand proposition.

1.5 Industry, Competitors and Market Position

As Greggs popularity increases so does its competitors. Pret A manger, Costa, Starbucks and Subway compete with Greggs for food-to-go. Alongside supermarket deals, which Tesco, Sainsburys, Morrisons and co-op compete. Due to its quick service convenience competitors include McDonald's, KFC and local bakeries. Greggs' own market data shows it competes across breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacking and delivery occasions, ranking first for breakfast, second for lunch, third for snacking and fourth for delivery in 2025 (Greggs plc, 2026). Therefore, Greggs' market position can be described as mass-market, value led and convenience focused, with the Vegan Sausage Roll strengthening its appeal to vegan, vegetarian and flexitarian consumers.

2. External and Internal Analysis

2.1 PESTEL Analysis

2.1.1 Political Factors

Greggs is influenced politically and administratively by government obesity intervention. In 2024, 30% of adults were obese and 66% were overweight or obese, up from 15% in 1993 (NHS England Digital, 2026). These trends have put pressure on the government to improve out-of-home food nutrition and transparency. On April 6, 2022, the Calorie Labelling (Out of Home Sector) (England) Regulations 2021 took effect. Companies with 250 or more employees, including bakeries and takeaway chains like Greggs, must display calorie information for qualifying non-prepacked food and drink products (Department of Health and Social Care, 2021). The policy promotes informed consumer choice and product reformulation or calorie reduction.

Mandatory calorie disclosure presents a reputational risk and strategic opportunity for the Vegan Sausage Roll. Vegan products may be associated with healthier eating despite having higher calorie, saturated fat, and salt content. If consumers compare the product to lower-calorie food-to-go options, calorie transparency may weaken this perceived "health halo". Conversely, greater nutritional scrutiny may encourage Greggs to reformulate, adjust portion sizes, or introduce healthier plant-based alternatives, supporting product innovation and meeting changing health expectations. The effectiveness of calorie labelling should not be overstated. According to Burton and Kees' (2012) behavioural framework, labels can only influence purchasing when consumers notice the information, are motivated to make healthier choices,

understand how the calories relate to their daily needs, and receive information that changes their intended decision. After mandatory labelling in England, nutritional awareness and use increased, but eating-out frequency, restaurant choice, and amount consumed did not (Breck et al., 2017 cited in Essman et al., 2025). Calorie labelling may influence some purchasing decisions, but its greater strategic impact on Greggs may come from reputational pressure and product reformulation rather than a significant drop in customer demand.

2.1.2 Economic Factors

Greggs' Vegan Sausage Roll faces a strategic dilemma due to the state of the economy, while lower household purchasing power makes Greggs' value proposition more appealing, it also reduces the frequency of food-to-go. Market visits fell 3.1% in 2025, but Greggs' share rose to 8.6%. This suggests that low-income customers may switch from more expensive competitors. Since consumers may choose cheaper items or supermarket alternatives, it does not indicate a higher demand for the Vegan Sausage Roll (Greggs plc, 2026). Thus, price remains strategic. Law, Smith, and Cornelsen (2022) found that fast-food demand for main meals is less price-elastic than in restaurants, suggesting that price responsiveness varies by outlet. Even though the Vegan Sausage Roll is affordable, flexitarians may be discouraged by a price premium over the traditional roll, especially since they can easily switch between the two.

Cost inflation worsens this pricing problem. Employment, food, and packaging costs drove 5.5% like-for-like cost inflation for Greggs in 2025 (Greggs plc, 2026). By November 2025, food and non-alcoholic beverage prices rose 4.2%, while the National Living Wage rose 6.7% to £12.21 per hour in April 2025 (Office for National Statistics, 2025; Low Pay Commission, 2025). Although Greggs' sales increased by 6.8%, underlying operating profit fell by 4%, indicating that revenue growth was insufficient to offset rising costs and lower volumes. Thus, repeatedly raising the Vegan Sausage Roll's price could protect its contribution margin but hurt Greggs' competitive advantage. Greggs' vertical integration, four months of forward purchasing cover, and £13 million of structural savings are more sustainable, but product-level margin data is needed to assess the roll's profitability. Greggs should maintain price accessibility, limit any difference from the traditional roll,

and use app rewards, meal deals, and operational efficiencies to improve transaction value rather than position the product as a premium vegan alternative.

2.1.3 Social Factors

Social change offers the Vegan Sausage Roll its best chance. Consumers reduce their meat consumption for a variety of reasons, including health, environmental, ethical, and animal welfare. Sheen, Lim, and Forde (2023) found that flexitarian consumers are diverse, so Greggs should not view the market as a single group with identical motivations. Some consumers choose plant-based foods occasionally without identifying as vegan or vegetarian (Sheen, Lim and Forde, 2023). Taste, familiarity, perceived healthiness, social norms, and food neophobia affect alternative protein acceptance. Plant-based proteins were generally more accepted than other protein categories, but acceptance was not automatic, according to Onwezen et al. (2021). Michel, Hartmann, and Siegrist (2021) found that consumers expect meat alternatives to taste, feel, and cook like meat. Greggs responded well by incorporating the alternative filling into a familiar product. The shape, pastry and convenience of a Greggs banger mean customers do not need to change their eating habits. This makes meat-free products suitable for vegans, vegetarians, flexitarians, and meat-eaters by reducing the perceived risk. Vegan products can divide society. After Greggs launched the Vegan Sausage Roll, Sanford and Lorimer (2022) found that it generated commercial engagement and online conflict over veganism, identity, and environmental politics. Greggs benefited from the publicity, but judgemental or politically divisive marketing could hurt the product (Sanford and Lorimer, 2022). There is also evidence that vegan labelling affects consumers' taste and product perceptions. According to Stremmel et al. (2022), vegan labelling can negatively impact taste, healthiness, and sustainability for non-vegan consumers. Greggs should continue to label the product as vegan, but its advertising should emphasise taste, familiarity, and value rather than veganism (Gesa et al., 2022). Greggs should strategically target meat-reducers and flexitarians, not just vegans. Instead of a dietary supplement, present it as a tasty Greggs meat-free savoury.

The Vegan Sausage Roll can capitalise on consumer interest in protein and the belief that plant-based diets lack it. Protein was a major barrier to reducing meat consumption, as many consumers associated meat with health and physical performance, according to Macdonald (2025). The study contrasted Greggs' meat and vegan sausage rolls. Vegan selection increased from 19.4% without carbon information to 25% with carbon and 36.8% with protein content (Macdonald, 2025). It appears that personal nutritional benefits may influence consumer choice more than sustainability messaging, or “nudge by proxy”. Greggs could use its app, website and digital menus to highlight the Vegan Sausage Roll's protein content to challenge nutritional inadequacy and attract flexitarian and fitness-conscious customers. However, the findings were based on hypothetical choices among UK students aged 18–25, so Greggs should test protein labelling before nationwide adoption.

2.1.4 Technological Factors

Technology enables Greggs not only to promote the Vegan Sausage Roll but also to evaluate whether promotional activity creates sustained customer demand. Greggs currently offers value-based bundles such as the Big Deal, which starts from £5.25 and allows customers to select a main, side and drink; the Vegan Sausage Roll can be selected as one of the eligible sides. Its app also provides Click + Collect, personalised communications and category-based rewards, through which customers receive their tenth eligible item free after collecting nine stamps (Greggs plc, 2025). These digital features support Greggs' wider strategy of using its app and customer relationship management system to strengthen loyalty and communicate more effectively with customers (Greggs plc, 2026).

Rather than using these promotions solely to generate short-term sales, Greggs could use app transaction data to examine which offers produce repeat demand for the Vegan Sausage Roll. Relevant measures could include offer-redemption rates, basket value, purchasing frequency, meal-deal attachment, time of purchase and whether customers subsequently repurchase the product without a discount. For example, Greggs could test whether including the Vegan Sausage Roll in a targeted meal deal encourages meat-based savoury customers to try it and whether this trial converts into

full-price repeat purchases. This would help distinguish genuine demand growth from temporary promotional switching or the cannibalisation of the traditional Sausage Roll.

However, app data should be interpreted cautiously because app users may be more loyal and promotion-sensitive than Greggs' wider customer base. A high redemption rate would not necessarily prove long-term product preference (Lee and Han, 2022). Greggs should therefore combine digital data with controlled trials, product-level profitability measures and customer feedback. Used effectively, these technologies could improve personalisation, demand forecasting and production planning while reducing unsold food and supporting evidence-based product development (Saarijärvi et al., 2024).

2.1.5 Environmental Factors

Vegetarian and vegan diets use less land, water, and greenhouse gases. Even processed alternatives have these benefits, according to Kustar and Patino-Echeverri (2021). Depending on energy use and ingredient processing, meat-free meals may be more environmentally friendly (Kustar and Patino-Echeverri, 2021). According to Derbyshire et al. (2023), mycoprotein is a sustainable protein source but requires thorough packaging and transportation assessments for products like the Vegan Sausage Roll. Greggs' sustainability efforts include carbon emissions and waste but not product-level assessments. Greggs could make more specific sustainability claims and emphasise value chain impacts by comparing vegan and traditional sausage rolls' life-cycle assessments.

2.1.6 Legal Factors

Greggs must update calorie and nutritional information across all channels when changing the recipe, filling, or portion size to avoid regulatory issues and customer distrust. Soon (2019) found that consumer awareness affects food-allergic people's

risk management. Vegan myths about allergen-free products can be dangerous, especially in shared production environments.

Greggs discloses Vegan Sausage Roll allergens and mycoprotein intolerance. To ensure food safety, customer information must be accurate across interactions. Greggs should unify recipe, calorie, and allergen data, automate product updates, and train employees on the allergen safety implications of the vegan designation.

2.1.7 PESTEL Strategic Synthesis

The Vegan Sausage Roll benefits from social, technological, and environmental trends that promote meat-free options. Greggs solved the problem by positioning the product within a familiar framework and supporting it with a large retail network, digital platforms, and a value-oriented business model. However, inflation, labour costs, nutritional scrutiny, allergen regulations, and a more critical view of processed plant-based foods put pressure on the product. The long-term success will rely less on the novelty of veganism and more on its sustained provision of robust flavour, value, convenience, and credible environmental advantages.

Greggs should keep the Vegan Sausage Roll as a staple, price it like the traditional roll, use loyalty data to analyse recurring demand, improve its nutritional profile, and add product-specific environmental evidence and protein values to appeal to mainstream flexitarians while reducing regulatory and reputational risks.

2.2 VRIO Analysis

2.2.1 Brand Reputation and Value Positioning

Greggs has a number of strategically valuable resources that bolster the competitive position of its Vegan Sausage Roll. Its greatest strength is a strong reputation for affordable, convenient food-to-go. This reputation is valuable because it reduces uncertainty for customers trying a new plant-based product and preserves Greggs' core value proposition. It is also relatively rare because few competitors share similar national recognition, cultural familiarity and strong value perceptions. Reputation is built up slowly over time through consistent customer experiences and is hard to copy rapidly, and is therefore a potential source of sustained competitive advantage

(Dierickx and Cool, 1989). Greggs is set up to exploit this resource through coordinated pricing, marketing, digital and shop operations.

2.2.2 Vertical Integration and National Store Network

Greggs' vertically integrated supply chain and national store network offer further competitive muscle. By the end of 2025, the company had 2,739 shops and is developing its logistics infrastructure to support up to 3,500 sites (Greggs plc, 2026). "Such capabilities are useful because they can be provided at scale, with uniform quality, and at reasonable prices." They are relatively scarce in the UK bakery and food-to-go market and are difficult to replicate as rivals would require a lot of capital, the right locations, production facilities and years of operational expertise. So the combination of brand, distribution and supply chain control is a more defensible advantage than any single product.

2.2.3 Product Innovation Capability

Product innovation is also important, with Greggs successfully adapting its established banger format using a bespoke Quorn filling. However, the innovation capability is partially rare and inimitable. Competitors may introduce similar plant-based savouries or develop relationships with other suppliers. The Vegan Sausage Roll in itself is therefore a temporary competitive advantage and not a sustainable one. The strategic importance lies in the ability of Greggs to rapidly commercialise the product across a national network.

2.2.4 Digital Capability and Customer Data

Greggs' loyalty app and customer data are a developing resource. Loyalty apps are common but Greggs' proprietary transaction history cannot be copied directly. In 2025, the app was scanned in 26.7 per cent of transactions in company managed shops, giving information that could support personalised promotions, product development and demand forecasting (Greggs plc, 2026).

2.2.5 VRIO Strategic Judgement

To summarise, the secret of Greggs' long-term success is not the recipe of the Vegan Sausage Roll, which can be copied by competitors. Instead, it arises from an integrated combination of brand image, value proposition, store access, and manufacturing and distribution capabilities. Greggs has to keep innovating, use customer data well and to protect product quality and affordability, to avoid competitors eroding this advantage.

2.3 SWOT Analysis

2.3.1 Strengths

The SWOT analysis indicates that the Vegan Sausage Roll is still strategically valuable but its long-term strength is no longer based on novelty. The strongest strength is the combination of Greggs' trusted value-led brand, familiar product design and the extensive UK distribution network. The Vegan Sausage Roll is not strong because it is vegan, it is strong because Greggs made a plant-based alternative accessible, affordable and familiar. Greggs should leverage this blend of brand and network to trial with mainstream and flexitarian customers.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

The main weakness is the dissonance between the product's plant-based image and its processed, high salt, pastry-based formulation. The product contains less energy, fat and saturated fat per 100g than the traditional Sausage Roll but a higher salt content (Greggs plc, 2026). Greggs could lower salt and saturated fat incrementally and still keep taste and texture. It shouldn't say the product is automatically healthy because it is vegan.

2.3.3 Opportunities

The main opportunity is to leverage the Greggs App and customer data to promote repeat purchasing by flexitarians and occasional meat reducers. Personalised trial offers could be targeted at customers who have a tendency to buy meat-based savouries. Then Greggs should measure whether those customers buy the vegan product again without a discount. That would be a more convincing argument for ongoing demand than any one-off sales.

2.3.4 Threats

The main threat is the combined impact of cost inflation, imitation and rising scepticism about processed plant-based foods. A rival can imitate a similar product. Higher costs can cause Greggs to raise their prices. Greggs should therefore compete on its whole system of brand, convenience, availability and customer data, rather than on the uniqueness of the recipe, and also protect affordability and improve the recipe.

3. Comprehensive and Holistic View of the Organisation

3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy

Greggs presents its corporate social responsibility strategy through three priorities: building stronger and healthier communities, making the planet safer and becoming a better business. The Vegan Sausage Roll demonstrates some genuine social and environmental value, but it is more accurately viewed as a commercial innovation with CSR benefits than as a CSR initiative.

3.1.1 Health and Nutrition

As noted earlier, while the Vegan Sausage Roll expands choice for vegan, vegetarian and flexitarian consumers, this does not automatically translate into improved nutritional value. Although it contains fewer calories, fat and saturated fat than the traditional Sausage Roll, its salt content remains comparatively high.

This aligns with broader research indicating that plant-based alternatives can still be highly processed and should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis rather than assumed to be healthier (Flint et al., 2023).

Greggs' wider efforts to reformulate products and provide transparent nutritional information support public-health goals. However, the absence of a specific reformulation target for this product suggests there is still scope to strengthen its alignment with CSR objectives, particularly through gradual reductions in salt and saturated fat.

3.1.2 Environmental Responsibility

The product potentially supports Greggs' environmental strategy by providing an alternative to pork. This is significant because more than 90% of Greggs' carbon footprint arises from Scope 3 emissions, with ingredients, packaging, meat and dairy

forming a substantial proportion of its product-related impact. Increasing the availability of plant-based options may therefore reduce the carbon intensity of the menu over time.

However, the environmental benefits should not be overstated. The Vegan Sausage Roll still requires agricultural inputs, processing, transportation, refrigeration, energy and packaging. Greggs has not published a full life-cycle assessment comparing it with the pork version. It should therefore be described as potentially lower-impact rather than conclusively sustainable.

Greggs' wider environmental activities include science-based emissions targets, renewable electricity, recyclable packaging, lower-carbon stores and food-waste reduction. By the end of 2025, 45% of unsold food was reportedly redistributed. These initiatives are important because the product's overall impact depends on production volumes, packaging and waste as well as its ingredients. Greggs should publish verified product-level environmental evidence to strengthen its claims and reduce greenwashing risk. CSR communication is generally more credible when supported by independent evidence rather than company statements alone (Gosselt, van Rompay and Haske, 2019).

3.1.3 Community and Social Value

Greggs supports communities through breakfast clubs, charitable donations and Outlet stores selling surplus food at reduced prices. The company donates at least 1% of pre-tax profits to the Greggs Foundation and reports that its breakfast clubs provide food to approximately 79,500 children each school day.

The Vegan Sausage Roll supports inclusion by making plant-based food available through a mainstream, value-led retailer rather than only through premium specialist outlets. Nevertheless, its community contribution remains indirect. Selling the product is a commercial transaction, although its profitability may support employment, charitable investment and future innovation.

3.1.4 Responsible Sourcing and Employee Responsibility

Responsible sourcing is important because the product relies on mycoprotein, vegetable oils, pastry ingredients and packaging. Greggs states that suppliers are assessed against ethical, social and environmental standards and that its procurement

framework addresses human rights, animal welfare and environmental management. However, responsible sourcing requires traceability, monitoring and enforcement rather than supplier policies alone (Chen, 2022). Greggs should therefore disclose more product-specific information about ingredient origins and supply-chain verification.

Employees also influence the product's CSR performance through manufacturing, distribution, baking, allergen communication and customer service. Greggs' investment in training, inclusive recruitment and employee profit-sharing may strengthen engagement and operational consistency. Research indicates that CSR is more credible when external commitments are matched by fair internal employment practices (Ansari and Irfan, 2023).

3.1.5 Alignment Between CSR and Business Objectives

Overall, the Vegan Sausage Roll is reasonably aligned with Greggs' CSR and commercial objectives because it broadens choice, supports meat reduction and makes plant-based food accessible. However, high salt and saturated-fat levels, limited ingredient transparency and the absence of product-level environmental evidence weaken this alignment. Greggs should prioritise gradual reformulation, verified environmental assessment, stronger traceability and continued affordability to position the product as a more credible example of responsible innovation.

3.2 Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard is suitable because the financial results alone cannot prove if the performance of the Vegan Sausage Roll will continue to be sustainable. Kaplan and Norton (1992) argue that organisations should assess performance through four related perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes, and learning and growth. For Greggs, the investment in employee skills and customer data ought to lead to improved forecasting and product development. Stronger internal processes should then improve availability, quality and customer satisfaction, ultimately supporting profitable sales. Moreover, health and sustainability should be embedded, since nutrition, responsible sourcing and food waste influence costs, reputation and customer trust (Figge et al., 2002).

3.2.1 Financial Perspective

From a financial perspective, Greggs should be focused on growing profitable sales while defending its value-led positioning. Relevant measures are unit sales, product revenue, gross margin, repeat-purchase revenue and waste costs. A reasonable goal would be to increase the sales of Vegan Sausage Roll by 5% per year over the next 2 years, keep the current margin within 1%, and reduce the waste costs per unit by 10%. This can be supported with meal deals, better forecasting and targeted app promotions rather than permanent discounts which may boost sales but erode profitability.

3.2.2 Customer Perspective

The customer view should be around drawing more flexitarian, value conscious and convenience seeking consumers. Greggs needs to track customer satisfaction, taste ratings, perceived value, repeat purchases and app feedback. Targets might include an average rating of at least 4.2 out of five and a 10% increase in repeat purchase within a year. Marketing should be based on taste, familiarity and affordability, not just vegan messaging. This is important because research shows that acceptance of plant-based alternatives is strongly influenced by taste, price and similarity to familiar products (Michel, Hartmann and Siegrist, 2021; Onwezen et al., 2021).

3.2.3 Internal Business Processes Perspective

Processes need to be efficient but also available internally. Greggs could achieve 97% availability during core trading hours, cut product waste by 15% and reduce salt content by 10% without significantly affecting taste ratings. These objectives would be supported by shop level sales data, waste reporting by product, sensory testing and supplier collaboration. This is necessary because underproduction results in lost sales while overproduction results in increased costs and environmental impact.

3.2.4 Learning and Growth Perspective

The other views rest on the basis of learning and growth. Greggs should train 90% or more of relevant employees per year and conduct four product or marketing trials under control each year. Training should include plant-based products, allergens, sustainability and customer communication and cross-functional teams should

combine expertise from marketing, nutrition, procurement and operations.

3.2.5 Overall Balanced Scorecard Judgement

Today the customer perspective is the most important thing to consider, because the product is no longer a novelty and can be copied by competitors. The financial and CSR objectives are partly aligned as waste reduction and efficient forecasting can reduce costs and environmental impact. Reformulating and sourcing sustainable materials could add to costs or impact taste. To summarise, Greggs should measure success by profitable repeat demand and less waste as well as improved nutrition and customer satisfaction, not just sales growth.

4. Strategic Choices and Implementation

4.1 Business-Level Strategic Options

Greggs could market the Vegan Sausage Roll through cost leadership, differentiation, focus, or a hybrid strategy. To offer the lowest sustainable price, pure cost leadership would use scale, vertical integration, and operational efficiency. Differentiation emphasises taste, convenience, quality, nutrition, and environmental credibility, while focus targets vegans and vegetarians. However, a premium strategy would conflict with Greggs' value positioning, and a vegan focus would overlook the larger flexitarian and mainstream market. Sustained discounting during rising labour, ingredient, and packaging costs could weaken margins, making pure cost leadership risky.

4.2 Recommended Hybrid Strategy

Therefore, the strongest alternative is a wide hybrid strategy of cost efficiency and selective differentiation. Greggs should maintain the price of the Vegan Sausage Roll close to the traditional product and differentiate it with its familiar taste, consistent availability, convenience, inclusive positioning and gradual nutritional and environmental improvements. Porter (1980) warns that firms can get “stuck in the middle” if they lack a clear source of advantage. Greggs could pre-empt this, as cost efficiency would come from its operating model, and differentiation would be based on attributes that customers value, rather than premium features.

4.3 Validation Using Porter's Five Forces

This recommendation is backed by Porter's Five Forces. As shown in the external analysis rivalry and substitution are high as customers can switch easily between bakeries, cafes, supermarkets, quick service restaurants and home prepared food. Therefore, buyer power is important. Although competitors can copy a vegan savoury, the VRIO analysis revealed that replicating Greggs' entire system of brand familiarity, national accessibility, and integrated production is significantly more difficult. Therefore, Greggs should be protecting the product through its organisational capabilities and not just through recipe uniqueness (Porter, 1980; Barney, 1991).

4.4 Validation Using Ansoff's Matrix

According to Ansoff's Matrix, the strategy should be implemented through market penetration and controlled product development (Ansoff, 1957). Repeat purchases from existing UK customers would be driven by market penetration through reliable availability, meal combinations and targeted app communications. Product development could include incremental reformulation, limited-edition flavours or close variants of plant-based savouries. They are better than diversification because they use Greggs' existing brand, shops, data and manufacturing capability and allow testing on a small scale before national roll-out.

4.5 Evaluation Using the SAFe Framework

This recommendation is also corroborated by the SAFe framework. This is apt as it addresses price sensitivity, strong competition and changing dietary preferences. It is fine as customers maintain affordability and familiarity and investors get the opportunity for repeat demand over temporary promotional sales. This is feasible because the VRIO analysis revealed that Greggs already has the required brand, distribution, manufacturing and digital resources (Whittington et al., 2019). The strategy is also consistent with the CSR findings as nutritional improvement, waste reduction and credible environmental evidence can build trust without repositioning the product as a premium ethical purchase.

4.6 Competitive Advantage and Optimum Performance

Improving the relationship of operational efficiency with customer value will likely improve the approach. Greggs' mass market appeal is driven by low prices and taste, familiarity and availability encourage trial and repeat purchasing. Nutritional improvement over time and verified environmental information can also reduce reputational risk and enhance differentiation. Customer data helps with better forecasting and better targeting of communications, which means less waste and helps margins. This can be seen as a reflection of the theory of dynamic-capabilities as Greggs would be constantly testing, learning and adjusting rather than relying on the original product novelty (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997). Success should be measured by the already suggested Balanced Scorecard indicators, especially repeat purchases, gross margin, availability, waste, satisfaction and reformulation performance.

4.7 Implementation Challenges and Mitigation

But there are several risks in implementation. Cost inflation could make it hard to protect affordability without eating into margins. Rather than resorting to permanent discounting, Greggs should react with productivity savings, supplier negotiation, selective meal deals and careful price adjustments. Reliance on specialist ingredients may also cause supply disruption and the need for contingency suppliers, service standards and forward purchasing cover. Greggs should use blind sensory testing and regional trials before any nationwide changes as reformulation could ruin the taste and affect repeat demand.

Other risks include greenwashing criticism, operational complexity and imbalance. Environmental claims should be supported by independently verified evidence at product level and new variants should be withdrawn if they fall short of agreed performance thresholds. Instead of developing another monitoring system, a cross-functional team of marketing, procurement, nutrition, operations and sustainability should oversee implementation using the existing Balanced Scorecard measures.

4.8 Final Strategic Recommendation

Greggs' overall message is that it shouldn't compete on vegan novelty, premium positioning or lowest price alone. A broad hybrid strategy with market penetration and selective product development is the best match with its environment and capabilities. It would maintain affordability while enhancing taste, credibility and relevance and would help to convert a short-term product-level advantage into something more sustainable at the organisational level.

SECTION 2: REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

5. Reflective Account Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Lastly, as this report comes to an end. I will write a reflective account using the Gibbs reflective cycle.

5.1 Description:

I researched and analysed Greggs' Vegan Sausage Roll to assess its external environment, internal resources, CSR performance and strategic direction. I used PESTEL, VRIO, SWOT, the Balanced Scorecard, Porter's Five Forces, Ansoff's Matrix and SAFe. Evidence was gathered from Greggs' annual reports, government data and academic literature.

5.2 Feelings:

Initially, I felt uncertain about selecting only the most relevant evidence because the available information was extensive and the word count was limited. I also found it difficult to avoid repeating findings across different strategic frameworks.

5.3 Evaluation:

The process was effective because using several frameworks created a balanced assessment of opportunities, risks and competitive advantages. Academic and corporate sources strengthened the credibility of the analysis. However, some early sections were descriptive and repeated points about affordability, vertical integration, customer data and sustainability.

5.4 Analysis:

I learned that strategic frameworks should be connected rather than presented independently. PESTEL identified environmental pressures, while VRIO explained

Greggs' ability to respond. SWOT synthesised the findings, and SAFe helped evaluate whether the recommended hybrid strategy was suitable, acceptable and feasible. Cross-referencing earlier findings improved coherence and reduced duplication.

5.5 Conclusion:

The process improved my ability to distinguish description from critical analysis. I recognised that strong analysis requires comparison, judgement and consideration of limitations rather than simply presenting evidence.

5.6 Action

plan:

In future assessments, I will create an evidence matrix before writing, assign each source to a specific framework and identify the main strategic argument earlier. I will also edit each section for repetition and ensure that recommendations follow directly from the preceding evidence.

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