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Introduction

This portfolio analyses the marketing strategy for a proposed plant-based ready-meal brand, Mindful Meals, developed for Marks and Spencer. Using STDP framework, the marketing mix and strategic reflection, the portfolio assesses how M&S can respond to changing consumer demands for health, sustainability and convenience.

ELEMENT 1: STDP ANALYSIS

1.1 Company Introduction

The Marks and Spencer (M&S) is among the oldest retailers in the United Kingdom with a long tradition of quality and customer loyalty in the food, clothing and home sector. M&S has more than 63,000 colleagues, 1,053 franchise and UK-owned stores, and offers in excess of 32 overseas markets (M&S, 2025). In 2025, the company produced PS13.9 billion in statutory revenue, which shows a 6% growth per year with a profit before tax and adjusting items amounting to PS875.5 million, an impressive growth of 22.2%. Food division is still a core competence with a 3.9% share in the UK market and a high value-for-money perception which is backed by high store net promoter score of 54%. This performance shows how strong the M&S brand is and that it can adjust to the changes in consumer demands. The recent market dynamics indicate that there are increased preferences towards healthier diets, sustainability and convenient food options, all of which present positive opportunities to M&S to launch a new food sub-brand addressing these new behaviours (Grieco, 2024).

1.2 New Brand Concept

M&S Mindful Meals, the suggested brand, is a health-centered plant-based ready-meals line that will provide convenient nutritionally balanced meals in accordance with modern wellbeing concerns. This idea builds up on the fact that M&S has a long history of reputation over high-quality prepared meals, and excellent supply-chain governance. Sourcing research indicates that M&S international sourcing, such as in Bangladesh, have high quality and ethical sourcing and quality control practices, which enhances its authority in terms of starting sustainability-focused food brands (Omee, 2023). The trend of plant-based consumption can also be related to broader issues of human health, environmental implications, and sustainable food systems. Studies of integrated health governance emphasise the way consumer-facing innovation could be used to achieve health system

objectives by influencing healthier individual decisions (Waring et al., 2025). Mindful Meals hence is in line with market demand and strategic opportunities. Moreover, the recent rise in the effectiveness of operations and logistics investments by M&S suggest high potential in production and distribution of fresh and chilled food items of high-quality and scale. It is the answer to the increasing demands of the consumers on the level of transparency, ethical sourcing and inclusive brand values that are the key points of the modern marketing practice (Grieco, 2024).

1.3 Segmentation

Market segmentation can be defined as the segmentation of a large market into smaller homogeneous groups of consumers in terms of their common traits like demographics, psychographics, behaviour and geography. The primary benefit of segmentation is that it will help organisations formulate more appropriate value propositions, enhance the effectiveness of targeting and resource allocation marketing efforts. It also helps in enhancing customer satisfaction as products are matched with specific needs. Segmentation may however be constrained by inaccurate data, excessive segmentation and there is a risk of overlooking potential customers in case segments are created too narrowly. Nevertheless, successful segmentation offers an evidence-based and systematic basis of strategic marketing choices (Kumar, 2023).

The plant-based ready meal is a market that can be segmented on the basis of demographics, psychographics, behaviour and geographical factors. The demographic situation is that younger adults 18-45 years old, professionals, students and young families are a high and highly health-aware population, with the middle-level disposable income. Psychographically, they are wellbeing, sustainability and ethical consumption-oriented consumers who are more inclined towards adopting the plant-based alternatives. Behavioural is used to target those that buy ready prepared meals on a regular basis and who value convenience without sacrificing on the quality of the food as well as those that are geographically positioned in the urban and suburban areas where M&S Foodhalls are either easy to reach or accessible. This is a multi-dimensional segmentation strategy that makes sure that the brand reacts to actual and evidence-based consumer requirements (Kumar, 2023).

1.4 Targeting

The main target audience of Mindful Meals will be young, urban, and health-conscious professionals aged 22-40 that actively pursue convenient, yet healthier alternatives of the meal. This segment has good buying power and can afford to pay an average premium in the name of quality, which fits well in the brand positioning of M&S. According to market research, these individuals exhibit long-term interest in plant-based items and are the leaders of consumption patterns based on health-consciousness (Xu, 2023). Their lifestyles, which are characterised by the intensity of work and lack of time, increase their dependency on the ready-meal formats. This customer base is also a part of the overall strategic direction of M & M&S to expand its Food division and increase its relevance among younger customers.

Mindful Meals will have a focused target market, and their target group will be young professionals, urban, health-conscious, and aged 22-40. This segment shows good purchasing power, the continued interest in plant-based food and high reliance on ready-made meal offerings, which is quite consistent with the premium but affordable brand positioning of M&S (Xu, 2023). The key benefit of this solution is effective resource distribution and an extremely applicable value proposal that is specific to a well-articulated consumer category. Nevertheless, depending on one major segment can narrow the market penetration and make it susceptible to the evolving demands of the consumer population, necessitating the continuous tracking of the market and market adjustments.

1.5 Differentiation

The combination of quality ingredients, commitment to nutritional integrity and sustainability also helps Mindful Meals to distinguish itself. Every food item meets with the requirements of M&S, namely, Eat well, and guarantees quantifiable health improvements. Packaging focuses on recyclable products and small environmental negative impact, which promotes responsible consumption. This distinction is enhanced by the fact that M&S has a long tradition of high-quality food, and it is also able to achieve supply-chain transparency, which is something that many of its rivals cannot replicate (Omee, 2023).

1.6 Positioning

Mindful Meals will be a high-quality/low-cost vegan ready-meal company with balanced nutrition, ethical procurement and excellent flavor. The brand is also expected to be viewed as the most reliable and flavour-led plant-based alternative in the UK mainstream retail

market, offering a higher experience than the low-end competitors whilst being more accessible than the high-end niche brands. This stance mirrors the inclusive marketing philosophy and corresponds to the rising demand of consumers to purchase wellbeing-centred and responsible brands (Grieco, 2024).

ELEMENT 2: MARKETING MIX

2.1 Product

Mindful Meals is a handpicked collection of plant-based ready meals that are more nutrition, taste and sustainable. The product range entails low-protein bowls, rich curries made of vegetables, wholegrain pastas, low-calorie balanced meals and frozen products to provide the flexibility in terms of consumption contexts. All the products will be able to adhere to the M&S Eat well nutritional framework, providing clear guidelines on the amount of fat, salt, sugar and protein in the product. Packaging is made of trays which are completely recyclable and cardboard sleeves which are certified by FSC, to minimise the impact on the environment and to convey sustainability information to the consumers. The brand language is a new visual language with uncluttered typography and natural colour palettes on which associations with health and wellbeing are supported. The range is still based on responsible ingredient sourcing, which expands on the established supplier relationships at M&S and its history of ethical sourcing (Omeo, 2023). Recent operational changes have helped M&S to ensure consistency and quality of its products via detailed data-driven supervision (Watson et al., 2022). The differentiation of the products is aimed at serving the various dietary restrictions, such as the vegan certified recipes, gluten-free and meals that align with calorie management, to allow high accessibility and inclusivity. Grounded on the core of the product offering of quality, sustainability and nutritional integrity, Mindful Meals has a close connection to the heritage of M&S in the excellence of innovations in prepared food.

2.2 Price

Mindful Meals occupies the high-end yet affordable bracket of the ready-meal industry. The prices are charged between the middle-range of mainstream competitors like Tesco Plant Chef but not across the high-end lines like Waitrose plant-based range. This is a value-based pricing model that acts as a balance between a perceived quality and affordability. Psychological pricing, like PS4.50-PS5.50 prices, works to prompt customers to make daily purchases as well as solidify the quality perceptions. Trial and adoption are supported by launch promotions, such as introductory promotions and multibuy promotions. Connection to the Sparks loyalty programme allows customising discounts and customising product suggestions, enhancing the interest of the customers. The selected pricing approach can be

explained by the studies on the oligopolistic markets, which emphasise the changes in the consumer compensation and pricing behaviour in case of the differentiated value provision by the firms (Ahmed et al, 2025). Moreover, strategic pricing also helps M&S to achieve its financial target of ensuring margin growth, which will further pave the way to its high adjusted basic earnings per share improvement of 24.6p to 31.9p between 2025 and 2025 (M&S, 2025).

2.3 Place

Mindful Meal will be delivered in M&S Food hall stores across the country, which will be well visible and available to customers. Locations in the cold aisles near products already in place like the Eat well area would support the nutritional placement of the range and special end-cap displays would encourage instant recognition at the launch stage. The online channel is also essential, being available both on M & S.com and on M&S's collaboration with Ocado, and serving a broad area of the UK geography. Digital integration through the M&S App is able to accommodate order fulfilment (in the form of smooth ordering and customised promotions). The developed supply-chain operations of M&S such as cold-chain, data-based oversight, and supply-chain management assure consistent and fresh products during the distribution process (Watson et al., 2022). The reduction of net debt between PS2.17bn and PS1.79bn (M&S, 2025) indicates the increased financial stability the company enjoys, as the net debt decrease allows the company to invest in the logistical infrastructure in the long run. Good place strategy increases the product reliability, stock-outs are minimised, and the products meet consumer expectations of convenience and availability.

2.4 Promotion

The marketing plan of Mindful Meals consists of online interactions, in-store communication and brand narration. Themed launch campaign- "Eat well. Live Mindfully." will promote the health, sustainability and convenience features of the brand via the social media channels like Instagram, Tik Tok and YouTube. Partnerships with nutritionists, fitness celebrities and wellness leaders will aid in legitimising the brand and reach younger customers. The in-store sampling events will promote trials and enable the customers to feel the better taste that comes with the M&S products (Dinh, 2025). V Sparks loyalty integration allows leveraging personalised push notifications and targeted suggestions, which reinforce customer retention. PR activities will include getting the brand covered in lifestyle and health magazines, which

will strengthen the association of the brand to the new eating habits. The relevance is ensured throughout the year with seasonal campaigns being Veganuary or summer wellness. Evidence-based thinking about the superiority of the marketing mix modelling shows the way that information may be used to promote allocations within channels in order to enhance the returns on investment (Mulc et al., 2025). In line with the concepts of inclusive marketing, the focus of communication is on accessibility, diversity and responsible living (Grieco, 2024). This combined strategy helps in good brand recognition and successful consumer interaction.

ELEMENT 3: PITCH MARKETING STRATEGY.

Company

Marks and Spencer is among the most reputable UK retailers with a workforce of more than 63,000 colleagues serving in 1,053 stores and is bringing PS13.9 billion in statutory revenue in 2025 and increasing its profit before tax and adjusting items by 22.2% (M&S, 2025). It has a strong financial base and brand that will see M&S grow into innovative food categories.

Problem/Opportunity

People are becoming more and more demanding of healthier, convenient and ethically prepared foods, leaving a definite market gap in the ready meal sector dominated by plant-based products that will be easily prepared and provide a nutritional balance without question. It is one of the opportunities M&S may leverage in order to extend its relatability to younger health-conscious consumers.

New Brand

The proposed solution is M&S Mindful Meals, a high-end plant-based ready-meal brand in line with the company with its Eat well standards, sustainability objectives and taste leadership.

Segmentation (Demographic, Psychographic, Geographic)

Mindful Meals targets professionals aged 22–40 (demographic) prioritising nutrition, sustainability and convenience in their food choices (psychographic). They frequently opt for ready meals and prefer plant-based options in alignment with responsible consumption habits. Geographically, the brand prioritises urban UK locations, where busy working lifestyles and higher access to M&S Foodhalls create strong demand for premium, health-oriented ready meals.

Marketing Mix Strategies

The product strategy provides nutritionally balanced, plant-based meals designed for health-conscious, time-pressed consumers. The pricing strategy prefers a premium-accessible level suited to young professionals willing to pay more for quality, sustainability and convenience.

Expected Impact

It is assumed that Mindful Meals will enhance the performance of M&S in the Food category and appeal to younger consumers and build the brand image of a responsible and innovative retailer.

M&S MINDFUL MEALS – MARKETING STRATEGY



Company overview

Marks and Spencer is among the most reputable UK retailers with a workforce of more than 63,000 colleagues serving in 1,053 stores and is bringing PS13.9 billion in statutory revenue in 2025 and increasing its profit before tax and adjusting items by 22.2% (MandS, 2025). It has a strong financial base and brand that will see M&S grow into innovative food categories.

New Brand

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MARKETING MIX SUMMARY

THE PRODUCT STRATEGY PROVIDES NUTRITIONALLY BALANCED, PLANT-BASED MEALS DESIGNED FOR HEALTH-CONSCIOUS, TIME-PRESSED CONSUMERS. THE PRICING STRATEGY PREFERS A PREMIUM-ACCESSIBLE LEVEL SUITED TO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR QUALITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND CONVENIENCE.



Problem/Opportunity

People are becoming more and more demanding of healthier, convenient and ethically prepared foods, leaving a definite market gap in the ready meal sector dominated by plant-based products that will be easily prepared and provide a nutritional balance without question. It is one of the opportunities M&S may leverage in order to extend its relatability to younger health-conscious consumers.



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EXPECTED IMPACT

IT IS ASSUMED THAT MINDFUL MEALS WILL ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE OF M&S IN THE FOOD CATEGORY AND APPEAL TO YOUNGER CONSUMERS AND BUILD THE BRAND IMAGE OF A RESPONSIBLE AND INNOVATIVE RETAILER.

ELEMENT 4: Reflection

The concept of Mindful Meals needed to be developed through building a brand strategy based on consumer insight, organisational capability and market evidence. The activity included the analysis of the strengths of M&S, researching consumer trends towards plant-based diets and working with the marketing theory in order to develop a consistent strategic proposal.

First, I was confronted by the necessity to combine creativity with rigid evidence-based thinking. My confidence grew as I went through, given that the M&S Annual Report presented good financial and operational grounds, and the marketing theory presented by Kumar (2023) and Grewal and Levy (2021) allowed me to contextualise my decisions.

The best thing about the process was the ability to correlate the consumer trends with the Food performance data of M&S to substantiate the relevance of plant-based ready meals. The promotional strategy was enhanced with the utilisation of digital marketing principles as suggested by Chaffey and Smith (2022) and AI-driven insights as suggested by Mulc et al. (2025). One of the weaknesses, however, was that it was hard to reduce consumer segments in a manner that seemed both realistic and analytically sound.

The assignment helped me to learn more about the role of STDP frameworks in strategic clarity. The complexity of mapping real consumer motivations was observed in segmenting the individual by the demographic, psychographic and behavioural variables. The interdependence between product design, pricing logic, distribution capability and communications that I have come to appreciate after the 4ps analysis. The considerations by Rachmad about AI and hyper-personalisation highlighted the fact that the marketing environment is changing to a data-driven decision making, which further confirms the necessity to adapt continuously.

In order to become better in the future, I would enhance my ability to work with data analytics and consumer research skills to better segmentation. I would also become more proficient in AI-based marketing technologies and performance measurement that would allow making decisions in dynamic and competitive marketing closer and more evidence-based.

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Conclusion

This assignment has shown how Marks and Spencer can effectively react to changing consumer demand by designing the Mindful Meals brand. Through using the STDP framework, the target segment and value proposition were well defined with the trends of the market and organisational capacity supporting them. The marketing blend has converted the strategic intent into practical product, pricing, distribution and promotion choices, consistent with the premium but affordable positioning of M&S. The analysis of reflection shows the significance of evidence-based decision-making, fact-driven marketing and flexibility in a swift setting. All in all, Mindful Meals is a potential and strategically rational growth prospect of M&S.

