



MARKETING PLAN ON SUBWAY

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Executive Summary

This marketing report presents a strategic product development plan for Subway to re-launch its iconic £5 footlong product with new vegan options. In response to rising inflation, changing dietary preferences and increasing competition, Subway had to adapt to engage with price-sensitive, health-conscious consumers. This product promotion is designed to restore affordability while meeting current consumer demand for value, customization and healthy alternatives. The campaign will be implemented over a 12-month period from September 2025 to August 2026, guided by the SOSTAC framework.

Based on environment and market analysis, SMART goals are set including increasing footlong sales by 15%, customer retention by 10%, and vegan option sales by 20% by August 2026. With the clear promotion goals, Subway aims to strengthen market share, drive sales growth and increase brand relevance in the evolving UK fast food industry.

Through the STP model, the strategy of this plan targets convenience-seeking commuters, budget-conscious consumers and health-oriented individuals, particularly vegans, and Subway will position itself as an affordable, healthier alternative to fast food. Tactically, the 7Ps marketing mix is the foundation for execution, with highlights including an expanded vegan product line, transparent pricing, targeted promotions, and improved digital ordering and customer service processes. To put the strategy and tactics into practice, Gantt charts were applied in detail to determine the timeline, budget, and team responsible for plan execution. Through careful deployment, the KPIs for each goal will be strictly monitored, accompanied by timely adjustments and optimizations to ensure goal achievement.

Finally, recommendations on localized marketing, technology adoption and a hybrid store model are raised for further improving its competitiveness and ultimately regaining its share of the UK fast food market.

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1. Introduction

Subway, a global fast-food franchise known for its customisable submarine sandwiches, has maintained a strong presence in the UK market (Bashir, 2025). However, rising competition changing consumer preferences, and economic pressures necessitate a strategic revaluation. With inflation driving up the cost of living, UK consumers are more price-sensitive than ever, prompting fast food chains to revisit value-based offerings (Peacock, 2023). Subway's iconic \$5 footlong promotion, once a driver of growth, generated \$3.8B in sales in the 2008-09 fiscal year alone (Crockett, 2024). Although it was hit by the pandemic and over-franchising to be taken off the shelves, in today's price-sensitive times, it could be revitalised in the UK to address current market challenges. This report outlines a detailed marketing plan focused on product development, specifically the reoccurrence of the £5 footlong promotion, including new vegan options, to improve Subway's market performance.

2. Main findings

After completing the strategic audit, Subway is reported to face multiple external and internal challenges in the UK market. Macro factors such as inflation and health trends impact consumer behaviour, while micro-level issues include intense competition from brands like Greggs and Pret A Manger (Bhattacharya, 2023). Internally, Subway requires a refreshed product line and pricing strategy to stay relevant. The strategic objective identified is product development through the return of the £5 footlong, expanded to include vegan-friendly options (Protz, 2024). This initiative aims to increase sales, attract new customers, and retain existing ones, especially value-sensitive and health-conscious consumers. A SOSTAC-based plan will guide the implementation and monitoring of this strategy.

3. SOSTAC

The SOSTAC framework was originally created by UK-based marketer PR Smith in the 1990s, which is widely recognised for its structured approach to marketing and business planning (Chaffey and Smith, 2022). SOSTAC is an acronym stands for Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control, each representing a key component of the planning process. Through these parts of the plan, a 12-month marketing campaign from September 2025 to August 2026 of £5 footlong product will be presented.

3.1 Situation

From the PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces analysis, the insights can be drawn that the UK fast-food market is experiencing shifts affected by macroeconomic pressures and evolving customer expectations. With inflation and a rising cost of living, affordability has become a key decision factor for consumers. As shown in SWOT analysis (Figure 1), Subway, although widely recognised, has seen declining sales due to outdated product offerings and inconsistent promotions. Internally, Subway possesses a strong brand and wide franchise network, but lacks innovation and value propositions compared to competitors.



Figure 1 SWOT Analysis of Subway⁴¹

However, health consciousness is on the rise, with increasing demand for vegan and lower-calorie meals (Talbot and Branley-Bell, 2022). Thus, reviving the £5 footlong promotion, enhanced with modern flavours and vegan choices, provides an opportunity to reengage cost-conscious and health-aware consumers.

3.2 Objectives

Establishing SMART objectives is critical for the success of any marketing plan, where goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Solntsev et al., 2022). For Subway in the UK, the following objectives provide a clear map for enhancing market performance through focused initiatives.

- **Objective 1:** Increase sales of footlong products in the UK by 15% within 12 months through the reintroduction of the £5 footlong promotion.

SMART	Description
Specific	The objective is to increase sales of footlong products in the UK market.
Measurable	A 15% increase, measured by sales figures.
Achievable	Achievable based on the product's history of success and the current economy's increased demand for value for money products.
Relevant	Directly related to Subway's overall strategy to improve performance in the marketplace, especially for price-sensitive consumers.
Time-bound	To be completed within 12 months.

- **Objective 2:** Improve customer retention rates by 10% year-on-year via loyalty incentives tied to footlong purchases.

SMART	Description
Specific	Make a clear case for improving customer retention rates by 10% year-on-year via loyalty incentives tied to footlong purchases.
Measurable	Measured by year-over-year change in customer retention
Achievable	Given that Subway has a membership system in place, it is feasible to achieve growth by promoting footlong product.
Relevant	Loyalty improvement delivers long-term benefits and is consistent with the company's goal of increasing customer lifecycle value.
Time-bound	The annual cycle is time-bound.

- **Objective 3:** Achieve a 20% increase in vegan product sales by August 2026 through emphasising new vegan options in footlong product.

SMART	Description
Specific	Increase vegan product sales by introducing new vegan footlong options.
Measurable	Growth target of 20%, tracked based on sales data.
Achievable	Based on the current rapid growth in demand for vegan food in the UK, it is achievable.
Relevant	In line with the brand's 'Eat Fresh' positioning and the strategic need to expand into new segments (health/environmental consumers).
Time-bound	The deadline is August 2026.

These objectives address both financial performance and brand equity, supporting Subway's broader aim to regain market share. Sales growth will be supported by effective communication of value and product enhancements, while customer retention will be fostered through specific tactics and targeted efforts. Vegan product expansion aligns with health trends and environmental concerns, enhancing Subway's relevance to modern consumers (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2024).

3.3 Strategy

The strategy for this footlong product promotion is based on the STP model and related strategic framework, which centres on understanding and meeting the needs of different consumer segments while focusing on the visions and targets of the brand.

3.3.1 STP Analysis

The STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) marketing model is a well-known strategic method, which is a strategy that makes marketing communications more defined, relevant, focused and personalised to effectively engage the target market (Ezimoghomo-Moran, 2023).

- **Segmentation:** The market is segmented based on demographics (age, income), behaviour (lifestyle, value perception, health-focused), and psychology (life attitude, environmental awareness).
- **Targeting:** The primary customer targets are:
 - 1) Office workers seeking convenient, quick meals during lunch breaks.

Office workers represent a large segment of the urban fast-food market due to their demand for speed, convenience, and customisation during short lunch breaks (Zheng,

2024). Subway's customizable sandwiches and speedy service align with this group's needs.

2) Price-sensitive consumers affected by inflation.

The UK's cost-of-living crisis has significantly influenced purchasing decisions, pushing consumers to seek out affordable meal options. According to recent research, affordability is now a key determinant of fast-food choices (Mintel, 2023).

3) Health-conscious individuals, including vegans and vegetarians.

An increasing number of UK consumers are opting for plant-based or health-focused food. In 2022, over 40% of consumers reported reducing meat consumption for health or ethical reasons (Statista, 2023).

- **Positioning:** Subway positions itself as a healthy, customizable, and affordable fast-food brand. To cater the expectations of fast-food audience, this marketing plan will reinforce its value-for-money positioning while introducing fresh, innovative product options including vegan choices.

3.3.2 Brand Positioning Map



Figure 2 Brand Positioning Map of Fast-Food Industry (DEANLONG, 2021)

The map compares major competitors in the UK fast food market based on healthiness and price. It can be analysed that Greggs and Pret A Manger are the biggest competitors of Subway in healthy food area. Gregg has been able to achieve rapid growth in the UK in recent years because it occupies the bottom right-hand corner of the map, making Subway

lose its edge on price (Bhattacharya, 2023). To gain more competitiveness, SUBWAY should try to occupy the quadrant offering high health value at an affordable price point.

3.3.3 Porter's Generic Strategy

Porter's generic strategy is a framework that helps firms to position themselves in the market based on cost, differentiation and focus on specific market segments (Ali and Anwar, 2021). Subway will adopt a Cost Leadership strategy, offering quality meals at competitive prices. Reviving the £5 footlong with improved ingredients and vegan choices caters to price-conscious consumers without compromising on health or taste. Subway's global supply chain and standardised operations will support this mode, enabling economies of scale and reducing per-unit costs (Mitchell, 2024).

3.3.4 Ansoff's Matrix

Developed by Igor Ansoff in 1957, the Ansoff Matrix provides a structured way to evaluate different growth strategies based on new or existing products and markets, with 4 types including Market Penetration, Market Development, Product Development, and Diversification (Peterdy, 2023).



Figure 3 Ansoff Matrix (Peter Boolkah, 2023)←

Subway's strategy aligns with Product Development by reintroducing £5 footlong with updated ingredients and new vegan options, responding to both evolving dietary trends and consumer nostalgia. This approach is effective for mature brands like Subway seeking renewed engagement from both loyal and lost customers.

3.4 Tactic

To implement the strategic vision effectively, Subway's marketing tactics are built around the 7Ps Marketing Mix, which is a conceptual framework that emphasises the main decisions made in configuring marketing offerings to suit the needs of customers (Sattapong and Suanmali, 2022). Each element is carefully designed below to support the overall goal of increasing the popularity of £5 footlong sandwich with a new vegan option, and driving customer retention.

3.4.1 Product

Subway will introduce a completely updated version of its iconic £5 footlong. The product line will now include a larger vegan line as well as other healthier alternatives to meet different dietary needs as well as societal eating trends. According to Ganatra et al. (2021), vegan-related products that have performed well in Subway in recent years, which provide the experience of support for this tactic. Additionally, Subway will continue its homemade offerings, enhancing the sandwich experience by offering a wider range of condiments, breads and toppings, allowing consumers to customise their orders to fit their dietary and taste preferences.

3.4.2 Price

The pricing at 5 pounds is at the heart of this marketing plan, reinforcing Subway's image as an affordable but quality-focused brand. According to the study from Singh et al. (2021), affordability has been proven to have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and brand image, even helping customer loyalty. A transparent pricing strategy paired with promotions that highlight nutritional benefits and cost savings compared to competitors will reinforce the value proposition.

3.4.3 Place

In terms of location selection, SUBWAY will strengthen its market presence in high-traffic urban centres, especially near office parks and transportation hubs, because these areas are full of time-constrained professionals and commuters, a core customer segment seeking convenient meal options (Sutarjo et al., 2024). Moreover, an improved online ordering system and partnerships with local delivery service companies ensure easy access to products even for busy professionals and families.

3.4.4 Promotion

A cross-channel advertising campaign will be divided into two parts, above the line (ATL) and below the line (BTL), centred on online and offline advertising, sales promotions and public partnerships. This integrated approach will ensure consistency in marketing messages and use unique strengths of each channel to improve campaign effectiveness, with ATL increasing brand exposure, and BTL improving customer retention (Barik and Mukherjee, 2023). The detailed marketing plan will be developed in the Action section.

3.4.5 People

It is critical to ensure employees are aware of new product benefits and customer service best practices. Investing in advanced customer relationship management system and regular training sessions will enhance the ability of frontline staff to deliver personalised service, thereby improving the overall customer experience (Kumolu-Johnson, 2024). Additionally, within the organisation, employee incentive programmes can promote a proactive sales culture by linking sales performance to the success of new campaigns.

3.4.6 Process

Research shows that digital transformation in order processing systems can efficiently increase sales efficiency and customer satisfaction (Wolniak et al., 2024). Thus, Subway can implement real-time feedback mechanisms such as digital surveys to quickly respond to operational issues and customer concerns, and adopting advanced analytics to monitor customer preferences and order patterns will also drive continuous process optimisation.

3.4.7 Physical Evidence

Physical Evidence's efforts, including environment, presentation, packaging, etc., are all proven to have positive impacts on sales. Therefore, Subway's storefront will communicate its new, healthy and affordable brand image through clear product posters, with upgraded website and apps functionality creating a seamless, visually appealing customer experience. Additionally, the data shows that over 56% of customers prefer eco-friendly packaging in food service (Sharma, 2025), so sustainable packaging will be used to highlight its commitment to environmental responsibility for attracting customers.

Each of these 7P elements is intertwined with comprehensive market research and customer insights. By consistently deploying these tactics across all touchpoints, Subway ensured that the plan resonated with its core audiences and achieved promotion objectives.

3.5 Action

To translate strategies and tactics into measurable outcomes, Subway will deploy a detailed action plan spanning from September 2025 to August 2026. A comprehensive Gantt chart will be applied to outline critical actions, timelines, budget and responsible teams. As a roadmap of marketing project, this tool helps track each milestone and progress, making it a particularly useful tool to present to senior management or clients for a quick overview (Martins, 2025).

Task \ Month	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Budget	Responsible Teams
1. Market Research & Product Testing	✓	✓											£30,000	R&D, Marketing
2. Product Launch and Optimization			✓	✓	✓								£30,000	R&D, Operations
3. ATL Campaign Planning	✓	✓	✓										£60,000	Marketing
3.1 Online Advertising			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£80,000	Digital Marketing Team
3.2 Offline Ads: Billboards, Print			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£70,000	Media Buying Team
4. BTL Campaign Planning	✓	✓	✓										£40,000	Marketing
4.1 In-Store Sales Promotions				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£40,000	Sales
4.2 Loyalty Programme			✓	✓	✓	✓							£20,000	CRM Team
4.3 Public Partnerships				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£30,000	PR, Events Team
5. Staff Training for Execution	✓	✓	✓										£10,000	HR, Training Team
6. Monitoring & KPI Reviews					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£10,000	Analytics, Marketing
TOTAL BUDGET													£420,000	

Figure 4 Gantt Chart of £5 Footlong Product Relaunching Plan

This Gantt chart details several key actions with a total budget of £420,000.

In the early stage, market research and product testing are the basis for gauging market demand and product quality before the product is launched, followed by continuous optimisation after release.

In ATL promotions, Online Advertising is the most essential part, which uses platforms like search engines and social media to target a broad demographic, increasing brand visibility and driving traffic (Nyagadza, 2022). Offline Ads such as Billboards and Print will also maintain a physical presence and can capture the attention of a large, diverse audience (Rabindranath and Singh, 2024).

BTL marketing is more targeted, including In-Store Sales Promotions directly influencing purchase decisions at the point of sale, followed by the Loyalty Programme focuses on customer retention and repeat business (Denga and Ahmed, 2023). Public Partnerships are also added to enhance brand reputation through collaborations and community-focused activities.

Additionally, Staff Training for Execution and Monitoring & KPI Reviews ensure effective implementation and performance evaluation respectively.

3.6 Control

To ensure Subway's marketing objectives are met, robust control mechanisms must be implemented. These mechanisms involve measuring, tracking, and optimising key KPIs regularly (Aithal and Aithal, 2023). Each KPI is directly linked to one of the SMART objectives to evaluate success and enable ongoing improvements.

- **KPI 1: Footlong Sales Growth (+15% within 12 months)**

This metric will track sales data through the point-of-sale (POS) system in all UK stores and will be compared to benchmark data before campaign launch on a monthly basis (Tyagi et al., 2024). In addition, Subway will adjust the ATL/BTL focus after identifying regional performance variances, and retargeting ads to high-potential regions. If growth is stagnant, A/B testing of marketing channels is required to identify the most effective sales drivers and adjust promotional strategies in a timely manner.

- **KPI 2: Customer Retention (+10% Year on Year)**

This indicator will track repeat purchase behaviour primarily through loyalty programme data in the CRM system, and monitor loyalty enrolment rates and reward redemptions on a monthly basis (Agarwal, 2023). Based on feedback, the plan will be refined, such as offering more relevant rewards or personalised loyalty rewards based on customer data segmentation. Other promotion mixes such as email marketing can also be further applied to improve customer retention and loyalty.

- **KPI 3: Vegan Footlong Sales Growth (+20% within 12 months)**

Monthly tracking of sales data for the product's vegan options will be the focus of the measurement. If sales growth is slow, Subway should consider adjusting flavours or running targeted campaigns for the vegan audience. Through user reviews and questionnaires combined with a marketing focus, the promotion of vegan choice will be improved over time (Ghaffari, 2022).

4. Recommendations

- **Strengthening localised marketing**

Although Subway is a global brand, the company can further strengthen its localisation strategy following the current trend of consumers emphasising “local value” and community belonging (Kovács et al., 2022). For example, the £5 footlong product could be launched in different cities with regional flavours, or partner with small local farms to source ingredients, emphasising the combination of regional culture and sustainable supply chains.

- **Technological Application**

In order to improve consumer experience and repurchase rate, Subway can further increase the construction of data-driven personalised recommendation system. For instance, by combining customers' online ordering records and consumption behaviour data, Subway can use AI algorithms to recommend their preferred flavour combinations, and display personalised promotional offers in the store's self-service ordering kiosks or mobile apps (Yaiprasert and Hidayanto, 2024).

- **Exploring Hybrid Store Models**

In the face of cost pressures such as inflation and rising rents, it is recommended that Subway explore more hybrid store models compared to traditional stores, such as small takeaway stores or stores that share space with convenience stores or gas stations (Mohd Shafie et al., 2021). These models not only reduce operating costs, but also provide the flexibility to test new products and respond quickly to changes in the market, helping to stabilise growth in the face of uncertainty.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Subway faces significant challenges in the UK from changing consumer preferences and economic pressures. However, by capitalising on its brand awareness and reviving its £5 footlong promotion with new vegan options, it could meet key market needs. The SOSTAC-based programme provided a structured approach to implementation, including situation analysis, goal setting, strategy development, tactical execution, action planning and control. Recommendations on localised marketing, technology adoption and hybrid store models can further enhance its competitiveness. By adhering to this plan, Subway is hopeful of regaining its share of the UK fast food market.

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Appendices

Figure 1 SWOT Analysis of Subway



Figure 2 Brand Positioning Map of Fast-Food Industry (DEANLONG, 2021)



Figure 3 Ansoff Matrix (Peter Boolkah, 2022)



Figure 4 Gantt Chart of £5 Footlong Product Relaunching Plan

Task \ Month	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Budget	Responsible Teams
1. Market Research & Product Testing	✓	✓											£30,000	R&D, Marketing
2. Product Launch and Optimization			✓	✓	✓								£30,000	R&D, Operations
3. ATL Campaign Planning	✓	✓	✓										£60,000	Marketing
3.1 Online Advertising			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£80,000	Digital Marketing Team
3.2 Offline Ads: Billboards, Print			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£70,000	Media Buying Team
4. BTL Campaign Planning	✓	✓	✓										£40,000	Marketing
4.1 In-Store Sales Promotions				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£40,000	Sales
4.2 Loyalty Programme			✓	✓	✓	✓							£20,000	CRM Team
4.3 Public Partnerships				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£30,000	PR, Events Team
5. Staff Training for Execution	✓	✓	✓										£10,000	HR, Training Team
6. Monitoring & KPI Reviews					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£10,000	Analytics, Marketing
TOTAL BUDGET													£420,000	