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Brand Extension Strategy for Unilever: "Dove Baby Nutrition"

1. Introduction

Businesses can launch new items that appeal to consumers, cut marketing expenses, and achieve quick market adoption by utilizing the power of an established brand. Additionally, brand expansion gives you a competitive edge over competitors who don't provide comparable goods or services. A successful brand extension not only allows firms to capitalize on their existing brand equity but also gives them a competitive edge over rivals who lack diversified portfolios. This assignment proposes a strategic brand extension for Unilever—launching a new product line under its well-established Dove brand: **Dove Baby Nutrition**.

2. Overview of Unilever and the Dove Brand

A well-known multinational corporation, Unilever controls a number of well-known brands in the food and beverage, personal care, and home care industries. Among its many brands, **Dove** stands out for its values of real beauty, gentleness, and skin sensitivity. Dove products are marketed as safe, nourishing, and suitable for sensitive skin, making the brand particularly popular among families and young mothers.

However, the brand has not yet entered the infant nutrition market, which represents a lucrative and complementary category. Dove Baby Nutrition is a suggested new brand extension that builds on this reputation and trust. The initiative aligns with growing demand among millennial and Gen Z parents for trustworthy, science-backed, and ethically produced nutrition options for their children.

2.1. Dove Baby Nutrition: A New Brand Extension

Unilever's current Dove Baby product line is a logical outgrowth of the proposed Dove Baby Nutrition brand extension. It launches a range of nutritious, healthy, and organic baby food items made to satisfy the nutritional and developmental requirements of infants and toddlers aged six months to three years. The product line echoes the brand's current commitment to care and trust by supporting parents looking to provide their kids with gentle, high-quality nutrition.

➤ Product Categories

There will be four main product categories in the Dove Baby Nutrition line:

- ❖ Organic Purees (Stages 1 and 2): Fruit and vegetable purees made with one or more ingredients.
- ❖ Infant Grains & Cereals: Enhanced with vital nutrients such as DHA, calcium, and iron. Rice cereal, oatmeal, quinoa blend, and multigrain mixtures are some of the variations.
- ❖ Plant-based and dairy-based infant formula: created in consultation with pediatric dietitians.
- ❖ Toddler Finger Foods and treats: Simple-to-chew treats such as puffed cereals, yogurt melts, and teething biscuits.

➤ Assurance of Health and Safety

- ❖ Each item in the Dove Baby Nutrition range will be certified organic in accordance with USDA and EU standards.
- ❖ Non-GMO and gluten-free when appropriate; tested for nutritional compliance and allergen safety; manufactured in accordance with Unilever's worldwide quality assurance systems
- ❖ Utilizing environmentally friendly materials and inks for branding clear labeling (age stage, nutritional value, and allergens) will be present on the packaging.

2.2. Justification for the Brand Extension

A well-thought-out brand extension needs to have a strong justification that is backed by brand strategy theory, consumer behavior insights, and market research. Unilever's Dove brand is being strategically and value-driven extended with the projected Dove Baby Nutrition product range. This section provides a concise explanation of the benefits and viability of this brand expansion.

2.2.1. Trust and the Brand-Consumer Relationship

By establishing itself as a company that values kindness, safety, and consideration, Dove has developed a strong emotional bond with its customers, particularly parents. Its

advertising initiatives, such as "Real Beauty" and the launch of Dove Baby, have increased customer loyalty and confidence. Strong brand equity makes it easier for customers to accept extensions, particularly when there is a high degree of perceived compatibility between the new and existing categories (Keller, 2013).

2.2.2. Making Use of Growth Potential and Market Trends

Due to factors like dual-income homes, growing health consciousness, and rising expenditure on high-end baby items, the worldwide baby food market is expected to reach over USD 120 billion by 2030 (Statista, 2023). Parents are actively looking for reputable companies that provide nutrient-dense, organic, and allergy-free baby food solutions.

2.2.3. Brand Differentiation and Competitive Advantage

At the moment, Unilever focuses mostly on baby care rather than baby nutrition, in contrast to rivals like Johnson & Johnson (skincare) and Nestlé (nutrition). This gap offers a special chance. Unilever can offer a comprehensive approach to baby well-being by integrating skincare and nutrition under one dependable brand—Dove—thereby gaining a clear competitive edge. Because parents are more likely to remain loyal to a company that meets their internal and external baby care demands.

2.2.4 Operational Readiness and Strategic Fit

Unilever's extensive infrastructure, global supply chain, R&D capacity, and strong presence in both personal care and food sectors make it highly capable of managing this type of cross-category expansion. The operational synergy between its existing baby product lines and proposed nutrition line ensures cost-effective development and rollout.

2.2.5. Target Market for Dove Baby Nutrition

Defining the target market for Dove Baby Nutrition involves a detailed understanding of modern consumer behavior, specifically among parents of infants and toddlers. These consumers are highly discerning when it comes to selecting baby products, prioritizing

quality, safety, and ethical considerations. The primary target market for Dove Baby Nutrition includes:

- Health-conscious parents aged 25–40
- Middle to upper-income families
- Environmentally aware consumers looking for sustainable baby food packaging
- Pediatricians and caregivers as secondary influencers

2.2.6. Marketing and Launch Strategy for Dove Baby Nutrition

Dove Baby Nutrition's marketing and launch plan must complement Unilever's larger goal of "making sustainable living commonplace." Dove's trusted identity will be reflected in the product's positioning, which will bring its principles of gentleness, care, and purity into the baby nourishment market.

❖ Pre-Launch Strategy

- **Market Research and Test Marketing:** Before the national rollout, Unilever will conduct localized **test marketing in urban centers** like London, Birmingham, and Manchester to assess demand, collect feedback, and optimize product formulations. In-home usage tests (IHUTs) will also be conducted with parenting communities and pediatric clinics.
- **Product Trials and Samples:**
 - Free trial packs distributed at **maternity hospitals, pediatrician clinics, and parenting seminars.**
 - **Subscription discounts** for first-time buyers on platforms like Amazon and Sainsbury's.
 - Collaboration with **baby clubs and mother-care communities** for trials and reviews
- **Influencer & Healthcare Collaboration:** To build early credibility:
 - Collaborate with **mom-bloggers, pediatricians, and nutritionists**
 - Provide educational content through **online parenting portals**, such as BabyCenter and local Face book parenting groups

❖ Launch Strategy

The official product launch will be **hybrid**, combining digital engagement with offline experiences. The phased strategy includes:

➤ Launch Events:

- A **flagship launch event** in urban areas with media presence, healthcare professionals, Unilever executives, and influencers.
- Simultaneous launch events in retail outlets and hospitals.
- Live streaming events on Facebook and YouTube

➤ Omnichannel Activation:

- Launch across **e-commerce (Amazon, Sainsbury's, Tesco Groceries)** and offline retail (Morrisons Superstore, Tesco Extra.)
- In-store visibility through branded shelves, endcaps, and standees featuring **Dove Baby Nutrition ambassadors.**

➤ Digital First Campaigns:

- A dedicated digital launch campaign under the hash tag: **#GentleNutrition.**
- Story-driven ads on Instagram, YouTube, and Meta featuring real parents sharing their experience.
- 30-second ad reels featuring key USPs: **"Organic. Trusted. Dove."**

❖ Post-Launch Growth Strategy

➤ Brand Engagement & Loyalty

➤ Cross-Promotions with Dove Baby Skincare: Bundle Dove Baby Nutrition products with skincare kits for a **"Complete Baby Wellness Box"**, fostering multi-category trial and brand stickiness.

➤ Customer Feedback Loop

➤ International Expansion Strategy

2.2.7. Communication Message & Media Plan

Element	Strategy
Message	“Care for your baby, from the inside out.”
Tone	Warm, nurturing, scientific (pediatric-backed)
Channels	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, parenting blogs, retail POS, newsletters
KOLs	Pediatricians, nutritionists, lifestyle vloggers, health-conscious mothers
Frequency	High frequency in the first 90 days post-launch, followed by sustained engagement campaigns

Measuring Success

Market performance, brand perception, customer engagement, and operational efficiency are just a few of the business variables that must be assessed using both quantitative and qualitative criteria in order to determine the success of the Dove Baby Nutrition brand extension.

2.2.8. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A robust set of **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** will be used to measure the effectiveness of the launch and ongoing performance:

KPI Category	Indicator	Purpose
Sales Metrics	- Units sold per month - Revenue growth - Repeat purchase rate	To assess market demand and sales momentum
Market Penetration	- Market share in baby nutrition sector - Retail coverage ratio	To evaluate competitiveness and availability

Customer Metrics	- Customer acquisition cost (CAC) - Customer lifetime value (CLV)	To measure marketing ROI and customer value
Digital Metrics	- Website traffic - Conversion rates - Social media engagement (likes, shares, comments)	To evaluate online presence and promotional effectiveness
Brand Health Metrics	- Brand awareness lift - Net Promoter Score (NPS) - Customer satisfaction (CSAT) surveys	To understand customer loyalty and brand perception
Operational Metrics	- Brand awareness lift - Net Promoter Score (NPS)	To monitor backend and logistics performance

2.2.9. Success Benchmarks (First 12 Months)

Unilever will evaluate success in three strategic phases:

Phase	Timeframe	Success Targets
Launch Phase	Months 1–3	Achieve awareness reach of 2 million impressions - Generate 50,000+ sample requests
Growth Phase	Months 4–6	- Capture 8–10% market share in the baby nutrition segment - Achieve 40% repeat customer rate
Expansion Phase	Months 7–12	- Expand to 5 new cities - Launch 2 new SKUs based on feedback –Maintain 80% customer satisfaction rating

2.2.10. Visual Graph: Projected Market Growth in Year 1:

Quarter	Target Sales (in Units)	Achieved (Forecast)
Q1	10,000	8,500
Q2	20,000	19,000
Q3	35,000	33,500

Q4	50,000	52,000
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3. Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) Strategy for Dove Baby Nutrition

For Dove Baby Nutrition to reach the correct target with an appealing message, a well-thought-out STP approach is necessary. In order to properly position the brand extension in the baby nutrition industry, Unilever will divide up its potential customer base into the most appropriate segments.

3.1 Segmenting the Market

Based on common traits, market segmentation separates the large baby nutrition market into meaningful, quantifiable categories. Dove Baby Nutrition has a multifaceted segmentation strategy:

- Segmenting by demographics
 - ✓ Parents' ages: 25 to 40
 - ✓ Income: Households with middle-class to upper-class incomes
 - ✓ Education: Parents with a college degree or a professional job
 - ✓ Families with infants (6 months to 3 years old) comprise the family life cycle.
 - ✓ Geographically, Bangladesh is primarily composed of urban and semi-urban regions, such as London, Birmingham, and Manchester.
- ✓ Psychographic Segmentation
 - ✓ **Lifestyle:** Health-conscious, time-constrained, value-driven families
 - ✓ **Values:** Trust, transparency, safety, sustainability
 - ✓ **Parenting style:** Nurturing, research-based, digitally connected
 - ✓ **Brand beliefs:** Preference for well-established, ethical brands
- ✓ Behavioral Segmentation
 - ✓ **Purchasing behavior:** Online shoppers, users of mobile parenting apps, loyalty program participants
 - ✓ **Product benefits sought:** Nutrition quality, organic ingredients, ease of use
 - ✓ **Usage rate:** Daily or routine consumers of baby food and supplements

3.2 Targeting Strategy

Based on the segmentation analysis, Dove Baby Nutrition will adopt a differentiated targeting strategy, focusing on a primary and secondary target audience.

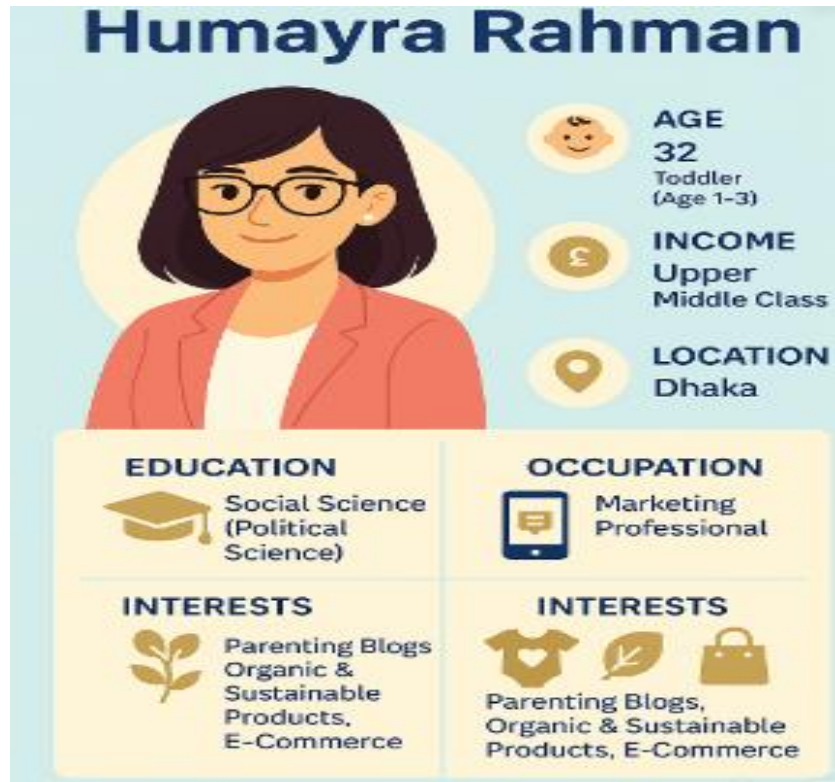
✓ Primary Target Segment

- **Urban mothers aged 25–35**
- Have at least one child under 3 years old
- Middle to upper-middle income bracket
- Use social media and online shopping platforms for baby care purchases
- Trust global FMCG brands, especially in sensitive categories like baby food

✓ Secondary Target Segment

- **Working parents** in dual-income households
- Reside in metropolitan or semi-urban locations
- Highly influenced by healthcare professionals, peer reviews, and convenience
- Prefer subscription-based or bulk-purchase options

The brand will appeal to these segments through emotional storytelling, expert endorsements, and functional product benefits, differentiating itself in a growing market of informed parents.



3.3. Brand Positioning

Dove Baby Nutrition will be positioned as a premium, gentle and scientifically-formulated baby food solution that continues Dove's trusted legacy in baby care. The positioning statement is as follows: "For modern parents who seek safe, gentle, and nourishing food options for their babies, Dove Baby Nutrition offers a clinically tested and ethically produced product line developed by nutritionists and backed by the trusted Dove brand."

3.4. Positioning Elements

Element	Dove Baby Nutrition's Approach
Target Audience	Health-conscious, time-constrained parents with babies aged 6–36 months
Brand Promise	Gentle nutrition backed by science and trust

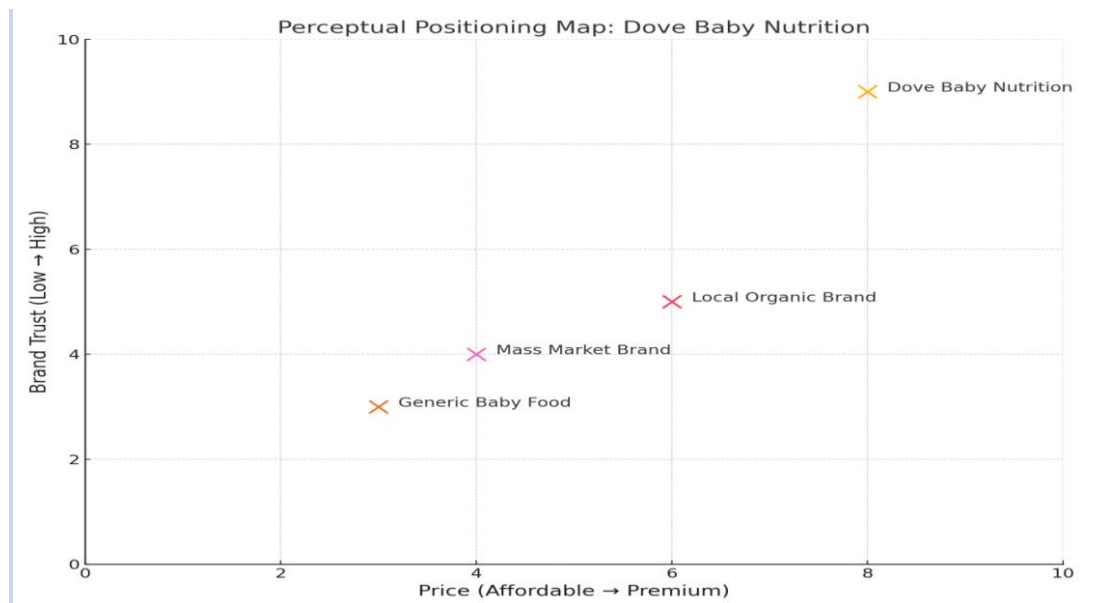
Reason to Believe	Created by pediatric nutrition experts, using organic, allergen-free ingredients, and sustainable packaging
Brand Personality	Caring, reassuring, trustworthy, modern

3.5. Perceptual Map for Dove Baby Nutrition

A Perceptual Positioning Map (also called a Perceptual Map **or** Positioning Map) is a visual tool used in marketing to show how consumers perceive a product or brand in relation to its competitors, based on certain key attributes.

- X-Axis: Price
(From "Affordable" → "Premium")
- Y-Axis: Brand Trust
(From "Low Trust/Unfamiliar" → "High Trust/Familiar")

Now, let's visualize this with a simplified diagram:



✓ Why It Matters

Using this perceptual map, Unilever can clearly see that Dove Baby Nutrition:

- Occupies a **distinct premium and trustworthy space** in the market.
- Has an opportunity to **differentiate** from lower-cost or unfamiliar competitors.
- Can confidently communicate its **unique selling proposition (USP)**: "Gentle, scientifically-backed nutrition from a brand parents already trust."

4. Customer Persona for Dove Baby Nutrition

4.1. Customer Persona: "Maya – The Health-Conscious Modern Mother"

Maya – The Health-Conscious Modern Mother



PSYCHOGRAPHIC

Lifestyle: Busy, health-conscious, digitally connected, socially aware

Parenting Approach: Gentle, informed, focused on nutrition and early development

Values: Trust, safety, transparency, sustainability

Media Consumption: Relies on social media, baby blogs

Buying Habits: Buys online and offline; prefers well-reviewed and trusted brands

Emotional Drivers: Cares deeply about baby's safety, immune development and long-term health

Pain Points: Lack of time, confusing ingredient labels,

DEMOGRAPHIC

Age: 30 years old

Marital Status:

Children: One child, 8-month-old baby boy

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Education: Master's degree in Business Administration

Occupation: Mid-level executive at a private bank

Household Income: BDT 120,000–150,000 per month

Living Environment: Urban, nuclear family setup

BEHAVIORAL

Purchasing Frequency: Buys baby food bi-weekly or monthly

Preferred Channels: Superstores, e-commerce, pharmacy

Influencers: Pediatricians, mommy bloggers, peer reviews

Response to Marketing: Prefers soft, emotional advertising with educational content

Why Dove Baby Nutrition Appeals to Maya

Brand Trust: Already trusts Dove for skincare, so she feels confident extending that trust to baby products

✓ Why Dove Baby Nutrition Appeals to Maya

- Brand Trust
- Gentle Formula
- Modern Convenience
- Emotional Connection
- Response to Marketing

4.2. Secondary Persona Snapshot: "Tanvir & Liana – Dual-Income New Parents"

Attribute	Details
Age	34 and 32
Profession	Engineer & Software Developer
Location	Manchester
Child	One daughter (1 year old)
Traits	Tech-savvy, budget-conscious but quality-focused, environmentally aware
Needs	Affordable nutrition with no artificial preservatives, supports eco-packaging, values brand reputation

4.3. Use of Persona in Marketing Strategy

By understanding personas like Maya, Unilever can:

- Design product packaging that clearly communicates benefits (e.g., “organic,” “no added sugar”)
- Run digital campaigns on Facebook and parenting forums
- Offer bundle deals or subscription services via e-commerce platforms
- Partner with doctors and nutritionists for product endorsements

5. Marketing Mix Strategy (7Ps) for Dove Baby Nutrition

Unilever will employ a thorough marketing mix strategy based on the 7Ps model—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence—to guarantee the successful introduction and long-term expansion of Dove Baby Nutrition. Every important component of the customer experience and brand delivery is covered by this all-encompassing strategy.

✓ Goods

In order to meet the developmental needs of newborns and toddlers between the ages of six months and three years, Dove Baby Nutrition will provide a high-end line of organic and nutritionally balanced baby food items. Organic purees based on stages (fruits and vegetables)

- Infant Cereals with added iron, zinc, DHA, and calcium
- Plant-based and dairy-based baby formula (cow's milk, soy, and oats)
- Toddler Teething Biscuits and Probiotic Snacks

Every item will be:

- Pediatrician-approved and allergen-tested
- Devoid of artificial flavors, added sugars, and preservatives
- Organic certification (USDA and EU criteria)
- Compostable, recyclable, or BPA-free packaging

✓ Price

Dove Baby Nutrition will follow a value-based pricing model that reflects the brand's premium quality and organic certifications. The strategy includes:

- Slightly premium pricing (positioned above mass-market brands but below luxury organic competitors)
- Bundled pricing offers (e.g., "Nourishment Starter Pack" including purees + cereal + lotion)
- Loyalty programs and monthly subscription discounts for repeat buyers
- Occasional price promotions and introductory trial offers to encourage first-time purchases

✓ Location (Dissemination)

Maximum availability will be guaranteed both online and offline thanks to the distribution plan. Among the channels are:

- E-commerce sites: Dove's own website, Amazon, Sainsbury's, and Asda

- Retail chains include pharmacies, baby care centers, and supermarkets (like Tesco and Sainsbury's).
 - Special starter kits and sample placements for pediatric and maternity clinics
- ✓ Promotion

Promotional efforts will focus on building awareness, educating parents, and creating emotional connections with the brand. The strategy includes:

- Social media campaigns using hashtags like #GentleNutrition and #CareFromWithin
 - Influencer collaborations with mom-bloggers, parenting YouTubers, and pediatricians
 - In-store displays and free sampling in baby expos, maternity wards, and clinics
 - Content marketing through parenting blogs and short-form video content about baby nutrition
- ✓ Physical Evidence

To support brand authenticity and transparency, Dove Baby Nutrition will focus on delivering visual and tactile proof of its values.

Examples:

- Certifications on packaging (USDA Organic, BPA-Free)
- Sustainable, pastel-toned pouches with clear labeling
- Physical presence at parenting workshops and baby care expos
- Testimonials and UGC (user-generated content) featured in-store and online



6. Conclusion

Unilever's expansion of the Dove brand into baby nutrition offers a strategic opportunity to capitalize on brand equity, meet rising parental expectations, and enter a growing consumer market. By leveraging a thoughtful STP strategy, comprehensive 7Ps marketing mix, and emotionally driven brand positioning, Dove Baby Nutrition is well-poised to become a trusted name in baby health and wellness globally.

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