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**Module Title:** Marketing Fundamentals LCBB4004

**Assignment Title:** Assessment 1. Marketing Fundamentals Analysis and Evaluation

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**‘Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large’ (Ama, 2017)**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The following assessment has been conducted analysing the role and the techniques of Marketing used by the McDonald’s Corporate Company. Main information has been collected through the official website of the company, the McDonald’s Annual Report 2019, and several journal articles. The information has later been compared with books related to Marketing to identify the marketing strategy adopted by the company. The analysis has been conducted following the 5 stages of the Marketing Process, focusing on the Situational Analysis (conducting the SWOT and 5’s Porter Forces analysis) and focusing on the Strategies.



**Company:** McDonald's Corporate

*[Sources: (McDonald's website, 2021)]*

**Founders:** Richard McDonald, Maurice McDonald (Founders of the Restaurant); Ray Kroc (McDonald's Corporate)

**CEO:** Chris Kempczinski

**Entered in UK market in:** 1974

**Company's motto:** QSC&V (Quality, Service, Cleanliness & Value)"

**Industry and sector:** Public – Fast Food Restaurant

**Global presence:** 118 countries

## 5 STAGES OF MARKETING PROCESS

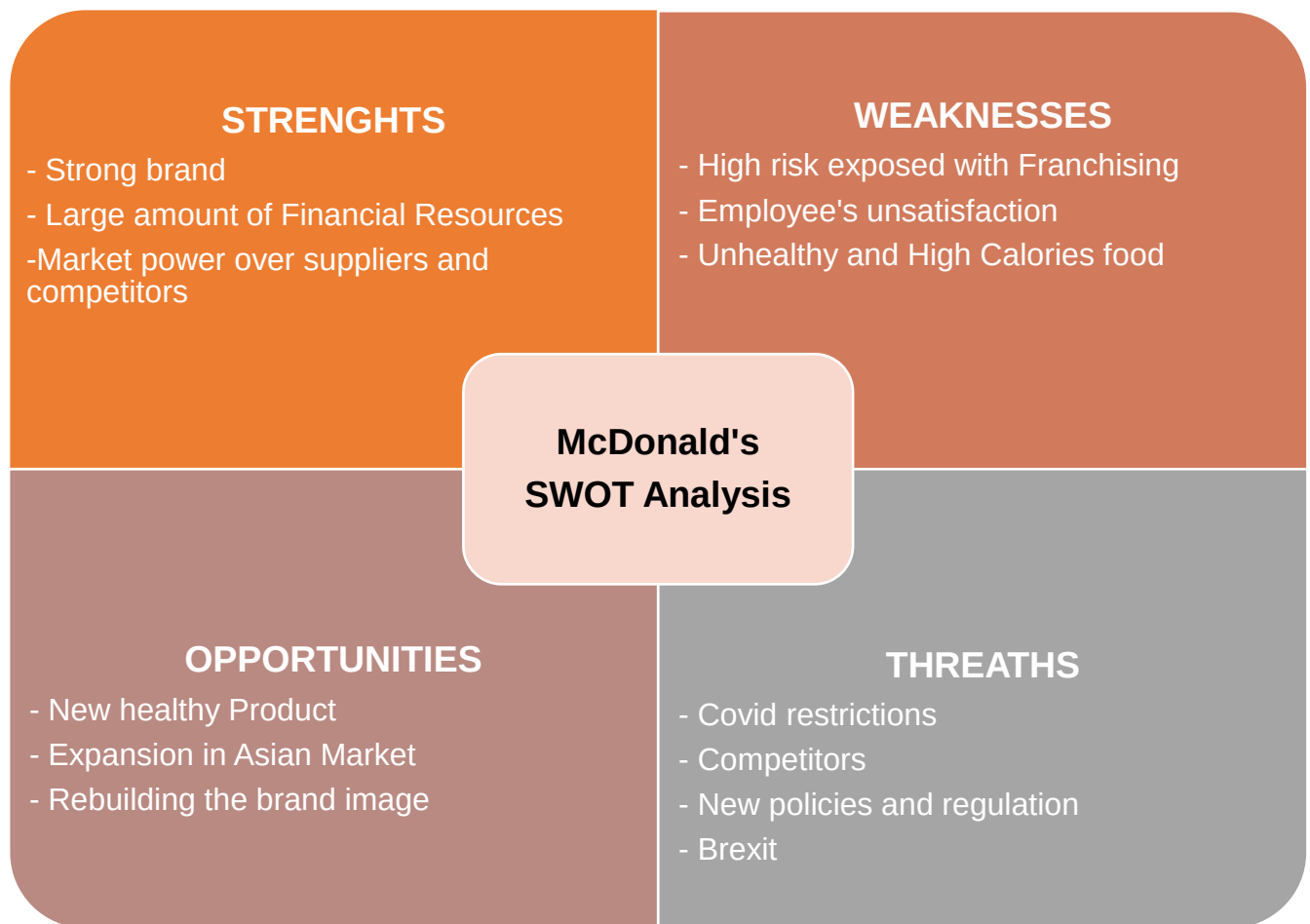


*(SmartArt Graphic Excel – Staggered Process)*

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

(Wilson and Gilligan, 2017) It is the management process of analysing internal and external forces that affect the business. It assists managers to plan and develop new strategies for the business, as it gives them an overview of the entire aspects of the business. By monitoring the competitor's weaknesses, managers can create opportunities for their company.

## SWOT ANALYSIS



[Titled Matrix, Excel – Source: Slideshare (2018)]

## STRENGTHS

### -STRONG BRAND

According to Krock, Anderson (2012) and with the website Forbes (2020) McDonald's Brand is ranked within the top 10 of the most valuable brand in the world with a Brand Value of \$ 46.1 B. It is also ranked as the first valuable brand in the Industry of the restaurant.

### -LARGE AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Balance Sheet of McDonald's Corporation for the fiscal year ended in 2020 report a Current Asset: \$ 6.24 B and a Total Asset: \$ 52.63 B. (Marketwatch, 2021)

### -MARKET POWER OVER SUPPLIERS AND COMPETITORS

An example of the Market power of McDonald's company is its long-term relationship with Coca Cola since 1955. In order of an agreement and to the fact that McDonald's is the largest restaurant customer of Coca Cola, the latter is not allowed to sell its Coca Cola syrup to other restaurants for a lower price. (Gelles, 2014)

## WEAKNESSES:

### -HIGH RISK EXPOSED WITH FRANCHISING

Although McDonald's company has a strong relationship with its franchising, more than 90% of the company is operated by franchising, exposing the company to certain risk: The control of company is limited and strictly depends for several aspect by the franchising. One of this aspect is the revenue, directed affected by the ability of the franchising to generate income. Poor management operating could also directly affect the brand's reputation. (McDonald's Annual Report, 2019)

### -EMPLOYEE'S UNSATISFACTION

Employees have been protesting many times in different part of the world. During the last strike in the UK, in November 2019 (BBC 2019), employees protested to obtain:

- 40 hours guarantee job contract
- Pay rise (employee starts working in McDonald's with the minimum wage salary)
- End of youth rates
- To know their Rota four weeks in advance

### - UNHEALTHY AND HIGH CALORIES FOOD

According to BBC News (2005) and Santora (2002), McDonald's has been often criticized for its unhealthy and high calories food. Many people consider McDonald's major responsibility for society's obesity issue, so much that in America the company has been lawsuit several times in court. The company has also been accused of holding intentionally the nutrition information of its product. To avoid this issue, from 2006 was introduced a new packaging with all the nutritional details printed over. Although the problem of the transparency of the nutritional information was resolved, the products are still considered with a high-calorie count.

The following table reports the amounts of calorie's sample of a medium meal, referring to the nutrition information provided by the Nutrition Calculator (2021) on the McDonald's website.

| SANDWICH                                  | MEDIUM DRINK                                   | MEDIUM SIDE                    | TOTAL KCAL |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Big Mac<br>508 kcal                       | Coca-Cola Classic<br>170 kcal                  | McDonald's Fries<br>337 kcal   | 1015 kcal  |
| Filet-o-Fish<br>388 kcal                  | Mango and Pineapple Fruit Smoothie<br>187 kcal | Mozzarella Dippers<br>256 kcal | 831 kcal   |
| Chicken Legend with Cool Mayo<br>519 kcal | Vanilla Milkshake<br>366 kcal                  | Carrot Bag<br>34 kcal          | 919 kcal   |
| Vegetable Deluxe<br>380 kcal              | Fanta Orange<br>76 kcal                        | Side Salad<br>15 kcal          | 471 kcal   |
| Double Sausage & Egg McMuffin<br>565 kcal | Tropicana Orange Juice<br>103 kcal             | Hash Brown<br>136 kcal         | 804 kcal   |

Table Excel

According to the government dietary recommendations (Public Health England, 2017), to maintain a healthy weight: women should not exceed to consume 2,000 calories and men no more than 2,500.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

### -NEW HEALTHIER PRODUCT

A survey published by the research expert Nils-Gerrit Wunsch (2020) shows that 40.42 % of the respondent is often following a healthy and balanced diet, against the 3.14% that never do it. People start to be concern about the problem of obesity, seeking healthy product.

The analysis conducted by Public Health England (Tedstone, 2020). It reveals that although the consumption of calories is still high, the new data reports a consumption decrease over time.

Consumers' food behaviour is becoming healthier and business like McDonald's should exploit the opportunity to introduce a healthier product in the menu, in order of customer's demand.

In the current year, the company planned to launch the new plant-based burger the "McPlant", as a healthier and meat alternative. (BBC News, 2020a)

### -EXPANSION TO ASIAN MARKET

With its high density of populations, a country as China represents a considerable opportunity to expand the market. McDonald's already started its plan to double the number of restaurant in China. Aiming to have by 2022 around 4,500 restaurants. (Pisani, 2021)

### -REBUILDING THE BRAND'S IMAGE

McDonald's brand's reputation has been criticized many times for selling unhealthy food. Documentaries as *Super Size Me* (2004) and book as *Fast Food Nation* (2001), or *Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food* (2006), and so many others, indeed influenced negatively the perception of the brand.

(Parkinson, 2015) (Smithers, 2007) Besides, working for McDonald's seems to have another negative perception. The term *McJob*, initially used as slang to indicate the company's employee, is now a term that describes a low-pay job that does not require any particular skill and with no career prospects. Despite the company undertook a campaign to modify the definition of *McJob* on the dictionaries, it is still perceived as a term of derision.

Despite all the difficulties, according to the research of Shakespeare (2017) the company's strategy of rebuilding the perception of its brand gaining positive results.

## THREATS

### -COVID RESTRICTIONS

Although McDonald's is still working with the takeaway, the numerous restrictions for Covid, certainly affected the business. During the lockdown, the company adapted its business to the economic environment by adopting a home delivery's service. However, the delivery fee decreased the number of order request. Besides, many customers buying from McDonald's because of its fast service, during the lockdown (as people are required to stay at home) it is no longer a necessity for many people. During the pandemic, other factors negatively affected the business, E.g.: the restaurant cannot offer dine-in service; the required social-distance between employee affected a reduction of the menu. (Gray 2021)

### -COMPETITORS

Although McDonald's has a globally strong brand, it still has to cope with many competitors. Those are big chain of Fast Food: as *Burger King* or *KFC*; Coffee shop as *Starbucks*; also small local business. Alternatives substitutes as healthier products are also threats for the company.

### -NEW POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Particularly during the last years, the UK government is focusing to endorse new policies and regulation to tackle the problem of obesity. E.G:

- In 2018 the new introduction of the Sugar Tax' with the consequence of an increase in McDonald's selling prices. (Evans, 2018)
- In addition to the reduction of television advertising for HFSS, already applied, there is a new proposal to completely ban online HFSS advertising. (Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2020)

### -BREXIT

McDonald's initially warned its customers of the possibility that some ingredients may be missing in their products, due to the supplier's delay for the Brexit. At a later time reassured that the company will not suffer the ingredients shortage.

Nevertheless, during an uncertain period of political change, it would be irresponsible not to consider Brexit, as a threat. E.G. Imported material or ingredients may increase the cost. Also, McDonald's could tackle the problem of hiring new foreign employees. European that

wants to work for McDonald's (with no possession of settled status) do not fulfil the new requirements to obtain the visa.

### -DISADVANTAGES OF SWOT ANALYSIS

On the other hand, there are several disadvantages and limitation of the analysis:

- Lack of objective. E.g. Manager that overestimates the strength and the opportunities of the company, or underestimates the weaknesses and the threats.
- Relevant information ignored. E.g. Focusing on current local competitors and disregarding the entrance of new international competitors in the market.
- Unpredictable factors. E.g. A situational analysis of 2019 would not have considered the threat of a pandemic for the year 2020.

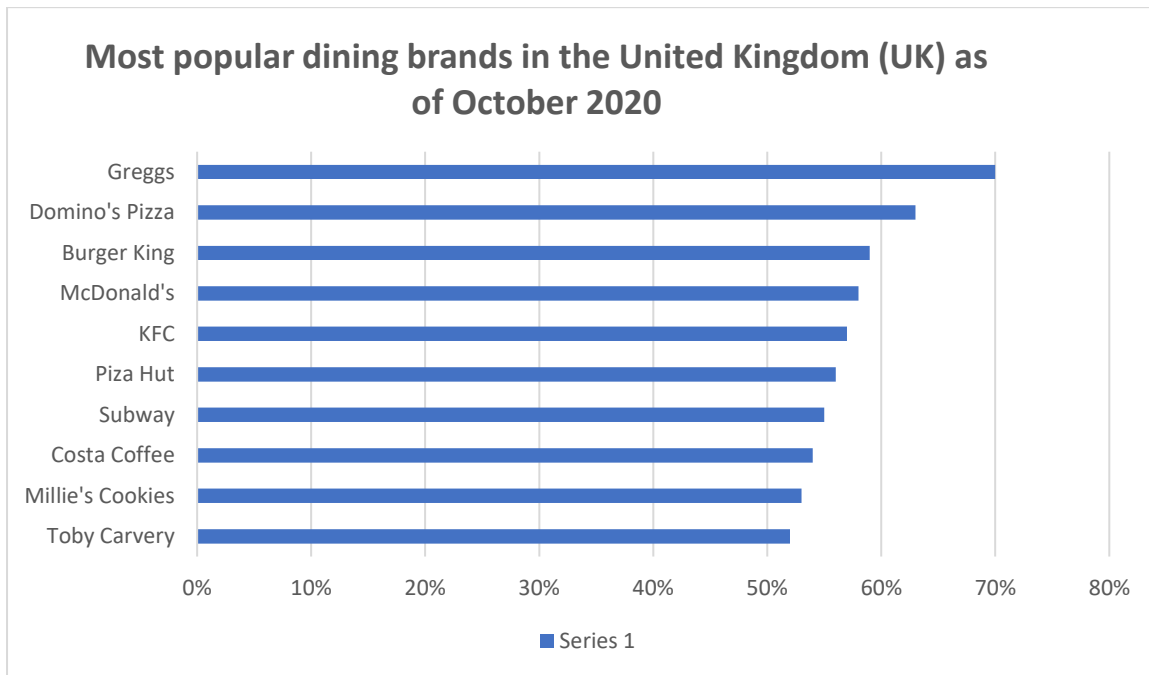
## **PORTER'S 5 FORCES MODEL**

The analysis has been created consulting several resources, listed below, that has been compared with the McDonald's Annual Report (2019). The purpose is to analyse the forces of competition and the attractiveness of the company. The results are as follow:

### -COMPETITIVE RIVALRY

#### **HIGH**

According to Lock, S. (2021), the survey 'Most popular dining brands in the United Kingdom' ranks McDonald's (with 58% rating) in the fourth position. According to the survey, the competitors that successfully gain the first three position are Greggs (70%), followed by Domino's Pizza (63%) and Burger King (59%).



[Chart Bar: Clustered Bar, Excel. Source: Statista (Lock, S. 2021)]

Although McDonald's has a strong brand, the competition in the restaurant industry is high. In 2015 McDonald's profit dropped more than 20% because of its competitors. (Hussain, S. 2015)

### -THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS

#### **MODERATE**

McDonald's created high barriers of entry for the new competitors that want to enter the market. The company brags of an advantage's experience since 1940, the advantage's cost of an economy of scale and exclusive deal with the suppliers (E.g. with Coca-Cola). McDonald's has also a strong brand, although the low-cost of switching is an advantage for the rivalry.

Overall, the threat of new entrance could have been considered weak it was not for the announcement of the entrance of Wendy's in the UK market. Wendy's is one of the major competitors of McDonald's in the U.S.'s market, and according to BBC News (2020b) it decided to enter in 2021 in the UK market.

### -BUYER POWER

#### **HIGH**

The several alternatives and low-switching cost present a high threat to McDonald's, and it gives power to the customer.

#### -SUPPLIER POWER

##### LOW

McDonald's has numerous independent suppliers for raw material and ingredients. These suppliers are easily replaceable. Furthermore, McDonald's economies of scale give the company the power of the low-switching cost for the suppliers, the latter are also restricted to follow the high standard guidelines and conduct required from McDonald's.

#### -SUBSTITUTES

##### HIGH

There is a wide range of substitutes for McDonald's food. E.g. bakery, pizza, sushi fast-food chain as *Itsu* or *Wasabi*, healthier chain restaurant as *Pret a Manger*. As the survey, mentioned above (in the SWOT analysis: New healthier product) published by the research expert Nils-Gerrit Wunsch (2020) shows that many people are concern regarding the importance of eating healthier. The consequence is a high threat force of substitute for McDonald's, as many consumers prefer to eat a healthier product.

## STRATEGIES

The Marketing strategies, starting from the core value of the brand's company, design a strategy to reach and influence the consumer's behaviour to acquire them as a customer. It is also useful to create a long-term relationship with the customer and an advantage over competitors.

To design the perfect strategy, the first step is to identify the market target. Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning are the pre-stage strategies for the Marketing Mix.

The cornerstone of Marketing Mix is based on four main elements: *Product*, *Price*, *Promotion* and *Place*. According to Boom & Bitner (1981), these can be extended, especially for the company that provide services rather than good, to three more elements: *Physical evidence*, *People* and *Process*. Each of these, cannot be considered in isolation from the strategy been pursued. Indeed, a successful marketing strategy is the perfect combination of these elements, created to achieve the company's objectives. (Hooley, *et al.* 2020)

## SEGMENTATION, TARGETING, POSITIONING

### -SEGMENTATION

The company divides the heterogeneous market into the smallest groups. This let to identify more accurately the need and want of consumer to allocate the resources efficiently and to develop the Marketing Mix Strategy. E.g. McDonald's subdivides the market in Demographic and Geographic Segmentation.

- Demographic Segmentation for age  
McDonald's target customers are kids, teenagers, young/middle-aged adult. E.g. the *Happy Meal* as the clown mascots are targeted for kids. The £1 *Cheeseburger* or the promotion for the students are targeted at teenagers with low or no-income. The McDonald's playground is targeted for the kids and for the parents (young-middle age adult) giving them the opportunity of relaxing and enjoying time with the family.
- Geographic Segmentation  
McDonald's does a Geographic Segmentation, adapting the business to the local's culture and tastes. E.g. McDonald's in India does not sell beef, according to India's culture. McDonald's in China serves bubbles tea, according to the local's tastes. (Kannan, 2014).

### -TARGETING

- Differentiated Marketing  
McDonald's uses different product and strategies to entice more market segments. E.g. *Happy Meal* targeting the kids, *Veggie Burger* targeting vegetarian's consumer, Fast Breakfast targeting worker adult.

### - POSITIONING

It regards creating a distinction from the competition, offering different activities or giving uniqueness at similar activities. McDonald's exploits the following Positioning:

- Benefit Positioning  
Speed of service
- User Positioning  
McDonald's created a unique experience for eating that it gives distinction from its competitors. McDonald's is focusing on the family's experience. E.g. the clown mascot Ronald, the *Happy Meal*, free balloon, the playground, Interactive free game. Focusing

on the kids, offering enjoyable moments, is also creating a long-term relationship with the customers. It generates an emotional commitment, persuading future nostalgic adults to return to McDonald's.

- Repositioning

As already touched on above (in the section McDonald's SWOT analysis – Opportunities: Rebuilding the Brand's image), McDonald's is working to meliorate its brand's perception. Although all the criticism regarding unhealthy food, McDonald's brand has been recently damaged for the CEO's misconduct. The ex McDonald's CEO, Steve Easterbrook got fired after dating an employee (BBC News 2019b). The new CEO Chris Kempczinski, during an interview with Rosefield (2020), said 'Customers are seeking brands that reflect their values... and the line between the corporate brand and the consumer-facing brand is blurring'. He added that his priority as a new CEO is to change the company's culture, developing the brand's perception.

## MARKETING MIX



*SmartArt, Radial Cycle – Excel*

## -PRODUCT

(Jhon, 1995), McDonald's opened the first restaurant in 1940, selling three main products: *Burgers, Fries, and Shakes*. The immediate success of the company is assigned to the benefits of the product: Fast-Service (the ideology of Fast-Food started with McDonald's) and the tasted food. In the course of time, McDonald's menu has been enriched and diversified to influence and satisfy a broad target market. E.g. different products in different location, thought precisely for the local's tasted and culture. In 1982 breakfast was introduced to the menu. Now, the main product line includes: *Burger, Sandwiches, Chicken, Fish, Fries, Shakes, Soft Drink, Coffee, Smoothies, Snack, Salad, Wrap, Desserts*. McDonald's allows the customers to customize their products. (McDonald's Corporate, 2021b) The packaging is constantly developing as the company is aiming to tackle the sustainability of the environment. McDonald's goal is by 2025 to use 100% renewable and recyclable guest packaging. McDonald's shows to the customers the transparency of its products providing nutritional information on the packaging.

Some of the products:



*Big Mac*



*Cheesburger*



*20 Chicken McNuggets*



*Fries*



*Vegetable Deluxe*



*Filet-o-Fish*



*Oreo McFlurry*



*Sausage & Egg McMuffin*

*Source: McDonald's website*

It Can be said that McDonald's is using a *Line Extension Brand's Strategy* as it produces specific products for a different target market in the same industry. E.g. McDonald's *Happy Meal* has been introduced to the menu targeting kids.

McDonald's also created its *Brand Personality* with the clown Ronald McDonald's, the mascots and character associated with the brand. Ronald McDonald's is the image of family, love and joy.

### -PRICE

(McDonald's 2021b) McDonald's has slightly different prices over the national stores, as it allowed the franchising store to decide their prices, also called *Price Discrimination*. The following table reports the price of a random sample of products of the McDonald's Acton (W3 6LP London, UK) available on Uber Eats website (2021).

| MAIN                                    | DRINK                            | SIDE                         | TOTAL  | TOTAL MEDIUM MEAL |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Big Mac<br>£ 3.49                       | Buxton Mineral Water<br>£ 1.09   | Medium Fries<br>£ 1.19       | £ 5.77 | £ 4.99            |
| Chicken Legend with Cool Mayo<br>£ 4.19 | Medium Diet Coke<br>£ 0.99       | Carrot Bag<br>£ 0.79         | £ 5.97 | £ 5.59            |
| Vegetable Deluxe<br>£ 3.49              | Tropicana Orange Juice<br>£ 1.29 | Side Salad<br>£ 1.09         | £ 5.87 | £ 4.99            |
| 6 Chicken McNuggets<br>£ 3.49           | Regular Latte<br>£ 1.69          | Apple & Grapefruit<br>£ 0.79 | £ 5.97 | £ 5.39            |

[Table excel – Source: Uber Eats (2021)]

Observing the table above it can be concluded that McDonald's is using a *Bundle Pricing Strategy* and *Psychological Pricing Strategy*:

- *Bundle Pricing Strategy*

The strategy consists of finding a complementary combination of product to sell them together. E.g. McDonald's meal. The bundle of products purchased together is less expensive than purchasing the same items separately. (Giri, et al. 2020)

- Psychological Pricing Strategy

Is the strategy of using £ 0.99 rather than the whole number £ 1.00. It is a psychological strategy as aims to deceive the consumer's mind into buying something economical, for numerical cognition. (Husemann-Kopetzky, 2018)

## -PROMOTION

(McDonald's, 2021c) A large amount of financial resources permits McDonald's to exploit many tactics to promote its product. Through the *Integrated Marketing Communication* McDonald's communicates to the consumer, transmitting and sharing information. Although McDonald's uses Public Relation and Sponsorship (as Ronald McDonald House of Charity and the sponsorship for the UK football communities), the main promotion it uses is Advertising and Sales Promotion:

- Advertising:

- Tv
- Radio
- Newspaper or Magazine
- Online Media
- Billboards

- Sales Promotion

- Discount Coupons – usually distributed with the newspaper or Magazine
- Competition with prizes – *Monopoly* competition, with a wide range of prizes, as free food or holidays
- Loyalty Cards – *McCafè Loyalty Card*: the customer gets a stamp on the card for any hot drink purchased. When the card is full of the stamp, they can receive a free hot drink)
- Student Card Discount – Some special discount or a free extra product when a student purchases a meal
- Free freebies – Balloons, or *Happy Meal's* toy or book.
- Discounted product – McDonald's discount some product with the *Deal of the day*, every day there is a different product with a special discount.

McDonald's has also an official website and many social media accounts that are using for interpersonal communication. E.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.

### -PLACE

It refers to how the company is distributing its products to its customers. McDonald's is using the Direct and Indirect channel of distribution. Direct through the restaurants and the McDonald's app. Indirect for the home delivery services, where costumers can order through another website as *Uber Eats* or *Just Eat*. McDonad's also uses a Franchising business model to distribuities its products and expand its network. McDonald's distribuities its products globally over 118 countries.

## CONCLUSION

The combination of the results for the *Situational Analysis* shows that the highest threat for McDonald's is the competition and substitutes products. The results also show that despite McDonald's has a strong brand, the dissatisfaction of the employees and the brand's negative perception put the brand's reputation at risk. McDonald's Marketing Mix Strategy has been tailored for the target audience: kids, families and young adults. McDonald's financial resources permit the company to use a wide range of promotion as TV's advertising and to practice IMC. McDonald's distributes its products through its stores or with delivery services. McDonald's economy of scale permits the company to maintain low-cost fast-food prices, however, the franchising model lets the prices slightly change from one restaurant to another one.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As consumers are always more inclined for healthier food and the highest treat for McDonald's is the competition and substitutes products, McDonald's should focus more on *Product Development Strategy*. This strategy consists of introducing new products in an existing market. The recommendation is to introduce healthier or low calories products to tackle the substitutes option and to meliorate the brand's perception associated with junk food.

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