

Basil's Bakery:

A Business Consultancy Report

Prepared for: Basil, Owner, Basil's Bakery, Coventry

Student Name: Hiyam Al-bayati

Student ID: 2521405

Assignment Title: Basil's Bakery: A Business Consultancy Report

Module title: problem solving and decision making

Module Code: LCLM 4004

Lecturer's Name: Deji Olagboyr

Contents

1. Overview of the Case Study	3
2. Proposed Solutions	3
3. Evaluation of Solutions (PMI Technique) and Preferred Solution	4
4. Implementation Plan	5
5. Key Performance Indicator and SMART Objectives	6
6. Key Findings	7
Reference List	8
Appendix 1: PMI Evaluation Table	10
Appendix 2: Implementation Timeline	11
Appendix 3: SMART Objectives Table	12

1. Overview of the Case Study

Basil's Bakery is an independent artisan bakery in a Coventry retail park, opened in 2015 around organic, contemporary baked goods for shoppers, retail staff and nearby industrial-estate workers. Sales grew steadily until the 2020 lockdown, after which footfall partially recovered but has stagnated since 2023 at roughly 25% below 2019 levels. This mirrors a national pattern of elevated UK retail vacancy rates since the pandemic (British Retail Consortium, 2023; House of Commons Library, 2024), although retail parks have proved comparatively resilient overall (Retail Gazette, 2023). The problem therefore combines a shrinking, less-occupied retail park, a shift to hybrid working, unmet demand for delivery and pre-ordering, and rising, unpredictable overhead and ingredient costs.

2. Proposed Solutions

Two solutions are proposed to address the decline in trade.

Solution 1, a local delivery service: partnering with an established courier or a bakery-focused marketplace such as Bakers Market, which supports independent bakeries with ready-made online ordering and delivery infrastructure (Bakers Market, 2021), would let Basil reach customers who no longer visit the retail park, including redundant former retail staff and hybrid workers now based at home several days a week. Comparable independent bakeries used exactly this pivot successfully during recent disruption, in some cases replacing lost in-store trade entirely and reaching new households (BakeryAndSnacks, 2020). Using a third-party courier or a part-time driver removes the resourcing conflict of Basil needing to remain on-site baking throughout the day.

Solution 2, an online pre-order and click-and-collect system: a simple website or app allowing customers to order in advance and choose a collection time would resolve the unsatisfactory queuing problem during busy periods and appeal specifically to hybrid workers who can plan orders around their in-office days. Because orders are submitted digitally rather than by phone, Basil is not interrupted while baking, and advance order data allows more accurate stock forecasting, directly easing the difficulty of budgeting for volatile organic ingredient costs.

3. Evaluation of Solutions (PMI Technique) and Preferred Solution

3.1 PMI Evaluation

To compare the two solutions objectively, the Plus-Minus-Interesting (PMI) technique developed by Edward de Bono was applied to each option (De Bono, n.d.); the full table is presented in Appendix 1.

For the delivery service, the main advantages are recaptured trade from customers who have moved away or lost local jobs, and a new revenue channel beyond the retail park's footfall. However, third-party delivery platforms typically charge commission of around 20 to 30%, which would further erode margins already squeezed by rising overheads (CX Network, 2025), and fragile products such as cakes carry packaging and quality risks in transit. An interesting implication is that delivery could evolve into a standalone local brand over time, but this requires resources Basil does not currently have.

For the pre-order and click-and-collect system, the main advantages are lower implementation cost, reduced queuing, and smoother production planning. The principal drawbacks are the time needed to set up and learn a digital system, and the risk that some loyal, less digitally confident customers resist it. Interestingly, order data collected would help Basil forecast organic ingredient needs more accurately, easing a second problem, since rising input costs already erode the premium organic producers can command (University of Exeter, n.d.).

3.2 Results and Preferred Solution

The PMI evaluation indicates that the pre-order and click-and-collect system is the stronger initial choice. It carries lower financial risk than delivery, avoids ongoing commission costs that would compound Basil's existing overhead pressures (GKP, 2024), and its interesting implication, more accurate demand forecasting, directly tackles the volatility of organic ingredient supply, a second core problem in the case. Delivery remains attractive because it could recapture custom that no longer visits the retail park at all, but the commission costs, packaging risk, and reliance on third-party

couriers make it a costlier, less controllable option for a sole-operator business at this stage, and one that could be reconsidered once cash flow has stabilised.

Therefore, the preferred solution is to introduce an online pre-order and click-and-collect system first, with local delivery treated as a longer-term option once digital ordering is established and its uptake proven.

4. Implementation Plan

4.1 Plan

Implementation should proceed in three phases; the detailed timeline, activities and responsibilities are set out in full in Appendix 2.

In Phase 1 (Weeks 1 to 4), Basil should select and set up a low-cost, bakery-suitable ordering platform, such as a hosted click-and-collect tool or a service similar to Bakers Market (Bakers Market, 2021), and configure the product menu, collection time slots and payment processing, testing the system internally before any customer sees it.

In Phase 2 (Weeks 5 to 8), Basil should run a soft launch with existing loyal customers, using in-store signage, social media and word of mouth to build initial awareness, while monitoring order volumes, collection-time accuracy and any technical issues that arise.

In Phase 3 (Weeks 9 to 12 and ongoing), Basil should review early performance data, adjust collection-slot capacity and menu availability accordingly, and begin wider marketing to office and warehouse workers at the adjacent industrial estate, positioning pre-ordering explicitly as a solution to queuing at peak times.

This phased approach allows the system to be tested and refined on a small scale before being promoted more widely, minimising disruption to daily baking operations throughout the roll-out.

4.2 Rationale for Activities, Timing, Order and Responsibilities

The phased order reflects the need to control risk before scaling. Beginning with system set-up (Phase 1) ensures the technical foundation, menu, pricing and collection slots, is correct before any customer sees it, avoiding early errors that could damage trust and reputation. A soft launch to loyal customers (Phase 2) provides a

smaller, forgiving test group, in keeping with how comparable bakeries piloted their online services successfully during recent disruption (BakeryAndSnacks, 2020), before committing to broader promotion and expense. Reviewing data before scaling (Phase 3) ensures capacity and menu decisions are evidence-based rather than assumed. Because Basil is a sole operator who must remain at the ovens for most of the day, activities are designed to require limited hands-on time from him personally; platform set-up and day-to-day monitoring can be delegated to a part-time staff member, with Basil retaining final decisions on menu, pricing and capacity.

5. Key Performance Indicator and SMART Objectives

5.1 KPI and SMART Objectives

The primary Key Performance Indicator (KPI) selected is the proportion of weekly sales transactions placed through the pre-order and click-and-collect system, as this most directly measures adoption of the new service and its effect on queuing-related lost sales.

Applying the SMART framework (Doran, 1981; Esade, 2025), the following objective is proposed for the first six months; the full breakdown appears in Appendix 3.

- **Specific:** increase the share of weekly sales transactions placed via the pre-order and click-and-collect system.
- **Measurable:** tracked as the percentage of total weekly transactions made through the platform, measured against a baseline of 0% at launch.
- **Achievable:** informed by comparable adoption rates achieved by other independent bakeries using similar ordering platforms (Bakers Market, 2021).
- **Relevant:** directly addresses the case's evidence of unmet demand for pre-ordering and queuing complaints during busy periods.
- **Time-bound:** reach 25% of weekly transactions via pre-order within six months of launch, reviewed quarterly thereafter.

This gives Basil a single, trackable measure of whether the chosen solution is being adopted by customers, alongside a clear timeframe and numerical target against which success can be judged.

5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Once the system is launched, the KPI should be recorded weekly directly from platform sales data, requiring no additional administrative effort from Basil beyond a brief weekly check. Early weeks will establish a baseline trend, allowing Basil to see whether uptake is progressing towards the 25% six-month target or falling short of it.

If early data shows adoption is slower than expected, Basil can respond by adjusting marketing, for example targeting office and warehouse workers at the industrial estate directly, or by expanding available collection slots at peak times, rather than waiting until the full six-month period has elapsed to act. Conversely, if uptake exceeds the target early, this signals that local delivery could realistically be introduced sooner than originally planned.

Quarterly reviews should compare actual performance against the target, alongside secondary indicators such as average queuing time and customer feedback, to check that the KPI improvement is translating into the intended outcome of reduced congestion and better customer satisfaction, rather than simply shifting existing customers from one channel to another without any net benefit. This ongoing monitoring keeps the evaluation proportionate to a small, owner-operated business while still holding the chosen solution accountable to a measurable standard.

6. Key Findings

- Sales have stagnated roughly 25% below 2019 levels since 2023, reflecting a structural decline in retail park footfall rather than a temporary post-lockdown dip.
- Contributing factors include unit closures and job losses among former customers, and the growth of hybrid working reducing weekday office trade (NFON, 2024).
- Unmet customer demand for delivery and pre-ordering represents lost revenue that competitors could otherwise capture.
- Rising overheads and volatile organic ingredient costs are compressing margins further (GKP, 2024).

- An online pre-order and click-and-collect system is recommended as the lower-risk, lower-cost first solution, with delivery considered as a future expansion once it proves successful.

Reference List

Bakers Market (2021) [About](https://bakersmarket.co.uk/about). Available at: <https://bakersmarket.co.uk/about> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

BakeryAndSnacks (2020) [Adapting to a new normal: the UK's microbakeries are seeing new possibilities, thanks to lockdown](https://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/Article/2020/05/19/Adapting-to-a-new-normal-The-UK-s-microbakeries-are-seeing-new-possibilities-thanks-to-lockdown/). Available at: <https://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/Article/2020/05/19/Adapting-to-a-new-normal-The-UK-s-microbakeries-are-seeing-new-possibilities-thanks-to-lockdown/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

British Retail Consortium (2023) [Britain loses 6,000 storefronts in five years](https://brc.org.uk/news-and-events/news/corporate-affairs/2024/britain-loses-6-000-storefronts-in-five-years/). Available at: <https://brc.org.uk/news-and-events/news/corporate-affairs/2024/britain-loses-6-000-storefronts-in-five-years/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

CX Network (2025) [Retail sector faces turmoil as nearly 170,000 jobs lost in 2024](https://www.cxnetwork.com/cx-experience/news/retail-sector-faces-turmoil-as-nearly-170000-jobs-lost-in-2024). Available at: <https://www.cxnetwork.com/cx-experience/news/retail-sector-faces-turmoil-as-nearly-170000-jobs-lost-in-2024> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

De Bono, E. (n.d.) [PMI Lesson Plan](https://www.debono.com/de-bono-thinking-lessons-1/1.-pmi-lesson-plan). Available at: <https://www.debono.com/de-bono-thinking-lessons-1/1.-pmi-lesson-plan> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

Doran, G.T. (1981) 'There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives', *Management Review*, 70(11), pp. 35–36.

Esade (2025) [How to Create SMART Goals for Your Company](https://www.esade.edu/beyond/en/how-to-create-smart-goals-for-your-business/). Available at: <https://www.esade.edu/beyond/en/how-to-create-smart-goals-for-your-business/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

GKP (2024) [SME Energy Bills Predicted to Remain Above Pre-Crisis Levels](https://www.gkp.co.uk/gkp-news/business-news/archive/article/2024/September/sme-energy-bills-predicted-to-remain-above-pre-crisis-levels). Available at: <https://www.gkp.co.uk/gkp-news/business-news/archive/article/2024/September/sme-energy-bills-predicted-to-remain-above-pre-crisis-levels> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

House of Commons Library (2024) [High Streets \(Designation, Review and Improvement Plan\) Bill](#). London: UK Parliament. Available at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10006/CBP-10006.pdf> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

NFON (2024) [Are Attitudes Toward Remote Working Changing in the UK? Examining the Shift Back to Office Work](#). Available at: <https://www.nfon.com/gb/blog/are-attitudes-toward-remote-working-changing-in-the-uk-examining-the-shift-back-to-office-work/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

Retail Gazette (2023) [Retail Footfall Recovers Slowly as Brits Continue to Work From Home](#). Available at: <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2023/01/footfall-pandemic/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

University of Exeter (n.d.) [Socio-Economic Aspects of Organic Farming](#). Available at: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/research/crpr/documents/socio-economic_aspects_organic_farming.pdf (Accessed: 20 July 2026).

Appendix 1: PMI Evaluation Table

Solution 1: Local Delivery Service

Plus	Minus	Interesting
Recaptures customers who no longer visit the retail park (redundant staff, home workers)	Third-party platform commission of c.20–30% erodes already tight margins	Could evolve into a standalone local delivery brand over time
Opens a new revenue channel beyond retail park footfall	Fragile products (cakes) carry packaging and transit-quality risk	May require menu adaptation for products that travel well
Matches direct customer requests for a delivery option	Requires a reliable courier or dedicated part-time driver	Long-term potential depends on resources Basil does not yet have

Solution 2: Online Pre-Order and Click-and-Collect System

Plus	Minus	Interesting
Lower implementation cost than delivery; no ongoing commission	Requires time and initial cost to set up and learn a digital system	Order data improves forecasting of volatile organic ingredient needs
Reduces queuing and improves the customer waiting-time experience	Some loyal, less digitally confident customers may resist adoption	Could integrate later with a loyalty scheme
Smooths production planning around known advance orders	Does not reach customers who no longer visit the retail park at all	Establishes the digital foundation needed before adding delivery later

Appendix 2: Implementation Timeline

Phase	Weeks	Key Activities	Responsibility	Rationale
Phase 1: Set-up	1–4	Select ordering platform; configure menu, collection slots and payment; internal testing	Basil (decisions); part-time staff member (set-up support)	Ensures a correct technical foundation before customers see the system
Phase 2: Soft launch	5–8	Launch to loyal customers; promote via in-store signage, social media, word of mouth; monitor orders	Basil and staff member jointly	Tests the system with a forgiving group before wider promotion
Phase 3: Review and scale	9–12 and ongoing	Review data; adjust slot capacity and menu; market to office and warehouse workers	Basil (final decisions); staff member (day-to-day monitoring)	Ensures scaling decisions are evidence-based, not assumed

Appendix 3: SMART Objectives Table

Criterion	Detail
Specific	Increase the share of weekly sales transactions placed via the pre-order and click-and-collect system.
Measurable	Percentage of total weekly transactions made through the platform, measured against a 0% baseline at launch.
Achievable	Informed by comparable adoption rates at other independent bakeries using similar ordering platforms (Bakers Market, 2021).
Relevant	Directly addresses the case's evidence of unmet demand for pre-ordering and queuing complaints during busy periods.
Time-bound	Reach 25% of weekly transactions via pre-order within six months of launch, reviewed quarterly thereafter.