

Jonathan Lowe Marketing Plan

by Jonathan Lowe

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Executive Summary

A presentation has been delivered prior to this report being produced, offering an environmental marketing analysis, in relation to Lush Cosmetics. Within the presentation recommendations were made suggesting ways Lush could further develop their existing target audience. Below are the three main ideas developed to allow this to take place:

- Develop a gift card scheme delivered through new channels
- Develop a pregnancy range
- Produce a new Charity pot idea - local change pot.

The desired outcomes for this marketing plan are to:

- Propose options for designing a creative customer service to enhance market perception.
 - Suggest how the proposition will be launched internally and externally.
- 

Introduction

Creators of LUSH Cosmetics company has been operating since 1995 (Lush, 2019). The business is a network of boutiques, consisting of over 700 stores and several manufacturing sites currently operating in over forty countries. There are presently six thousand employees who are contributing to the hand-crafted products (Lush, 2019). Lush has a reputation for historically being able to recreate itself (Jones & Manktelow, 2019). Headquarters are located in Poole, England, and the company has introduced customers to a new perspective towards bath products bath bombs, perfume, cosmetics, massage bars and shampoo bars. This report will evaluate how the organisation can create innovative marketing strategies for raising awareness of the brand to add value, as well as managing the customer journey across an assortment of communication channels to guarantee current and future stakeholders' expectations are satisfied (Musso, 2010).

This report considers the factors potentially affecting the Lush Cosmetics Company, by following up an investigation into the pressures of the external environment, and the impacts that can change the organisation. There will be a consideration of how to practically apply and identify the challenges faced by the retail industry with regards to how they differentiate themselves to stay competitive and remain attractive to loyal and new potential customers in the marketplace (Wang & Zhu, 2019). Additionally, understanding and reacting to the changing needs and current trend that may well influence customer decisions (Louth, 2019).

Senior management allocated the responsibility of developing a new customer service proposition with the intent being to enrich the present customer service. This report will deliver a marketing plan for the augmented overall customer journey and how eventually this can influence consumers.

Main Findings

Suitable frameworks were selected to conduct a detailed analysis to reflect how Lush Cosmetics, could possibly adapt its marketing activities to ensure higher customer value, delivered in response to changes in the external environment. These conditions were evaluated to identify the advantages and limitations of the chosen strategies, offering recommendations for foreseeable resources and performance monitoring. ✓

Cosmetics which are cruelty free have created a social movement, increasing awareness of animal rights and in turn increasing the customer demand for the cruelty free products available (MarketWatch, 2019). The cosmetic industry is a lucrative industry renowned for staying resilient even in times of economic struggles (Loeschen, 2019). There are ten cosmetic companies which have led the global market for the past few decades (MarketWatch, 2019). Even after surviving the 2008 world financial crises the industry carried on thriving, however, consumers have become price conscious to cosmetic products. (The Telegraph, 2008) noted "sales of cosmetics rising as women try to cheer themselves up during the financial crisis" with consumers perceiving cosmetics as a daily necessity (Linkdin, 2016). Cosmetic companies are taking advantage of the diversity of products and demographics at their disposal (Mintel, 2019).

Use more current info.

Last year, Lush Cosmetics pre-tax profits were up 70% to £73.5m (Saner, 2018), However, the company has forecast a fall in profits by more than forty percent (Onita, 2018). Lush currently trades from 105 boutiques in UK and Ireland (Callander, 2015), Mark Constantine has reassured stakeholders the decline in profits as being predominantly due to the company increasing wages, independently calculated from the living wage foundation to ensure employees can afford the cost of living. Additionally, attracting the best talent for the company (Slade, 2019). ✓

The 2008 financial crisis has profoundly affected every organisation around the world (Hruzova, 2009). Many organisations have adapted their marketing strategies to meet the changing consumer buying behaviour, effecting how customers behave in regards to relationship loyalties, with reductions in disposable income altering traditional spending habits (Kotler, & K, 2006).

Although the first half of 2019 recorded high employment levels and disposable incomes, this has still not been enough to encourage shoppers to spend. Political instability with Brexit negotiations in the UK has dominated headlines creating uncertainty (Deloitte, 2019). Additionally, Brexit has contributed to a weak British sterling pound currency forcing retailers essentially to pay more for imported products (Mustoe, 2019). A Hard Brexit could impact the retail sector by imposing £7.8bn in tariffs (Green, 2019). However, The cruelty free products belonging to the cosmetics market is projected to reach 10 billion USD by 2024; market forecast estimates a growth rate around 6.0% between the period of 2019 to 2025 (MarketWatch, 2019). ✓

For Lush cosmetics to gain the best advantage in the cosmetic marketplace prices need to be monitored or products altered frequently, enhancing the most successful products. Also, new alternatives need to be presented to the customer. Having a unique value proposition (UVP) can be utilized to differentiate from competitors and retain already loyal customers (Forbes, 2018). Lush manufacture superior products, competing in a niche market; where shoppers receive in store an experience supported by knowledgeable staff where premium prices can be justified (University of Cambridge, 2016). Lush introduce ethically sourced and seasonal themed goods which can be incorporated into customers everyday lives offering a unique experience to their competitors (Lush, 2019). ✓

An increase in popularity for consumers to make purchases through mobile phone devices has also essentially altered attitudes to the shopping experiences, with different values and expectations (Atterbury, 2019). Competition between retailers have become fierce in recent years, as economic austerity has increasingly changed consumer's behaviours (Schneider & Hall, 2011). Online shopping now accounts for around 17pc of retail in the UK in April 2018 ONS figures reveal, still a fraction of total but regarded as a growing threat to the British high street (Natwest, 2019). ✓

Target audience and behaviours

Lush is categorised, as part of the cosmetic industry. However, Lush is recognised for high quality products and high retail prices. Lush have gained the understanding of how to strategically attract customers that competitors possibly fail to target (O'Farrell, 2017).

Lush aim to attract ~~with~~ customer's who are like-minded to the business's environmental and ecological beliefs, natural products free of chemicals, no animal testing, sourcing fair trade ingredients. Lush targets the premium segment of the marketplace, unlike their competitors. They can enhance the attraction of products because all their ingredients are ethically sourced. Additionally, giving the customers the perception, their products are made from higher quality materials (Toby Gardner, 2010). Their products are suitable for vegetarians and 81% are vegan friendly. Products are handmade and ethically sourced adhering to fair trade practices and strengthening communities and economies globally (Loeb, 2017). Lush customers are willing to pay extra to experience and become loyal to Lush's products in the future. ✓

Lush cleverly, brand their products in a way that the customer perceives as unique. Although there are plenty of variants of this commodity from plenty of brand alternatives, branding is a method of developing iconic identities, creating value for money, although competitors are selling the same type of product (Dennis Adcock, 1998). ✓

Lush is a well-established business. However, to now gain a wider audience, social media could be used as a lucrative tool, which they have consciously decided to withdraw from. Lush relies on word of mouth. E-commerce could enhance the speed and increase sales alongside offering the convenience of home deliveries for customers (IBM, 2019).

According to Wasserman (2009):

Make sure you know who the gatekeepers and influencers are; they will affect the decision makers and you will most likely need to sell to them differently than to the end user." For example, parents might be the gatekeepers for products targeted to children or technology managers might hold influence over a company's decision to invest in new software.

In addition, Lush also differentiated itself from its competitors in 2007, the organisation developed a "Charity Pot": a hand and body lotion organised so the profits go hundred percent to small organisations operating in the areas of human rights and environmental conservation. These organisations can submit a request for the opportunity to attain £10,000 per year in funding (Lush, 2019).

Lush are also trying to cause disruption against corporate computer companies. By creating their own check out EPOS systems. The systems are stored and run from google "cloud", this technology is powered by google who use renewable sources of energy. Embracing the open source software allows lush to become more innovative towards problem solving and cost effective (Lush, 2019).

change of font style?

This is reading like a report rather than a marketing plan so far.

Recent investment has also been implemented for sustainable heating in the manufacturing facilities' through using old wooden pallets, using sustainable products to burn as opposed to the traditional methods such as oil or gas; therefore, reducing the carbon foot print the organisation produces (Skins, 2019).

Strategy

In order to develop strategies for marketing activities and future products a popular academic tool is the Ansoff's matrix (CIM, 2006). This was considered in the design of the three proposed suggestions. (Professional Academy, n.d.) provide a visual of this matrix in figure 1 with the addition of annotations of new propositions:

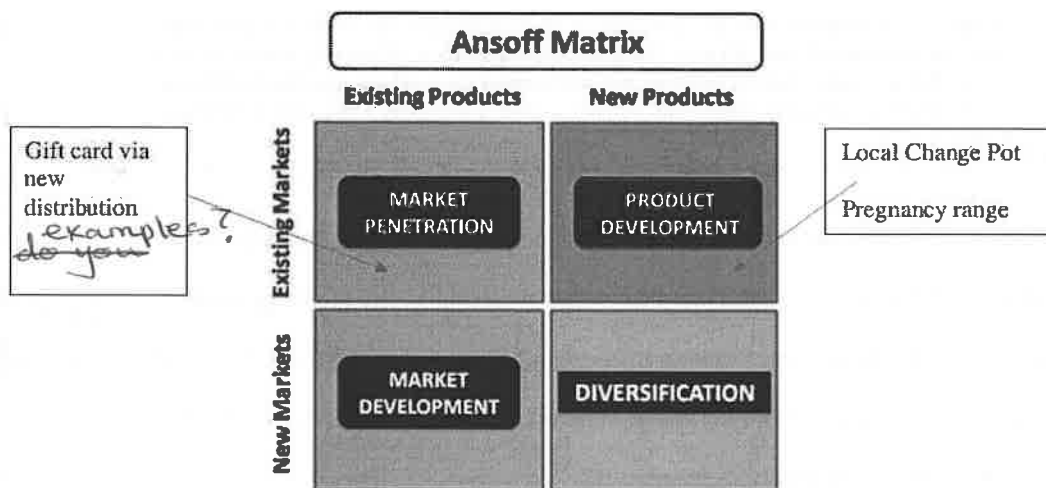


Figure 1: The Ansoff matrix

The annotations are based on (Ansoff, 1957), whereby market penetration is aimed at increasing sales within the original strategy for the product market - intended to increase sales to either new or current customers. Product development intends to keep the current mission but provides new features to improve the mission performance.

*Rather than
as describe the model, apply
+ discuss.*

Marketing objectives?

Marketing Channels

With word of mouth being high on the agenda in terms of a marketing channel for Lush and their preference towards using organic in-house marketing (WARC, 2016), it would be recommended that the channels used for the new proposals would be of minimum to no cost. Out of the three new proposed ideas, the gift card would be executed using the channels already used by Lush. In order to attract new customers to the Lush shopping experience and extend the opportunities to advertise via word of mouth, it is suggested that Lush embrace new, but slightly more traditional channels such as using new distribution channels for their gift cards, or perhaps even radio advertising or interviews. According to a financial services advertiser cited (Communicorpuk, 2019) "Radio delivers a mass audience, and in a much more cost-effective way than TV, which improves overall ROI". (Gift Card Partners, 2015) states that when positioned appropriately for gift card redemption, there are multiple benefits, from increasing brand awareness and "a call-to-action such as, Buy X gift card and receive Y extra value, reduced price". Lush could use these benefits to promote their extended products such as their spa experiences, which were plotted as 'problem child' products as was presented in the BCG product matrix during the marketing audit. Additional promotions for these products using this strategy could promote these lines to becoming 'rising stars'. The gift card would be presented as seen in the previous presentation promoting Lush with the message of being 'the natural choice', while also maintaining the Lush hand made cosmetics logo. Provided that the cost of using third parties did not exceed this benchmark, this initiative would potentially pay for itself.

If this option was to be disregarded by Lush due to their policies of not paying for advertising (Marketing-interactive, 2019), an alternative would be to strike deals with local retailers with

sales of their gift cards being reciprocated as an option (Nicasio, 2019), that ideally tie into Lush's brand, for example health food stores. Another alternative would be to provide the option of e-gift cards, not currently available on the UK site (Lush, 2019a). ✓

Change Pot

The proposed modification of the Charity Pot scheme is designed to deliver funding to smaller, local organisations, within the locality of the Lush Store. The existing charity pot scheme has received a positive response in the marketplace, especially now social and ethical responsibilities have become more recognised with consumer behaviours in recent decades. ✓

The rationale behind supporting local charities, are recognised for making a difference with their limited resources, however, often struggle to find funding. (Larbi, 2019) However, when applying the Boston Group Consultancy (BCG) model, the existing scheme evidently belongs to the question mark category (Faw, 2014). The new 'Change Pot', could lend itself to a current or short-term trend. In addition, the scheme strengthens the ethics and values of the of the business therefore overall contributing to the organisation as a whole indirectly holding a stronger position in the star's category. According to (Lush, 2019) for organisations to be considered to be involved in the scheme, they must have an income, less than two hundred and fifty-thousand-pound income. Along with this guideline, the charity should predominantly be staffed by volunteers, with an aim to challenge long term environmental interests. The new pot would be aimed at much more local charities extending the nature of the value offered – for example homelessness. The marketing channel that could be used for this might be local radio as suggested and/or promotional events where the customers are engaged in forming suggestions for the local charities to be supported. This is hoped to maximise positive word of mouth in the communities to attract new customers perhaps only interested in supporting more local causes.

New customers could be attracted to Lush through word of mouth. A channel which is being currently used is YouTube. In recent years, YouTube has in turn incidentally become Lush's most effective marketing channels. - source? WARC?

According to (Warc, 2016)

"Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics spends nothing on advertising, and instead uses social media, content marketing and a strong brand purpose to build buzz around its products."

Continuing this current marketing channel would mostly like to prove to be successful. However, Statistics illustrate that 48% of the public respond to leaflet advertisements and as a result then visit the shop, creating an enquiry, most likely requesting further information or a direct purchase as a result of leaflet marketing (ProActive Marketing, 2019). A company like Lush could use responsibly managed forests which help prevent deforestation. Also, this could help Lush take advantage of this marketing strategy from recycled materials to gain a wider audience to help contribute to the larger goal of the company's ethics and values.

Pregnancy Range

The proposed pregnancy range would be a separate line of merchandises, incorporating new ingredients which are considered to be safe to use in pregnancy. The cosmetic products would be supported with the advice from prenatal health professionals (midwives, general practitioners, pharmacists) Pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to the potential risks contained in cosmetics. The ingredients that could be used in the care range would be a natural and organic selection for both expecting mothers and baby. Currently Lush only offer only one baby product on sale at the moment.

Resources

Lush already sell their own gift cards in store (Lush, 2019a), therefore, this proposal of selling via new distribution channels would need no additional resources to implement this strategy. Additionally, they could utilize their in-house marketing channels to further promote this new offering.

Lush already have the change pot in place (Lush, 2019) . however, local radio and promotional events would promote more awareness and the possibility of reaching out to smaller organisation's, who share the same values in line with lush cosmetics.

Similarly, these same measures suggested for the change pot could be applied to promote the pregnancy range. In addition, to further promote the product, leaflets designed to entice customers to visit the store could be used. Lush stores could also promote the new range through hosting events targeted at expecting mums to demonstrate the product range on offer.

Currently with only 1 product, there might be a need for product development, how would it be manufactured/sourced?

Measuring performance (First Data, 2009) recommend using performance metrics such as "third party aggregator gift card sales", considering these as a percentage of overall company revenue, additionally, seasonal and year to year sales growth. A trial pilot period of six months to a year would provide evidence of success or not. ✓

When looking at the performance of the pregnancy range, measuring the sales of new products specific to the pregnancy range and the baby products through the use of sales reports. Customer feedback surveys and online analytics to analyse the results could also be used, as well as monitoring feedback from in-house communication channels. ✓

When observing the implementation of the local charge pot, as above measuring the sales of the new item and the amount raised for specific causes after 6 months based on 50% of the profits could be used. The use of analytics to determine any increased revenue, over the 6-month period could also be used to analyse sales in store and online.

— Is this a marketing objective?

Conclusion — Not necessary.

Lush has established a successful business with a unique approach to cosmetics. It is evident the soul aim is to provide customers with high quality products with ethically sourced materials. Differentiating from its competitors and retaining already loyal customers. Customers have the choice of over 700 stores. However, Statistics provide evidence of a decline in this year's profits, the company states this to be a short-term effect on the organisation's profits, mainly from choosing to investing in the establishments employees by raising the living wage and seeking to attract furthermore talent to work in their stores. Additionally, depending on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations will contribute to the future strength of the pound and its consumers disposable incomes.

Lush use, a differentiating strategy to attracting consumers who are enthusiastic to pay higher prices. Branding of the organisation and marketing strategies are used to promote their high quality and ethically driven products. Lush prides themselves on corporate social responsibility prescribing who they trade and collaborate with.

The proposed modification of the Charity Pot scheme is designed to deliver more effective funding to smaller organisations who can deliver more of an impact. Indirectly this could potentially reinforcing brand image creating enhanced sales margins.

The pregnancy range would be a low-cost way of introducing a new product line. Utilising the already natural ingredients. Selecting from the existing range of ingredients, modified to suit pregnancy range. The new product line has been currently unexplored by lush cosmetics.

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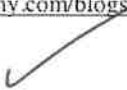
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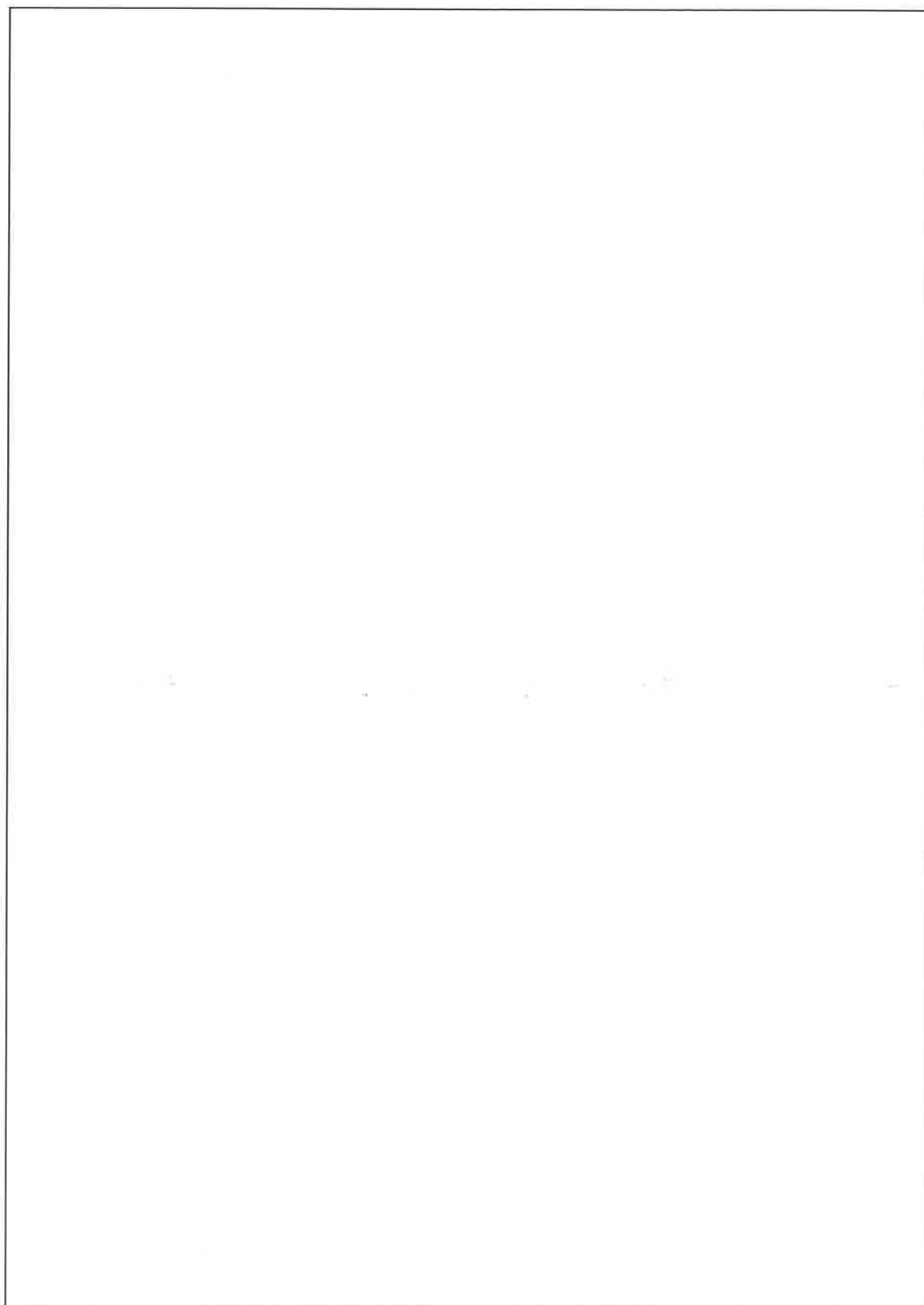
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Appendix

Swot Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Established Brand • Niche retail experience/activities • Employee advocates • Ethical values/cruelty free • Natural Ingredients • Personalised Packaging • Reduced packaging costs • Green policies in place • Private ownership	• Limited Advertising channels • Lack of online presence • Employee costs • Under targeted for men • High product price points
Opportunities	Threats
• Growth demand for natural products • Partnerships • Entering new markets/countries • Improve e-commerce • Loyalty schemes • Increasing advertising/awareness	• Lower priced competitors • Potential economic decline following BREXIT • Online competitors

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM : REPORT (75%)

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills	20	
You have clearly provided evidence of research using a variety of websites, however going forward try to incorporate more credible, academic sources relevant to the subject area in to your research. <i>In places the background research is dated.</i>		14 14/20
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills	20	
Overall you have demonstrated a good level of knowledge + understanding of the principles/concepts associated with the subject area. You have addressed the key elements of the task, providing some good ideas for enhancing ~~LUSH's~~ ^{the} perception of LUSH in the marketplace. You show a good/very good understanding of ~~the~~ appropriate principles and ~~homeworks~~ ^{in relation} to the case study company		15 14/20

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	20	
You've also provided clear evidence of critical evaluation, proposing sound ideas based on information analysed. You have also managed to demonstrate some creativity. <i>The ideas and suggestions are credible and reflect your prior analysis</i>		15 — 15 AC

4. Practical Application Skills	20	
Very good application of a range of techniques/concepts with good consideration given to the context for the most part - see comments re: Ansoff's Matrix. <i>This area is slightly weaker, not all concepts have been well applied to LUSH.</i>		13 — 12 AC

5. Presentation— professional skills	20	
You have communicated your ideas ~~is~~ confidently and consistently throughout, as a result this piece of work is professionally presented and coherent, with a small amendment of format ~~to~~ further improvement. Overall you have demonstrated professional skills which will be useful		15

Generally professionally presented and very readable. There is some inconsistency in margin presentation

15/AC

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)

Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)

Up to 1 week late (40% Max)

%

in future employment.

72% agreed

= 72%

= 70% AC