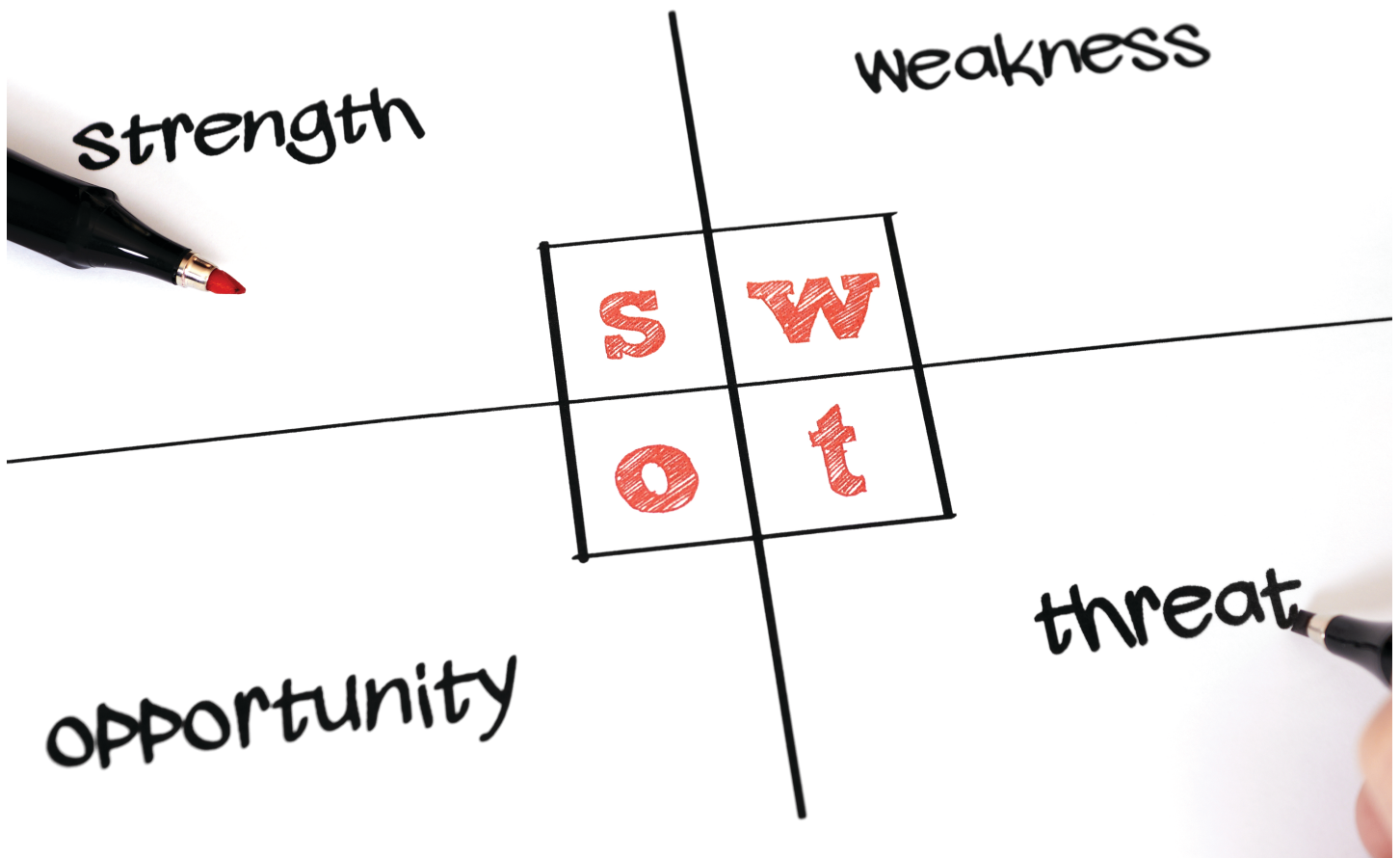


Business communication: writing a SWOT analysis



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Introduction

Welcome to this free course, *Business communication: writing a SWOT analysis*, which is designed to develop your writing skills for business. You will be taken step by step through the process of writing a SWOT analysis, with clear advice on selecting key information from a case study, making concise notes, choosing an appropriate structure and using language effectively. You will learn how to write a formal report including recommendations, based on a case study analysis of the British company, Greggs plc. You can progress at your own pace and it will take around 8 hours of your time to complete the course.

This OpenLearn course is an adapted extract from the Open University course [LB170 Communication skills for business and management](#). You can find out more about Open University courses and qualifications, tuition fees and funding options by visiting our [online prospectus](#).

Before you start, The Open University would really appreciate you taking a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations of the course. Your input will help to improve the online learning experience. If you would like to help, please fill in this [optional survey](#).

Learning outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- explain the SWOT framework
- use the SWOT framework to analyse a business case study or a workplace situation
- make concise, formal notes from a case study text
- use appropriate language and structuring to organise and write a SWOT analysis report for a business context.

1 What is a SWOT analysis?

To start, watch the following animation to find out more about what the course involves.

Video content is not available in this format.



2 What is a case study?



Figure 1 What is a case study?

Case studies are widely used in the study of business and management and you will learn more about them in the following activity.

Activity 1

Read the following sentences which describe what a case study is. Which of them are true and which are false? Write True or False in the box next to each sentence.

True or False	
Case studies are used in business and management to help you learn and think about a particular aspect of business and management.	Provide your answer...
A case study can be presented in a range of different formats including written text, video or audio. Case studies can include interviews, TV programmes, academic papers and newspaper articles.	Provide your answer...
A case study is a representation of a real-life or lifelike situation facing a business or business sector.	Provide your answer...

A case study may describe a simple situation or a highly complex one.

Provide your answer...

A case study can be based on fact or it can be fictional, i.e. completely invented.

Provide your answer...

Answer

All the comments are true. Case studies are designed to teach you something about business and they include a wide range of formats. They can be based on real business situations or invented.

Case studies are used in business and management to help you learn and think about a particular aspect of business and management. **True**

A case study can be presented in a range of different formats including written text, video or audio. Case studies can include interviews, TV programmes, academic papers and newspaper articles. **True**

A case study is a representation of a real-life or lifelike situation facing a business or business sector. **True**

A case study may describe a simple situation or a highly complex one. **True**

A case study can be based on fact or it can be fictional, i.e. completely invented). **True**

3 The SWOT framework



Figure 2 SWOT analysis

Using the SWOT framework to analyse a business situation involves studying the information in a case study closely and identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats mentioned. These points are then categorised in note form into the appropriate sections of a SWOT table. Note that the categories 'Strengths' and 'Weaknesses' refer to internal factors affecting a business, while 'Opportunities' and 'Threats' refer to external factors affecting a business. A SWOT table looks like the one shown in Table 1 (usually without the headings 'Internal factors' and 'External factors').

Table 1 A SWOT table

Internal factors	
Strengths	Weaknesses
External factors	
Opportunities	Threats

Internal factors might be the implementation of a new brand bringing changes, an increase in staffing (a strength) or lack of good training (a weakness). These can be controlled by the business itself.

External factors are things outside a business which affect it, such as rising oil prices due to war, a new product from a competitor in the market or new tax laws. These are out of the control of the business and the business needs to respond to them.

Once the SWOT table has been completed, the information in it can then be used to write a case study analysis and make recommendations.

Using a framework to analyse a case study enables you to:

- select what is relevant from information which might otherwise appear very complex
- organise your thinking
- make proposals or recommendations based on that thinking.

Key concepts

Key concepts are words or phrases that have a particular meaning in a business context. For example, **external environment** as a key concept has a special meaning in business and management. It refers to factors that affect a business such as economic and political factors.

Key concepts are important to the study of business, because using them allows you to give a clearer, more precise explanation of what is going on in a case study, and make recommendations using vocabulary that is more abstract, therefore more academic. It is important to learn the key concepts that you come across in your study of business and management, by noting them down with a definition of their specialised meaning.

4 Looking at a SWOT analysis report

In this section you will look closely at a SWOT analysis report, learning how to read the structure and to interpret the language used.



Figure 3 Studying a SWOT analysis report

4.1 Read the report

You are now going to read a SWOT analysis report, in order to see the end result of using the SWOT framework to analyse a case study.



Figure 4 A SWOT analysis of the bakery chain Greggs plc

The SWOT analysis report you will examine is of the British bakery chain, Greggs plc. This report was written by a first year business and management student, Sarah, in 2024 (Olatunji, 2024). Sarah gathered the information for her analysis from the assigned case study article and a few other sources. She wrote the report in response to this assignment question:

Assignment question

Using a SWOT analysis, critically examine the internal and external environment of Greggs, a UK bakery chain as described in the case study by Gill (2023). Finish your analysis by providing recommendations to Greggs about the important issues it needs to address and the actions it needs to take for business success.

Word count: 900 words

Activity 2

Read through Sarah's SWOT analysis of Greggs plc, and then answer the questions which follow.

Sarah's SWOT analysis

SWOT ANALYSIS OF GREGGS

Introduction

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method for evaluating a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Dess et al., 2020). It is an

effective framework for critically assessing a company’s internal and external environments to discover crucial aspects that may influence its performance and future success. The aim of this analysis is to use the SWOT framework to assess Greggs’ internal and external environments based on the case study (Gill, 2023). The analysis will also use tutor feedback on the previous tutor-marked assignment (TMA) 01 to improve the case study reading and analytical abilities displayed in that assessment.

Table 2 SWOT Analysis of Greggs

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strong brand recognition and cult status among consumers • Extensive network of over 2,300 stores across the UK • Successful shift towards food-to-go and plant-based offerings • Wide variety of customers • Ability to adapt recipes and products to meet changing consumer demands	• Perceived as a less premium offering compared to competitors like Pret A Manger • Reliance on the UK market, with limited international presence • High-fat products • Not good coffee
Opportunities	Threats
• Social media influencers • Demand for plant-based baked goods • Opportunity for growth in South of England and other English-speaking countries	• Increased competition from other food-to-go chains and retailers • Potential vulnerability to government regulations on unhealthy foods • Potential changes in consumer preferences towards healthier or more premium options • Disruptions in supply chain or manufacturing operations

(Source: Gill, 2023)

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Greggs has a number of strengths. Its primary assets are its remarkable brand awareness and cult status among customers. The firm has effectively developed a national reputation, with the case study identifying Greggs as ‘a national treasure’ (Gill, 2023), which has been imprinted in the ‘national psyche’ (Gill, 2023). This brand appeal has enabled Greggs to attract a diversified customer base, ranging from tradespeople to the ‘moneyed classes’ (Gill, 2023), proving the company’s broad market reach. Another major strength is Greggs’ enormous network of 2,300 outlets across the United Kingdom. This widespread retail presence has allowed the corporation to service customers more easily, with the case study emphasising large lines of customers waiting to be served even in a tiny town like Godalming (Gill, 2023). Greggs’ capacity to change its product offerings has also been a crucial asset, as indicated by its successful transition to food-to-go and plant-based options (Gill, 2023). This agility has enabled Greggs to remain relevant and suit evolving customer tastes (Euromonitor, 2023).

Weaknesses

However, Greggs does have several major weaknesses. The company's dependence on the UK market, along with its small overseas footprint, leaves it susceptible to domestic market shifts (Gill, 2023). Furthermore, Greggs' perceived position as a less premium product than rivals such as Pret A Manger (Gill, 2023) may restrict its attractiveness to some customer demographics looking for a more upmarket experience (Mintel, 2022). Other weaknesses of the company include high-fat food which may not appeal to health-conscious customers and the low-quality coffee which may reduce the number customers who want to buy good-quality coffee.

Opportunities

Despite its weaknesses, Greggs has several opportunities that it could explore. Looking at the outside world, Greggs has assorted options to pursue. The company's comparatively small presence in some locations, such as the south of England, gives prospects for future growth (Gill, 2023). Another development opportunity is to target additional travel-related outlets, such as train stations and airports. Furthermore, the case study reveals that Greggs is investigating international development, potentially in English-speaking areas such as Australia, which might open new growth opportunities (Gill, 2023). This overseas growth may help Greggs diversify its income sources and minimise its dependency on the UK market (IBISWorld, 2023). It could promote its products through social media influencers and offer plant-based baked products to cater for a wide range of customers.

Threats

However, Greggs faces several challenges, including rising rivalry from other food-to-go restaurants and shops (Gill, 2023). Consumer choices for healthier or more premium products may potentially threaten the company's established offers. Equally, the government regulation on unhealthy food is a threat to its popular product as noted by Gill (2023) that 'bakery products, by their nature, don't start from a great place'. Furthermore, interruptions in the supply chain or production processes may impair Greggs' capacity to satisfy consumer demand (Gill, 2023). The company's dependence on a limited product portfolio renders it susceptible to such disruptions (Euromonitor, 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the SWOT analysis identifies Greggs' primary strengths as famous brand awareness and a large UK shop network, as well as prospects for worldwide development and premium appeal. To achieve long-term success, the corporation must address its dependency on the local market while also enhancing the health profile of its goods.

Recommendations

According to the SWOT analysis, one important concern Greggs must solve is its small worldwide footprint. While the firm has had significant success in the UK market, its focus on the home market exposes it to changes in the local environment (Gill, 2023). To address this, Greggs should carefully examine expanding into overseas markets, especially in English-speaking nations with cultural commonalities that are likely to respond to its product offers (Tan, 2023; IBISWorld, 2023). Another important problem is that Greggs is perceived as a less premium option than rivals such as Pret A Manger (Gill, 2023; Mintel, 2022). To solve this, the corporation should prioritise improving product quality and customer service to

appeal to a wealthier client category. This may include adding more luxury menu items, improving shop atmosphere, and highlighting the brand's legacy and workmanship (Euromonitor, 2023). It is recommended that Greggs must continue to change its product line to meet changing customer desires for healthier alternatives (Gill, 2023). While the firm has made success in this regard, it should continue to decrease sugar, fat, and salt levels in its goods while retaining the flavour and quality that consumers demand (Gill, 2023; Euromonitor, 2023).

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(Adapted from text written by Open University Student Sarah Olatunji, 2024)

Now answer these questions on the material you've just read. Add your answers to the box below:

1. How is the report structured?
2. What information is included in the introduction?
3. What is the purpose of the conclusion?
4. Where are the recommendations?
5. How many recommendations are made?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Answer

1. The text is organised into eight sections with headings. The sections include an introduction, the SWOT table in note forms, the four areas of SWOT, a conclusion and recommendations. There is also a list of references used at the end.

2. The introduction includes a brief definition of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and what it is used for. It tells the reader what the analysis is about by signposting through the final two sentences.
3. The conclusion summarises the key points made in the SWOT analysis.
4. The recommendations come after the conclusion.
5. Three recommendations are made in response to the weaknesses and threats: to expand its market to English-speaking nations with cultural commonalities like Australia, to offer premium quality products and to provide healthier food options.

Discussion

You have seen a full SWOT analysis discussing issues at Greggs. Sarah uses this analysis to propose solutions to problems at the company in 2024. Having identified the issues through a SWOT analysis, she makes recommendations for the company that could be used to make decisions and address the identified problems.

A note on referencing

You will have seen that Sarah has written a list of references at the end of her text, which link to in-text references. This is because her text is an academic assignment for a university course. When writing at university you are required to list any sources you use for your assignment (usually texts that you read) at the end of your text. This shows the tutor where your information comes from. You are also required to include in-text references, which show precisely where pieces of information in your text come from. Here is one example from Sarah's report:

In-text reference:

The firm has effectively developed a national reputation, with the case study identifying Greggs as 'a national treasure' (Gill, 2023).

End-of-text reference:

Gill, O. (2023) 'Why Greggs is working. The bakery chain is making more dough than ever as it appeals to tradesmen and the moneyed classes alike. Is expansion overseas next, Oliver Gill asks its chief executive', *The Sunday Times* (London, England), 6 August, p. 4. Available at: <https://link-gale-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/apps/doc/A759744634/STND?u=tou&sid=bookmark-STND&xid=7ddd89b7> (Accessed: 14 April 2024).

You will see that the in-text reference includes the name of the organisation and the date, while the end-of-text reference includes the full information for finding the source. Usually an in-text reference will include the author's name; however, when there is no specified author, the name of the organisation can be used.

4.2 Focus on the language of SWOT analysis

Next, you will look more closely at some of the language used in Sarah's analysis.

Activity 3

Listed below are some of the phrases Sarah used in her SWOT analysis of Greggs to talk about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Decide which category each phrase belongs to by selecting from the drop-down options.

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Activity 4

Read Sarah's SWOT analysis again and note down any further words and phrases that may be useful for when you write your own SWOT analysis later in this course. Your notes might include new vocabulary (make sure you check definitions in a good dictionary such as <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>) or useful phrases for showing analysis, e.g. for expressing a viewpoint, making recommendations or describing cause and effect (i.e. why something is the way it is).

Provide your answer...

Discussion

You will have made your own choices for this activity. Here is a list of language which is useful for expressing analysis. Remember that the process of analysis includes:

- breaking down a situation in order to understand it better, often supported by a framework, e.g. SWOT
- weighing up the relative importance of the facts
- identifying cause and effect
- selecting the most relevant information
- shaping and organising relevant information
- evaluating and recommending.

Useful language for writing a SWOT analysis

Useful language used to express a viewpoint based on evidence:

- It is apparent that ...
- It is clear that ...

- These strengths work together to produce ...
- Lastly, a major advantage over the competition is that ...

Useful language for making recommendations:

- the business has to address ...
- ... is a priority
- there needs to be ...
- the aim of this recommendation would be ...
- by ... , the company will ...

These examples are from Olatunji (2024, emphasis added):

- 'This brand appeal has *enabled* Greggs *to* attract a diversified customer base ... *proving* the company's broad market reach.'
- 'This widespread retail presence has *allowed* the corporation *to* service customers more easily'
- 'Greggs' capacity to change its product offerings has also been a crucial asset, *as indicated* by its successful transition to food-to-go and plant-based options'
- 'This agility has *enabled* Greggs *to* remain relevant and suit evolving customer tastes'

5 Understanding an assignment title

Earlier, you read the assessment brief that Sarah responded to when she wrote her answer, which you also looked at. The assessment was a case study on the UK bakery chain Greggs plc (public limited company). The original company was founded by John Gregg in Newcastle in 1939. As of writing in 2026, the bakery chain sells on-the-go food, including sandwiches, baked goods and coffee. You are now going to examine the assessment brief yourself.



Figure 5 The first Greggs store, in Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Activity 5

Read this question, which is a typical assignment question from a university Business and Management course. List the key concepts and the instruction words in the box below.

Using a SWOT analysis, critically examine the internal and external environment of Greggs, a UK bakery chain, as described in the case study by Gill (2023). Finish your analysis by providing recommendations to Greggs about the important issues it needs to address and the actions it needs to take for business success.

Word count: 900 words

Key concepts:
Instruction words:

Answer

- **Key concepts:** 'SWOT analysis'; 'internal and external environment'; 'case study'; 'business success'

- **Instruction words:** 'Using'; 'critically examine'; 'Finish your analysis by providing recommendations' (Note: although 'word count' is not an instruction word, it does mean 'limit your writing to' the length stated.)

Discussion

The instruction words tell you what to do: they inform you about framework you need to use; and they ask you to 'critically examine' and to provide 'recommendations'. Identifying the instruction words in an assessment question is a crucial first step towards writing a good answer. Also, you should always note the word limit for the assessment.

The key concepts, described in the answer, are specific terms with specific meanings relating to a business context.

Approaching a SWOT analysis assessment

When you are given an assessment question like this, you need to take the following steps:

1. Analyse the assessment question/ prompt
2. Read, watch or listen to the case study text(s).
3. Select the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats mentioned in the text and put them into a SWOT table in concise note form (bullet points).
4. Decide on your recommendations for the business (based on your notes).
5. Write up your assessment, reporting on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats you noted down and including your recommendations based on these.

6 Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

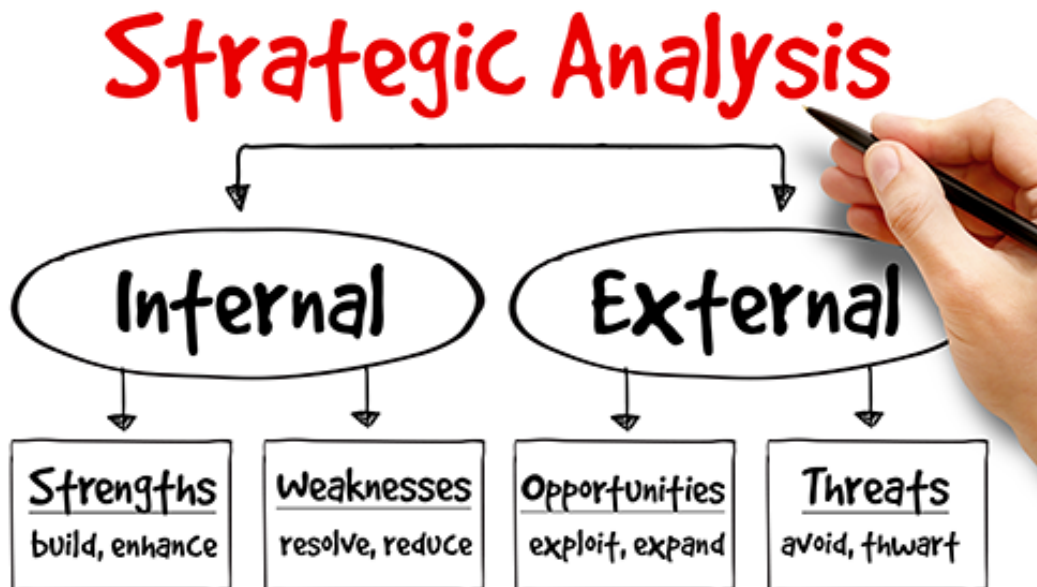


Figure 6 SWOT analysis

In this section you will learn how to identify the information relevant to SWOT in a case study.

6.1 Considering information from different sources

The information about a company may be presented in different ways. For example, it might be a written press release or take the form of videos or case studies. As you have already seen in this course, this will depend on the audience, context and purpose. The newspaper article you will be reading as part of the next few activities is from the business section of a newspaper and is targeted at those interested in the business environment. Different types of sources will present information in different ways, so it is important to understand what type of source you are looking at so you can account for these variations. Always check the dates on the sources you use because this is key to understanding the content and its context. Additionally, make sure you always date your SWOT analysis as it is a snapshot of a particular business at a particular time.

6.2 Identifying and describing strengths and weaknesses

In this section, you will practise completing a SWOT table using information from the case study on Greggs plc, which was originally published in a newspaper.

Activity 6 will ask you to recognise points relevant to strengths and weaknesses, so you can make use of these in a SWOT analysis.

Activity 6



Figure 7 A Greggs' employee

Read the first part of the Greggs case study text below (you will read the second part in the next activity) and highlight the sentences and phrases that refer to **strengths** in yellow and those that refer to **weaknesses** in green. You can [print out a version of the text](#) to use or you can use the text on your screen.

Case study: Greggs plc (1)

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Provide your answer...

Discussion

It is possible that not all your answers may match with the example but as long as you have selected the key relevant words or phrases, you don't need to worry about being 'correct'.

Now that you have identified Greggs' strengths and weaknesses from the newspaper article, you will turn the points made in the text into concise note form.

Activity 7

Using the points in the following tables, transform the strengths and weaknesses from the text into short bullet points. Remember to use concise noun phrases and formal language in your own words as far as possible. It may be possible to combine information from some of the sentences into a single bullet point. Some pieces of information are already concise, so require minimal changes. Use the completed

examples to guide you. When you have finished, compare your answers with the model answers.

Table 3 Strengths

Sentences in text (Gill, 2023)	Bullet points or noun phrases
'It appeals to tradesmen and the moneyed classes alike.'	Wide customer appeal
'Now with more than 2,300 stores across the UK, Greggs has become something of a national treasure.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'By 2012 the stock hit £5, and despite a wobble after the pandemic it has since soared to more than £25.'	Stock price increase
'Last week Greggs announced half-year sales of almost £850 million, equivalent to takings of more than £4.5 million a day.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'It's a very simple menu that can be done in mass in huge volumes.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'Greggs's transformation had been less about trailblazing and more about spotting market trends.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'Greggs hooked onto the bandwagon of meat alternatives just at the right time.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Table 4 Weaknesses

Sentences in text (all from Gill, 2023)	Bullet points or noun phrases
'Greggs does not take American Express.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'It was taking too long to be served.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'It's not the best coffee.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
'There was a degree of confusion about whether Greggs was a manufacturing business that sold its product through outlets, or a retail business that happened to manufacture most of the food that it sold.'	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Answer

These tables show some possible ways of transforming the information on strengths and weaknesses into bullet points or noun phrases. It is possible that not all your answers may match these examples, but as long as you have written the key relevant words or phrases in the bullet points, you don't need to worry about being 'correct'.

Table 3 Strengths (completed)

Sentences in text (Gill, 2023)	Bullet points or noun phrases
'It appeals to tradesmen and the moneyed classes alike.'	Wide customer appeal
'Now with more than 2,300 stores across the UK, Greggs has become something of a national treasure.'	2,300 UK stores Strong brand recognition
'By 2012 the stock hit £5, and despite a wobble after the pandemic it has since soared to more than £25.'	Stock price increase
'Last week Greggs announced half-year sales of almost £850 million, equivalent to takings of more than £4.5 million a day.'	High sales growth
'It's a very simple menu that can be done in mass in huge volumes.'	Menu suitable for mass production
'Greggs's transformation had been less about trailblazing and more about spotting market trends.'	Strong awareness of changing market
'Greggs hooked onto the bandwagon of meat alternatives just at the right time.'	Timely entry into alternative to meat market

Table 4 Weaknesses (completed)

Sentences in text (all from Gill, 2023)	Bullet points or noun phrases
'Greggs does not take American Express.'	Non-acceptance of American Express
'It was taking too long to be served.'	Slow service times
'It's not the best coffee.'	Low-quality coffee
'There was a degree of confusion about whether Greggs was a manufacturing business that sold its product through outlets, or a retail business that happened to manufacture most of the food that it sold.'	Lack of clarity regarding primary business sector

Discussion

The words you used may not be exactly the same as the examples provided, but the aim was to keep the bullet points concise and formal, using your own words and key concepts to group the information where possible. Often this means creating a noun phrase which carries the main meaning. For example, 'wide customer appeal' is a noun phrase which represents the sentence 'It appeals to tradesmen and the moneyed classes alike' in the 'Strengths' table.

Sometimes this may involve using a word which means the opposite of one that was used in the original text. For example, when the original text included the statement that 'It's not the best coffee' (weakness), the corresponding bullet point describes 'low-quality coffee' instead. You may also need to include a word which is more formal than the one used in the text. For example, the description 'taking too long to be served' from the 'Weaknesses' table is replaced by 'slow service times'.

If key concepts are used in the original text, these can be kept when turning information into note form. For example, the words 'stock', 'sales' and 'market' remain unchanged.

Grammar note: Nouns and noun phrases

Many of the words that you select to make concise notes will be nouns. This is because nouns carry most of the meaning in a sentence. As nouns are words that name things, they tell you who or what the writer is talking about in a sentence, who performs the actions and who or what is affected by the actions. Some nouns are physical things, for example 'bicycle', 'shop', 'director'. These are known as concrete nouns.

Some nouns are not physical things that you can see or touch; they are more like ideas or processes, for example 'capacity', 'production' or 'competition'. These are known as abstract nouns. Abstract nouns are very common in academic business language as they are used to encapsulate key concepts and ideas. It is important to recognise them and to use them in your writing as they help you to be succinct and precise.

Often nouns are used with other words that add information to the noun, e.g. adjectives or other nouns. This grouping of words is called a noun group or noun phrase, for example 'debt-free firm's investment', or, 'manufacturing process'.

6.3 Identifying and describing opportunities

The next activity will help you explore how to identify opportunities and threats in the Greggs case study. You will also have an opportunity to write up a few sentences analysing opportunities and threats.



Figure 8 Thinking about the 'O' in 'SWOT'.

Activity 8

Read the rest of the Greggs case study text below and look for the sentences and phrases that refer to **opportunities** and **threats**. (You have already noted the information related to strengths and weaknesses in [Activity 6](#).)

To help you do this, look at the table below the extract, which includes the bullet point notes that a business and management student, Tommy Cartmell (2024), made in his SWOT table when reading the text. Next to Tommy's concise bullet points, write a corresponding sentence or phrase from the text. Notice how he has used his own words to make the bullet points. There may be more than one sentence or phrase for each bullet point.

Case study: Greggs plc (2)

[...]

Plant-based bakery products were a natural evolution under Whiteside that started with introducing hot foods before diversifying into salads and falafel.

As David Cameron and successive Tory governments sought to clamp down on unhealthy foods amid rising obesity rates, Greggs appeared to be in the line of fire. 'Bakery products, by their nature, don't start from a great place,' another former Greggs director conceded.

'[But look at] the amount of sugar, fats and salts they've taken out. To do that successfully, you've got to do it gradually. Consumers will be turned off if the taste change is too extreme.' Greggs replaced puff pastry with lower-fat shortcrust pastry, gradually reduced the mayonnaise content in some products and used internal taste-test panels to trial changes to recipes.

Clive Black, head of research at the stockbroker Shore Capital, credited Whiteside with being quick to see the way the political winds were blowing and reducing fat and sugar in the menu. 'But it was not about throwing the baby out [with] the bathwater,' Black said which for Greggs meant 'keeping the sausage roll and the steak bake but evolving the range'.

A Daily Mail inspection earlier this year of the calorific content of the nation's sausage rolls found that while the Greggs version charted high in the ranking, it had fewer calories than those peddled by Pret A Manger, Marks & Spencer and Ginsters.

Alongside healthier eating and the wooing of the middle classes, Greggs's success over the past decade has been cemented by a rapid expansion of shops. More recently, it has targeted travel outlets such as railway stations, airports, motorway service stations and drivethrus. It has also opened more than 30 Outlet stores in disadvantaged areas that offer unsold food at a lower price.

The chain's knack of reinventing itself has served it well, but are there limits to its breakneck growth? Black believes that opportunities still abound in the UK, particularly in the south of England. Greggs has 40 locations in London; Pret A Manger has 282.

Whiteside said in 2015 that growth outside the UK was 'impossible'. Seven years earlier, Greggs ended a disastrous foray into Belgium, intended to be the launchpad to expand into Germany, France and the rest of the continent. But Currie disagrees: 'There's almost nothing off the agenda in terms of where we think we could take the brand and satisfy those needs.'

That said, she added: 'We don't have any sort of arrogance that Greggs will work everywhere in the world.'

Options are being considered. Currie refused to be drawn on locations, adding: 'We've got a small team, a sort of an R&D project, which is looking at where we think that may go in the future.'

Tan at PwC said: 'Like many UK concepts, it would need to flex that suite of products abroad ... Greggs needs to find somewhere culturally that would accept what it does.'

While some believe that Ireland is the logical next step, he suggested an English-speaking country further afield, also with a love of pies, was more likely. 'It might well be Australia or somewhere like that,' Tan said.

Currie joined the company in 2010 after a fledgling career at Asda. Now at the helm, she surely knows the recipe for Greggs's famous sausage roll? 'Oh gosh, no. It's in a locked box somewhere,' she said. The details are shared among a handful of people on a strict 'need to know basis', Currie added.

Back in Godalming, Edwina Young, 70, will not hear a bad word about Greggs. 'I love the coffee,' the retired council worker said, clasping a box of yum-yums for her husband. The couple regularly travel the country in their car and are always looking out for a Greggs at motorway service stations.'

‘After all, as you age, you have to stop a lot more,’ she grinned.
(Gill, 2023)

Table 5

Sentence or phrase in text (Gill, 2023)	Bullet point notes made by Tommy (Cartmell, 2024)
Opportunities	
Provide your answer...	• Trend towards healthier eating • Expansion into the appropriate overseas market
Threats	
Provide your answer...	• Perception that Greggs is unhealthy • Government policy on foods contributing to poor health

Answer

Table 5 (completed)

Sentence or phrase in text (Gill, 2023)	Bullet point notes made by Tommy (Cartmell, 2024)
Opportunities	
• ‘Plant-based bakery products were a natural evolution under Whiteside that started with introducing hot foods before diversifying into salads and falafel.’	• Trend towards healthier eating
• ‘Like many UK concepts, it would need to flex that suite of products abroad ... Greggs needs to find somewhere culturally that would accept what it does.’ • ‘While some believe that Ireland is the logical next step, he suggested an English-speaking country further afield, also with a love of pies, was more likely. “It might well be Australia or somewhere like that,” Tan said.’	• Expansion into the appropriate overseas market

Threats

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Bakery products, by their nature, don't start from a great place' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that Greggs is unhealthy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'As David Cameron and successive Tory governments sought to clamp down on unhealthy foods amid rising obesity rates, Greggs appeared to be in the line of fire.' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policy on foods contributing to poor health |

Comment

You will see that the wording of the bullet points made by Tommy is very concise. In some cases a single bullet point has been used to summarise more than one sentence from the original text. Some of the words used in the bullet points are key business concepts, such as 'overseas market'. The use of the phrase 'trend towards healthier eating' enables Tommy, as the writer of the analysis, to look at a real-world business situation (e.g. the fact that a business has the possibility to diversify its product range to target the customer conscious of healthy eating) and make a more general, abstract statement about the situation.

The phrase 'overseas market' encapsulates many practical, real, on-the-ground facts but describes the situation succinctly and keeps the focus of the reader at the level of an idea, a concept. You can use a short word or phrase to represent a considerable amount of information without including all the details or evidence. This is useful as it enables you as the case study analyst to see at a glance the 'snapshot' of the company in its environment. It also means that when you come to write your analysis, you are able to write in a formal, abstract, academic style which is a convention in case study analyses.

6.4 Using your own words

In the previous activity, Tommy (a business student) used his own words to produce the bullet points. It is very important to use your own words when making notes from a case study text in preparation for a written assessment, as this will help you to avoid copying pieces of the original text. Using chunks of original text when you write a business assessment does not show your tutor that you have understood the text. In fact, if it is done without using quotation marks, a citation and a reference, it can lead to accusations of plagiarism. There will be some words and phrases, however, which will remain the same, especially if these are key concepts (e.g. 'global market' or 'research and development').



Figure 9 Make notes in your own words in preparation for a written assessment

As you noticed in [Activity 8](#), Tommy made concise notes to represent the information from the original case study. By making his language more concise and using his own words in the form of key concepts, he is now well prepared to write his analysis of the case study without the risk of copying from the original. His notes were also selective as the information had to be related to only one of the following SWOT concepts: opportunities or threats.

Another point to note is that Tommy uses formal language in his bullet points. The tone of the article itself is quite informal in places because a number of business experts are being interviewed and therefore spoken language is used. In order to produce a more formal report on Greggs, Tommy has extracted his bullet points and, as you will see later in this course, used these to write up his report.

Having now explored all the SWOT points from the text, and having summarised these points using noun phrases for strengths and weaknesses, your final SWOT table may look something like Table 6, which comes from Tommy's SWOT analysis.

Table 6 Tommy's SWOT table on Greggs

Strengths	Weaknesses
Over 2,300 retail outlets throughout the UK	- Rate of growth not sustainable; the UK market near saturation - Greggs model unsuccessful in foreign markets

- Basic menu and easy to mass produce
- Quick to imitate competition and adapt to market trends
- Strong financial performance
- Appeal to a wide consumer base
- Expansion into travel shops market
- Gradual reduction of sugar and salt in its products
- Low-quality coffee
- High-fat products
- Not accepting all payment methods, limiting access to certain customers

Opportunities	Threats
• Extremely popular with online community • Trend towards healthier eating • Expansion in the South • Expansion into the appropriate overseas market	• Perception that Greggs is unhealthy • Government policy on foods contributing to poor health • Highly competitive food-to-go market

(Cartmell, 2024)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means passing off someone else's work as your own by not acknowledging the original source. If you would like to find out more about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, try some of the 5-minute activities on the [OU Library's 'Being Digital' website](#).

7 Writing a paragraph of a SWOT analysis



Figure 10 SWOT analysis write-up

In the next activity, you will practise writing up a SWOT analysis paragraph based on the Greggs case study you have been exploring in this course.

Activity 9

Look again at Table 6 and then try the tasks below.

Table 6 Tommy's SWOT table on Greggs

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Over 2,300 retail outlets throughout the UK • Basic menu and easy to mass produce • Quick to imitate competition and adapt to market trends • Strong financial performance • Appeal to a wide consumer base	• Rate of growth not sustainable; the UK market near saturation • Greggs model unsuccessful in foreign markets • Low-quality coffee • High-fat products • Not accepting all payment methods, limiting access to certain customers

- Expansion into travel shops market
- Gradual reduction of sugar and salt in its products

Opportunities

- Extremely popular with online community
- Trend towards healthier eating
- Expansion in the South
- Expansion into the appropriate overseas market

Threats

- Perception that Greggs is unhealthy
- Government policy on foods contributing to poor health
- Highly competitive food-to-go market

(Cartmell, 2024)

Task 1

Choose **one** section from Table 6 and expand the information to write a paragraph of 100 to 150 words. You should also draw on what you have read about Greggs in the [case study text](#).

Organise the points you want to include in a way that will make the information easy to understand for your reader. This means starting with more general information and moving on to more specific information. You can omit points that you consider to be very minor to keep to the word limit, and remember to check that you are using formal language. You do not need to include recommendations at this stage. A text box is provided below for your paragraph should you wish to use it.

Provide your answer...

Task 2

Once you have written your paragraph on either the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats of/to Greggs, compare it with the equivalent paragraph from Tommy's analysis below. To do this comparison, use any two categories of the [marking criteria](#): 'Use of source materials', 'Structure and development', 'Writing style' and 'Accuracy'. When you have compared the paragraphs, make a note of one or two of the main differences between your paragraph and Tommy's. A text box is provided.

Tommy's paragraph on Greggs's strengths

Greggs has a number of strengths. The main strength for Greggs is the use of a basic menu that is easy to mass produce (Gill, 2023). This enabled Greggs to meet the increasing demand during a period of growth, and supported expansion because the product range was already familiar to customers. Another strength for Greggs is the ability to imitate competitors and adapt quickly to changing market trends. This ability enables the company to get new products to market quickly in reaction to competition and shifting customer demand. This led to increased profits and a strong financial position that suggests it would be resilient to future instability and attractive to investors. With over 2,300 Greggs' retail outlets throughout the

UK (Gill, 2023) it is likely that profits will continue to remain high. Finally, new leadership in 2013 gave the business a clear identity and vision (Gill, 2023), that enabled the rapid growth of the business.

(Cartmell, 2024)

Tommy's paragraph on Greggs's weaknesses

Despite the strengths referred to above, Greggs also has several weaknesses. The most significant weakness is that the rate of growth for the business is not sustainable, and the UK market for Greggs is possibly nearing saturation. The quality of Greggs' coffee is considered poor and fatty food products have deterred health-conscious customers from buying food at Greggs. The failure and withdrawal from Belgium in 2008 (Gill, 2023) demonstrates that the Greggs business model may not always translate well to foreign markets. In a densely populated market, it is possible that Greggs' strong position could be reversed as rivals imitate Greggs' strategy.

(Cartmell, 2024)

Tommy's paragraph on Greggs's opportunities

Regardless of the weaknesses discussed above, there are opportunities for further development at Greggs. The first of these is the growing trend for healthier eating (Gill, 2023). It is possible that Greggs could further widen its customer base by offering an expanded range of healthy or non-meat products. This was demonstrated by the increase in profits following the launch of the Vegan sausage roll in 2019 (Gill, 2023). Popularity with social media influencers (Gill, 2023) is an opportunity to raise awareness of healthier food options and reinforce the positive aspects of the company, such as the support given to the disadvantaged. Gill (2023) states that Greggs has many possibilities for expansion because the company and product range have evolved since 2008 and may be better suited to certain foreign markets such as Australia. Finally, as the demand for healthier food grows, it has the potential to expand in the South of England because Greggs has just 40 outlets in London (Gill, 2023) to serve a city of that size.

(Cartmell, 2024)

Tommy's paragraph on Greggs's threats

Despite Greggs having several opportunities to improve the business, it should be wary of threats. The main threat to Greggs is from government

legislation, as demonstrated by recent efforts to tackle rising obesity in society (Gill, 2023). It is possible that further government action could negatively impact sales by affecting the product range Greggs is able to offer. Another threat could be the perception that Greggs is unhealthy because of the growing trend towards healthier eating and ranking highly for calorific content when compared to competitors (Gill, 2023).

(Cartmell, 2024)

Provide your answer...

Comment

This activity has involved transforming the notes Tommy made on the case study text into a paragraph to make up part of your analysis. This is a process of organising the information, expanding it and using your own words to provide an analysis.

How did you find this process? You will need to follow it for any case study analysis drawing on different sources.

8 Writing an effective SWOT analysis



Figure 11 A Greggs word cloud

In this section, you will look at the full text that Tommy, a business and management student, has written based on his SWOT analysis of Greggs using the information in the *Sunday Times* article written by Gill (2023). It is his answer to this assessment question:

Using a SWOT analysis, critically examine the internal and external environment of Greggs, a UK bakery chain, as described in the case study by Gill (2023). Finish your analysis by providing recommendations to Greggs about the important issues it needs to address and the actions it needs to take for business success.

Word count: 900 words

8.1 Arranging your analysis into paragraphs

As you will see in this section, Tommy has expanded the notes from his SWOT table (Table 6) to write the analysis and also include recommendations of his own. You will now read Tommy's full analysis and identify what the purpose of each paragraph is.

Activity 10

Read Tommy's SWOT analysis of the Greggs case study article. You will see that all the subheadings have been removed from the analysis except the first one ('Introduction'). Once you have read the text, answer the questions that follow.

Tommy's SWOT analysis of Greggs

Using SWOT to analyse Greggs' business environment

Introduction

Founded by John Gregg as a single shop in Newcastle in 1951 (Gill, 2023), Greggs has become a popular bakery chain throughout the UK (Gill, 2023). SWOT can be used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an organisation, providing a summary of a company's performance at that particular moment (The Open University, 2024). Using the SWOT framework, the report will examine the internal and external environment of Greggs and make recommendations on which issues should be addressed and opportunities exploited to ensure the business succeeds.

Table 7 SWOT table

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Over 2,300 retail outlets throughout the UK • Basic menu and easy to mass produce • Quick to imitate competition and adapt to market trends • Strong financial performance • Appeal to a wide consumer base • Expansion into travel shops market • Gradual reduction of sugar and salt in its products	• Rate of growth not sustainable; the UK market near saturation • Greggs model unsuccessful in foreign markets • Low-quality coffee • High-fat products • Not accepting all payment methods, limiting access to certain customers
Opportunities	Threats
• Extremely popular with online community • Trend towards healthier eating • Expansion in the South • Expansion into the appropriate overseas market	• Perception that Greggs is unhealthy • Government policy on foods contributing to poor health • Highly competitive food-to-go market

(Gill, 2023)

[Paragraph 2 subheading]

Greggs has a number of strengths. The main strength for Greggs is the use of a basic menu that is easy to mass produce (Gill, 2023). This enabled Greggs to meet the increasing demand during a period of growth, and supported expansion because the product range was already familiar to customers. Another strength for Greggs is the ability to imitate competitors and adapt quickly to changing market trends. This ability enables the company to get new products to market quickly in reaction to competition and shifting customer demand. This led to increased profits and a strong financial position that suggests it would be resilient to future instability and attractive to investors. With over 2,300 Greggs' retail outlets throughout the UK (Gill, 2023) it is likely that profits will continue to remain high. Finally, new leadership in 2013 gave the business a clear identity and vision (Gill, 2023), that enabled the rapid growth of the business.

[Paragraph 3 subheading]

Despite the strengths referred to above, Greggs also has several weaknesses. The most significant weakness is that the rate of growth for the business is not sustainable, and the UK market for Greggs is possibly nearing saturation. The quality of Greggs' coffee is considered poor and fatty food products have deterred health-conscious customers from buying food at Greggs. The failure and withdrawal from Belgium in 2008

(Gill, 2023) demonstrates that the Greggs business model may not always translate well to foreign markets. In a densely populated market, it is possible that Greggs' strong position could be reversed as rivals imitate Greggs' strategy.

[Paragraph 4 subheading]

Regardless of the weaknesses discussed above, there are opportunities for further development at Greggs. The first of these is the growing trend for healthier eating (Gill, 2023). It is possible that Greggs could further widen its customer base by offering an expanded range of healthy or non-meat products. This was demonstrated by the increase in profits following the launch of the Vegan sausage roll in 2019 (Gill, 2023). Popularity with social media influencers (Gill, 2023) is an opportunity to raise awareness of healthier food options and reinforce the positive aspects of the company, such as the support given to the disadvantaged. Gill (2023) states that Greggs has many possibilities for expansion because the company and product range have evolved since 2008 and may be better suited to certain foreign markets such as Australia. Finally, as the demand for healthier food grows, it has the potential to expand in the South of England because Greggs has just 40 outlets in London (Gill, 2023) to serve a city of that size.

[Paragraph 5 subheading]

Despite Greggs having several opportunities to improve the business, it should be wary of threats. The main threat to Greggs is from government legislation, as demonstrated by recent efforts to tackle rising obesity in society (Gill, 2023). It is possible that further government action could negatively impact sales by affecting the product range Greggs is able to offer. Another threat could be the perception that Greggs is unhealthy because of the growing trend towards healthier eating and ranking highly for calorific content when compared to competitors (Gill, 2023).

[Paragraph 6 subheading]

The key findings of this analysis are the ability of Greggs to mass produce a basic menu, adaptability when imitating competitors and meeting changing consumer expectations within a large number of outlets across the UK. The weaknesses identified include an unsustainable rate of growth in the UK and failed expansion into Europe. A number of opportunities were identified which included the trend amongst consumers to eat more healthily, the relationship with social media influencers and the options for further expansion. Lastly, the report has a warning about the threats facing the company: government legislation promoting healthy eating and the perception that Greggs is unhealthy as consumers' tastes change.

[Paragraph 7 subheading]

In order to improve, Greggs needs to address the weaknesses within the organisation and exploit the external opportunities highlighted in this report. The opportunity afforded by its popularity with social media influencers can be used to counter the perception of Greggs being unhealthy. The

company should explore options for expansion, both in the UK as mentioned above but also overseas in countries such as Australia, utilising market research specialists to identify a suitable location or the adjustments required to make the product range appealing to a potential target market.

Word count: 963 words

References

Gill, O. (2023) 'Why Greggs is working. The bakery chain is making more dough than ever as it appeals to tradesmen and the moneyed classes alike. Is expansion overseas next, Oliver Gill asks its chief executive', *The Sunday Times* (London, England), 6 August, p. 4. Available at: <https://link-gale-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/apps/doc/A759744634/STND?u=tou&-sid=bookmark-STND&xid=7ddd89b7> (Accessed: 14 April 2024).

The Open University (2024) '5.2 The SWOT framework', *LB170: Communication skills for business and management*. Available at: <https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=2227089§ion=2> (Accessed 23 February 2024).

(Adapted from Cartmell, 2024)

1. Use the text box below to identify the purpose of each paragraph. (You don't need to look at the table at the moment.) The 'Introduction' has already been described for you as an example.

Provide your answer...Paragraph 1 introduces the report.

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

Paragraph 4:

Paragraph 5:

Paragraph 6:

Paragraph 7:

Answer

There are seven paragraphs in total (not including the table). The purpose of each paragraph is as follows:

- Paragraph 1 introduces the report.
- Paragraph 2 analyses the strengths of Greggs.
- Paragraph 3 analyses the weaknesses of Greggs.
- Paragraph 4 analyses the opportunities of Greggs.
- Paragraph 5 analyses the threats of Greggs.
- Paragraph 6 makes conclusions based on analyses.
- Paragraph 7 makes recommendations to Greggs.

2. Write down a subheading for each paragraph below.

Provide your answer...Paragraph 1: Introduction
Paragraph 2:
Paragraph 3:
Paragraph 4:
Paragraph 5:
Paragraph 6:
Paragraph 7:

Answer

Suggested subheadings for the paragraphs are:

- Paragraph 1: Introduction
- Paragraph 2: Strengths
- Paragraph 3: Weaknesses
- Paragraph 4: Opportunities
- Paragraph 5: Threats
- Paragraph 6: Conclusion
- Paragraph 7: Recommendations

Comment

Constructing your text using paragraphs in this way helps you to organise and group your thoughts, and it will also help your reader to understand the information in the text. Generally, a paragraph should express one main idea, which is expanded and developed within that paragraph. The subheading indicates what the section is about. In most university assignments, it is acceptable to use subheadings for signposting. Their use is also common in business module assignments. However, reports and case study analyses tend to have subheadings for sections and their use may be limited or not used at all in essays. Always read the assignment guidance carefully to see if you can use them.

8.2 Using signposting phrases

As part of writing effective paragraphs that lead the reader through your text, you will need to include signposting phrases. You will practise identifying signposting phrases from within a piece of writing in the next activity.

Activity 11

Read through the following excerpt from Tommy's SWOT analysis of the article about Greggs (Cartmell, 2024). Click on each of the parts of the text that are highlighted in yellow and read about how these signposts guide the reader through Tommy's case study analysis.

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Discussion

This activity showed how signposting language can be used to guide the reader in your text. Signposting indicates to the reader what the text is about, what each paragraph is about and how the information is organised in the text (e.g. from general to particular).

8.3 Writing a well-structured paragraph

It is important to select and organise information carefully when writing a paragraph. In the next activity, you will look at paragraph 4 of Tommy's SWOT analysis of Greggs and the list of opportunities from his SWOT table, and you will analyse the way in which he has chosen to organise the information.

Activity 12

Read the list of opportunities from the SWOT table and paragraph 4 of Tommy's text. Look at the way Tommy has organised the information from the table into a well-written paragraph for the reader.

In the text box below, make a note of which point from the list of opportunities Tommy puts first in his paragraph and why you think he has done this.

Table 8 Opportunities from Tommy's SWOT table

Opportunities
- Extremely popular with online community - Trend towards healthier eating - Expansion in the South - Expansion into the appropriate overseas market

(Cartmell, 2024)

Paragraph 4 of Tommy's analysis

Opportunities

Regardless of the weaknesses discussed above, there are opportunities for further development at Greggs. The first of these is the growing trend for healthier eating (Gill, 2023). It is possible that Greggs could further widen its customer base by offering an expanded range of healthy or non-

meat products. This was demonstrated by the increase in profits following the launch of the Vegan sausage roll in 2019 (Gill, 2023). Popularity with social media influencers (Gill, 2023) is an opportunity to raise awareness of healthier food options and reinforce the positive aspects of the company, such as the support given to the disadvantaged. Gill (2023) states that Greggs has many possibilities for expansion because the company and product range have evolved since 2008 and may be better suited to certain foreign markets such as Australia. Finally, as the demand for healthier food grows, it has the potential to expand in the South of England because Greggs has just 40 outlets in London (Gill, 2023) to serve a city of that size.

(Cartmell, 2024)

Provide your answer...

Answer

The point that Tommy has put first in his paragraph is the fact that the company has an opportunity to target customers who want healthy food. This relates to the second bullet point, 'Trend towards healthier eating', in the table. In doing this, Tommy has identified this as the 'main' point – the most important one from the list of opportunities. It is an area that the company can easily expand by offering healthier and non-meat products to customers.

To find out why it is a well-written paragraph, read the comment next.

Comment

This paragraph is an example of a well-written passage from a SWOT analysis. It has a number of features which make it a good example. These are the main ones:

- **A good theme sentence:** The paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence: 'Regardless of the weaknesses discussed above, there are opportunities for further development at Greggs.' This effectively signals the main focus of the paragraph, which is exploring opportunities for Greggs.
- **A logical progression of ideas:** The paragraph moves logically from identifying general opportunities (healthier eating trends) to specific examples (the success of the vegan sausage roll and potential foreign market expansion). Pronouns such as 'this' and 'these' are used to refer back to the information already given. Each point builds on the previous one and creates a coherent flow of the text.
- **Use of signposting language:** Phrases like 'The first of these', 'This was demonstrated by', and 'Finally' guide the reader through the argument clearly and indicate the sequence of ideas. Contrast is also signposted effectively with 'Regardless of the weaknesses discussed above', which connects the paragraph to the previous section.
- **Use of relevant key concepts:** The paragraph integrates key business concepts such as *market trends*, *product innovation*, *social media marketing*, and *geographic expansion*. It also references *consumer demand for healthier products*, which is a crucial factor in the food retail industry.

- **Objective language:** The language is neutral and fact-based. For instance: 'It is possible that Greggs could further widen its customer base' uses cautious (the use of 'possible that'), objective phrasing rather than making unsupported claims or giving personal opinions. The use of citations – '(Gill, 2023)' – for the source (case study) reinforces the objectivity.
- **Evaluative language:** The paragraph uses evaluative terms like 'demonstrated by,' 'has the potential,' and 'may be better suited'. This shows an analysis of the company rather than just a description of the company. It also assesses the likelihood of future opportunities rather than merely listing them.

What makes a well-structured paragraph?

There are a few general rules about what makes a well-structured paragraph. Usually, a paragraph in a piece of formal writing:

- is linked to the previous paragraph through signposting and/or explanation
- makes the main point (often called a high-level generalisation) in the first sentence or the first couple of sentences
- develops the main point through giving examples or further details (often called low-level details)
- uses signposting to guide the reader
- uses **pronouns** to refer back to information already given (e.g. 'this', 'it' or 'they').

9 Making recommendations

The point of conducting a case study analysis by using a framework such as SWOT is to find ways of addressing issues or problems in organisations. This also means thinking critically about issues and coming up with convincing recommendations. The ability to do so enhances your professional communication skills. You will think about this in the next activity, which asks you to consider the recommendations Tommy makes in his analysis of Greggs.

Activity 13

In the final activity for this course, you're going to look at the recommendations that Tommy has made in the final paragraph of his analysis.

Read the final paragraph of Tommy's analysis and then answer the questions that follow.

Final paragraph of Tommy's text

Recommendations

In order to improve, Greggs needs to address the weaknesses within the organisation and exploit the external opportunities highlighted in this report. The opportunity afforded by its popularity with social media influencers can be used to counter the perception of Greggs being unhealthy. The company should explore options for expansion, both in the UK as mentioned above but also overseas in countries such as Australia, utilising market research specialists to identify a suitable location or the adjustments required to make the product range appealing to a potential target market.

(Cartmell, 2024)

1. How many recommendations did Tommy make?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Tommy makes five recommendations:

- exploit external opportunities
- use social media influencers to counter perceptions about Greggs being unhealthy
- expand further in the UK
- expand market overseas such as Australia
- adjust product range to make it appealing to a potential target market.

2. How did using a SWOT framework enable Tommy to think through the issues posed by the business environment and come to the point where he was able to make recommendations?

Provide your answer...

Answer

The SWOT analysis helped Tommy to pick out certain points of relevant information, and to leave out the points that are less relevant to the company in terms of what it should do next. It gave focus and clarity to his answer. The SWOT analysis also helped him to organise his thinking and therefore his text clearly. Tommy was able to structure his answer into the four key sections of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and then write his conclusions and recommendations for a strategy based on relevant evidence.

3. Do you agree with these recommendations? Why?

Provide your answer...

Comment

Your view of these recommendations will depend on how much you know about this area of business. They seem to be logical recommendations based on the information in the case study text. This is because the company seems ready to grow further (nationally and internationally), and these actions are the first steps towards that goal. However, the recommendation to expand to Australia may need more evidence and thus it may not be a strong one.

You may feel that you do not have enough knowledge to make recommendations based on one text. However, it is a good idea to develop the habit of thinking things through for yourself and formulating ideas and suggestions based on SWOT analyses, as this is a key expectation when you are studying business and management.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have now reached the end of this free course, *Business communication: writing a SWOT analysis*. You should now feel that you can:

- explain the SWOT framework
- use the SWOT framework for analysing a business case study or a workplace situation
- make concise, formal notes from a case study text
- use appropriate language and structuring to organise and write a SWOT analysis for a business context

Reflective activity

Reflect on the activities in this course by answering the following questions. Why is it useful to use a framework such as SWOT to analyse a business?

Provide your answer...

Do you feel more prepared for writing a case study analysis after studying this course?

Provide your answer...

What are the most important things you will remember when you come to writing a SWOT analysis of your own?

Provide your answer...

What are the next steps you would like to take to continue developing your communication skills for business?

Provide your answer...

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Now you've completed the course we would again appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us a bit about your experience of studying it and what you plan to do next. We will use this information to provide better online experiences for our learners and to share our findings with others. If you would like to help, please fill in this [optional survey](#).

References

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