

Mothercare Marketing Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 21st century, women have become more health conscious and are continuously finding ways to look smart, trendy, slim and maintain their figure. However, most women who are expecting a child or who already have children have difficulty in maintaining the same beautiful shape they once had. The specialist brand retailer, Mothercare, has been around for more than 40 years and has always delivered on its promise of caring for women every step of the way. Now Mothercare wants to keep its binding promise and lend a helping hand. The senior management had assigned a marketing and operations team to develop the 'Mothercare 360 Campaign' for keeping women of all ages in tip top shape by offering them the best professional advice and care available at the new Mothercare women's gym, opening in April 2011.

The project report for delivering the Mothercare 360 Campaign has the following nine sections:

- **Section 1** gives a brief introduction to Mothercare Plc.
- **Section 2** gives a brief description of the SOSTAC model which is divided into six stages and will be applied in this project report to create an effective marketing campaign.
- **Section 3** presents an environmental analysis using PEST, Porter's five forces and SWOT models.
- **Section 4** defines the marketing objectives of the campaign.
- **Section 5** defines the marketing strategy of the campaign which will accomplish the set objectives.
- **Section 6** defines the marketing tactics in the form of the Marketing Mix.
- **Section 7** gives a detailed outline of the action plan to be achieved using a Gantt chart and a budget analysis.
- **Section 8** discusses the control and implementation phase, contingency planning, integration of marketing and operations and risk assessment.
- **Section 9** concludes this project report.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE COMPANY

Founded in 1961, Mothercare is a specialist retailer of parenting and children's products. The company offers maternity and children's clothing, furniture and home furnishings, bedding, feeding-, bathing- and travel equipment and toys (Datamonitor 2010).

Mothercare has more than a 1000 stores across the globe. The company recorded a substantial increase in revenue; £723.6 million in the financial year ending March 2009 and worldwide network sales up to £1.1 billion by April 2010 (Datamonitor 2010). Appendix A gives a consolidated view of Mothercare's financial statements.

Headquartered in the United Kingdom, where Mothercare displayed weaker sales in first quarter of 2010, the company has expanded its operations in Europe, Middle East, Africa and the Far East. Mothercare's major competitors include Jacques Vert, the Marks and Spencer Group, Monsoon, Moss Bros Group, NEXT, Alexon Group PLC and Toys R Us Limited



Ian Peacock
Chairman, Mothercare Plc

"In 1961, our founder Selim Zilkha said that Mothercare aimed to provide 'Everything for mother and her baby under one roof'. In Mothercare's 50th year that vision remains intact, with our stores now containing a greater range of products than ever before."

Source: Mothercare (2010) and (Datamonitor 2010).

1.2 THE INOVATIVE BUSINESS IDEA

'The Expansion of the Mothercare Group into the UK's Health and Fitness industry by opening a new gym for women of all ages'

SECTION 2
THE SOSTAC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Businesses typically either thrive in their market or simply fail. The difference between a business that thrives and one that fails is often the marketing plan that is created and used (Chaffey et al., 2005). Though various marketing plans have proven effective over the years, many experienced business consultants claim that the SOSTAC model is one of the most effective (Smith and Taylor 2004).

Created by Paul Russell Smith, the SOSTAC planning framework is one of the most powerful planning systems ever developed. It is extremely effective as it contains the six vital ingredients for the perfect marketing plan (Fig. 2).

Fig.2		PR SMITH'S SOSTAC PLANNING FRAMEWORK		
S	SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	Where are we now?	STAGE 1	
O	OBJECTIVES	Where do we want to go?	STAGE 2	
S	STRATEGY	How do we get there?	STAGE 3	
T	TACTICS	What tools do we use to implement the strategy?	STAGE 4	
A	ACTION PLAN	Detailed Action Plan for each tool and tactic.	STAGE 5	
C	CONTROL	Tracking our progress by measuring, monitoring, reviewing, modifying and updating	STAGE 6	
Source : Smith (2003)				

SECTION 3

FIRST STAGE: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

If an organisation wants to expand into a different type of industry or business setting, it is of vital importance for the organisation to conduct a situational analysis in order to keep up with the changing environmental trends and to strengthen the foundation of their strategies (IDM Firm 2007).

A Situational or Environmental Analysis can be defined as a *problem-definition framework* designed for the systematic collection of past and present data to examine the trends, forces, internal factors and external factors which have a potential to influence the performance of the business (AMA 2007).

The first stage of the SOSTAC planning framework, Situational Analysis is undertaken by the application of PEST Analysis, Porter's Five Forces and SWOT Analysis.

3.1 EXTERNAL MARKETING AUDIT

To examine Mothercare's external market, the macro-environmental model called the PEST analysis was used to study the political, economic, social factors and the technological climate. Figure 3.0 gives an illustration of Mothercare's external environment using the PEST model.

Figure 3.0

PEST ANALYSIS OF MOTHERCARE (EXTERNAL)

POLITICAL

- **General Elections**
The political importance of parents with babies and young children is underlined by the ‘Mumsnet election’ in May 2010.
- **Ethical Trading and Suppliers**
Mothercare sources products from around the world and has a code of practice on the Ethical Trading Initiative’s Base Code. All suppliers share its values and are committed to working towards compliance with its Code.
- **Environmental policy**
Mothercare is fully committed to protecting its customers, people making its products and the environment by ensuring efficient use of raw materials, optimising the use of energy, encouraging recycling and sustainability, and engaging business partners and stakeholder groups.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility**
The European government has refused to take action on a controversial chemical (BPA), widely used in babies’ bottles, which could lead to serious health issues. Mothercare will be stopping its supply of older bottles this August.

ECONOMIC

- **UK Economic Growth**
The UK economy grew by a faster-than-expected 1.1% in the second quarter of 2010. The UK economy has come out of recession, after figures showed it had grown by a weaker-than-expected 0.1% in the last three months of 2009.
- **UK Inflation Rate and Indexes**
UK inflation slowed for a second consecutive month in June, to 3.2% from 3.4% in May. The Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation measure also fell to 5% from 5.1% in May
- **Unemployment Rate**
The number of people employed increased by 184,000. The number of people unemployed in the UK fell by 49,000 to 2.46 million in the three months to June 2010.
- **International Economies**
Mothercare's overseas franchise business currently operates through 358 stores in 45 countries, primarily in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East

TECHNOLOGICAL

- **Internet Shopping Convenience**
Mothercare offers their consumers to shop and have their goods delivered home using information technology
- **Social Networking Websites**
The Mothercare group has appointed Diffusion with developing a social media strategy to target parents online and offline. The company is also on Facebook and Twitter where B2C interaction is high and the company can hear what customers have to say about their products and services.
- **21st Century Retailer**
Use of laser scanners at cash tills and energy efficient products suited for the modern user.

SOCIAL

- **Marketing Baby Products**
Many social and demographic factors have a strong influence on the market for baby products. These include: falling birth rates, smaller family sizes and the use of efficient mobility products for longer journeys.
- **UK Demographics**
The UK population grew to 61.8 million in 2010. There were 791,000 babies born in 2008, an increase of 33,000 on 2007. By 2034, 23 per cent of the population is projected to be aged 65 and over.
- **UK Firms and Charities**
Firms such as Pearson, Serco and Tribal line up to run free schools. Mothercare’s principle vehicle for donations and charity is the Mothercare Group Foundation
- **UK Living Costs**
The cost of living differs depending the person’s lifestyle and location. Some provinces and countryside areas can offer cheap and very affordable living conditions. London is one of the global commercial and business centres. Living in this major city is definitely expensive when compared with smaller towns in the United Kingdom

Sources : Mcare (2010), Keynote (2009), Taylor (2010), BBC News (2010), BBC News 2 (2010), BBC News 3 (2010), International (2010), BBC News 4 (2010), BBC News 5 (2010), National Statistics Office (2010), Expat (2009)

3.2 INTERNAL MARKETING AUDIT

The IIA and CIPFA maintain that an internal audit of an organisation has an independent assurance function and consulting activity which is designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation to accomplish its objectives by examining, evaluating and reporting, and bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to improving the effectiveness of risk management, economic control and the effective use of resources (CIPFA and IIA 2007).

For conducting an extensive internal marketing audit, the use of the 6Ms model – men, machinery, money, minutes, material and markets – could be used, but for the purpose of this project report, the internal market of Mothercare will be examined by using Porter's five forces model.

The Porter's five forces model was developed by Professor Michael Porter in 1980. His framework for industry analysis and business strategy development is a micro-environmental model which is used for identifying an organisation's competitiveness helping firms to increase their potential by being aware of its competitors (Sloman and Sutcliffe 2004).

In simple terms, the Porter's model is a powerful tool for understanding where power lies in a business situation. This is useful because it helps one to understand both the strengths of the current competitive position and the strengths of a position one is looking to move into (Mind-tools 2007).

Fig. 3.1

MICRO-ECONOMIC APPLICATION OF PORTER'S 5 FORCES MODEL TO MOTHERCARE (INTERNAL)

Force	Issues	Impact on Mothercare Gym
Competitive Rivalry	<p>Mothercare faces intense competition from nine main competitors, as listed below.</p> <p>Jacques Vert Marks and Spencer Group Monsoon Moss Bros Group NEXT Seven Arts Pictures Alexon Group PLC Hamleys of London Toys R Us Limited</p>	<p>Negative, as the introduction of the Mothercare gym will increase competition in the market.</p>
	<p>Mothercare faces severe competition on the price and quality of its products from the above competitors.</p>	<p>Positive, as Mothercare will need to try harder to attract and retain customers but will offer an additional service not being offered by its major competitors.</p>
Threat of New Entry	<p>Opening a gym involves high capital requirements.</p>	<p>Negative, as Mothercare needs to invest a lot of capital to start the new venture.</p>
	<p>Opening a gym involves a very substantial financial investment for Mothercare.</p>	<p>Negative, as Mothercare needs to invest a lot of financial investment to start the new venture.</p>
Threat of Substitution	<p>There are high switching costs as customers have a great variety to choose from</p> <p>Consumer awareness of price and provision of quality of product and services.</p>	<p>Negative, as Mothercare will need to continuously monitor its product and service range</p> <p>Negative, as high consumer awareness increases Mothercare's competitiveness and it will always have to provide the best products and</p>

Continued

Buyer Power	There are large switching costs as buyers will only buy the best products and service that satisfies their need.	Negative, as Mothercare will need to provide customers with something innovative and different that satisfies customers needs better than its competitors.
	Bargaining power of buyers is high due to its well-known reputation and position in the UK market.	Positive. Buyers will conduct a market survey and then decide which they feel is the best choice to satisfy their needs.
Supplier Power	Mothercare will need to purchase a wide range of goods from suppliers to open up the gymnasium, eg. gym equipment; also producing marketing materials.	Positive, as Mothercare will need to negotiate prices with new suppliers. This will increase its supplier base.
	High supplier power due to strong brand image and position in the market	Positive, as Mothercare will need to purchase goods from suppliers who provide quality at reasonable prices. Many suppliers will wish to supply to Mothercare due to its strong market presence.
<i>Refer (Appendix B) for a detailed illustration of Porter's Framework</i>		
Source : Keynote (2009)		

3.3 SWOT ANALYSIS

After a study of the external (macro) and internal (micro) factors was undertaken, a SWOT analysis (Figure 3.2) was conducted to assess Mothercare’s current situation. The graphical framework of SWOT was used to analyse Mothercare’s environment, which aided in the process of determining its major weaknesses (internal), threats (external) and opportunities (external) and converting them into its major strengths (external).

Figure 3.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF MOTHERCARE	
<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established brand position (40-years experience) • Baby products / clothing : speciality retailer • Ability to adapt itself to the needs of its customers in international markets • Wide variety of products and services 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No product diversity • The cost of commission payment to sponsors and affinity groups. • Not targeting the teenage market • Fall in sales due to recession
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased sales through an expansion of the service offerings. • Increasing credit options for products. • Many customers buy from affinity groups. • Can enter a new market (Diversification) • Increased sales through Tesco’s website 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct insurance. • Fierce competition • Decreasing market share • The stagnation in affinity group membership

This is a helpful model which will aid in the formulation of Mothercare’s SMART marketing objectives in Section 4.

SECTION 4
SECOND STAGE: OBJECTIVES

4.1 MISSION STATEMENT

*'To become the world's specialist retailer in meeting the needs and aspirations of parents
for their children'.*

(Mothercare Plc 2010)

4.2 OBJECTIVES

For June 2010 – April 2011, the SMART objectives approved for Mothercare 360 Campaign can be simplified as:

- To unveil the grand opening of a new Mothercare gymnasium on Mother's Day (3 April 2011) in London, for women of all ages. The specialty gym's core service will be delivering the best group or one-to-one programmes that pregnant and post-term women could ever have.
- To support the launch of the new gym by generating 50% awareness in the immediate community three weeks before opening.
- To create special marketing offers by presenting gift vouchers to new gym members. These will be used in the future for comparison and measuring voucher usage at different points in time.
- To measure the campaign's performance and progress by using electronic awareness methods such as point clicking systems on social networking websites and Mothercare's corporate website.

SECTION 5

THIRD STAGE: STRATEGY

5.1 Mothercare's Present Strategy

Mothercare has four key growth channels through which they develop their iconic brands. These are as follows:

(a) UK retailing

Mothercare expects its retailing outlets property strategy to deliver £16.1 million of annual benefits each year by the end of 2012. It has planned to do this by opening more out-of-town parenting centres, rationalising High Street chains for cutting down costs and targeting certain favourable in-town areas as golden opportunities (MSR 2010).

(b) Direct

Direct has continued its rapid growth with total sales of £126.8 million in the year, an increase of 18.2%. The development of e-commerce in the UK over the last ten years has transformed the face of UK retailing and Mothercare has been in the vanguard of that transformation. Mothercare UK's Direct business is now over 20% of its UK business, split between orders placed online at home and online in store (MSR 2010).

(c) Wholesale

Wholesale is currently small, but represents a significant growth opportunity both in the UK and globally. In the UK, wholesale sales were £4.8 million, an increase of 78%, and this will be boosted in 2010/11 by the autumn launch of Mothercare's clothing partnership with Boots (MSR 2010).

(d) International franchise

Mothercare earns profits from its royalties as a fixed percentage of international retail sales. Its strategy is to form joint ventures with franchise partners where substantial growth is expected. Mothercare plans to enter new countries, open larger format stores and open at least 100 additional overseas stores per year for the foreseeable future (MSR 2010).

5.2 Mothercare 360 Campaign: The Proposed Strategy

It is very clear from Mothercare's present strategy that the organisation believes expansion and further growth in the same market to be its strategic route to success.

5.3 Application of the Ansoff Matrix

The Ansoff Matrix was developed by Igor Ansoff and is a tool to help businesses decide their product and market growth strategy. According to the proposed strategy, Mothercare will be entering a new market with a new service offering, which in terms of the Ansoff Matrix will be *Product / Service Diversification*.

None of Mothercare's major competitors have entered the health and fitness market yet. In addition, over the last 40 years Mothercare has had an excellent reputation amongst women who have some connection with children, are expecting a baby or are mothers. Very few gyms in the UK have had such a long attachment with their customers.

The core and unique selling point would be to attract mothers by taking care of them at every stage of the programme which aims to get them into shape or make their pregnancy a memorable experience. The brand will speak for itself by having an emotional and symbolic impact on other women who will feel that the brand does care for them. Very few gyms in Europe conduct open pregnancy–post pregnancy sessions, thereby giving Mothercare an exceptional advantage over its present and potential competitors.

Figure 4.0 gives an illustration of the **strategic thrust** concepts being applied, by using the **Ansoff Matrix** to define the future direction of Mothercare's business operations.

Figure 4.0

THE ANSOFF MATRIX FOR MOTHERCARE

		PRODUCTS	
		EXISTING	NEW
MARKETS	EXISTING	MARKET PENETRATION (Present Strategy)	PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (Present Strategy)
	NEW	MARKET DEVELOPMENT	DIVERSIFICATION (Mothercare 360 Campaign: New Strategy)

Note: -

*With time, when Mothercare enters into the health and fitness market, it will follow a sequential four stage process, namely, **Build, Hold, Harvest** and **Digest**. The health and fitness market has already gone through all these processes.*

5.4 THE STP PROCESS

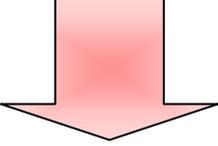
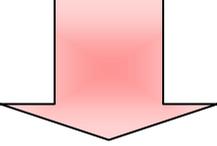
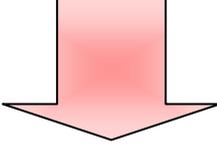
STP stands for:

- (a) **Segmentation** – how to divide up the market(s).
- (b) **Targeting** – which segments of the market to focus upon.
- (c) **Positioning** – how to be perceived in each different target segment.

The segmentation, targeting and positioning process of the Mothercare 360 Campaign is illustrated in Figure 5.0.

Figure 5.0

THE STP PROCESS FOR MOTHERCARE

 	 	 
<p>Mothercare Gym</p> <p>The gym has been developed solely for women giving them the freedom, space and privacy to exercise with complete confidence.</p>	<p>Targeting By</p> <p>(a) Sex - Females (b) Geography – Central London</p>	<p>1. Pregnant Women</p> <p>High Priced Package (£61 per month) plus discounts as indicated. The high price has been kept high to the location and because Mothercare will be one of the very few gyms in Central London offering such exceptional services.</p>
<p>Segmented Market by Women’s Status</p> <p>1 Pregnant Women</p> <p>2 Post-Pregnant Women</p> <p>3 Non-Pregnant Women</p>	<p>Focus and core target will be (1) Pregnant Women who will be offered the gym’s professional services of a one-to-one or group sessions and unique exercises fit for the individual to perform, depending upon the pregnancy case.</p>	<p>2. Post Pregnant and 3. Non-Pregnant Women</p> <p>Medium Priced Package (£41 per month) plus discounts as discussed</p>
	<p>This target market will be attracted by using:</p> <p>(a) 15% Discount vouchers on all mothercare products</p> <p>(b) An additional 5% discount voucher when getting a new member (MGM: Member get Member scheme)</p> <p>(c) Special 5% discount on gym membership when registering online and a special gift.</p>	<p>Charity and CSR</p> <p>£1 donated to the Mothercare Foundation Charity to help poor children around the world.</p>

SECTION 6

FOURTH STAGE: TACTICS

6.1 THE MARKETING MIX

The elements of the 6Ps, to be used for Mothercare's new marketing strategy selection are as follows:-

Product / Service

There will be **two** product developments here. Firstly, as stated in sections 1 and 4, the proposed strategy recommended in the Mothercare 360 Campaign is for the organisation to take its first step into a new market; the health and fitness market. The goal is to offer an exceptional service to pregnant, post pregnant women or to women who want to get in shape by opening a new gymnasium.

Secondly, the development of a new linking website catering to the needs of consumers and thus creating a culture of social interactions, chat forums, thread-based culture and consumer-perception viewer to study customers at a closer level. Here, using a point-clicking system, Mothercare will be able to get consumer traffic visit responses.

Place

In the health and fitness sector, the majority of consumers which Mothercare will target will be those starting as new entries. So the first Mothercare gymnasium's unveiling will be in Central London which is the most densely populated city in the UK with more than 7.5 million residents (True Knowledge 2010).

Price

The price factor is very important. Psychological pricing shall be applied here, attracting customers and brand switchers to become a part of the brand. As shown in Fig. 5.0, the prices of £41 and \$61 are purposely kept to make consumers question the extra pound. The £1 will be donated to charity.

This will become a part of Mothercare's CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) approach representing a sense of goodwill and giving something back to the community. Appendix C gives an illustration of Mothercare's present CSR approaches.

Promotion

Four channels of promotions will be used by Mothercare to promote the launch and delivery of its services:

- (a) NHS strategic alliance and promotion leaflets. The best way would be for a general practitioner to refer pregnant women and patients needing to lose weight directly to Mothercare;
- (b) Website promotions;
- (c) Voucher and gift promotions (one Mothercare gift from a selection);
- (d) MGM : Member-get-member scheme promotion;
- (e) Billboard promotions;
- (f) Television advertisement promotion;
- (g) Press releases and invitations for the unveiling;
- (h) Promotional booklets for pregnant women on how they need to take care of themselves when exercising, what targets they need to achieve, how to practice of breathing techniques with their partners, etc.

People

Here, an element of relationship marketing through chat forums, social interactions, the awareness-interest-desire factor and the use of special discounts (Figure 5.0) will be used to create a sense of appeal for promoting Mothercare's newly developed image.

The day for the inauguration of the new gymnasium will be 3 August 2011, a date kept for a reason. This is Mothers Day in the UK, a time when children pay respect to and present their mothers with gifts. The innovative idea behind this is to create a positive psychological association in the minds of consumers when they think about Mothercare. It should be perceived as an organisation that is providing the best possible care for a mother, starting from a historic day which holds a symbolic and cultural representation of a mother's love, care and tenderness.

Physical Evidence

A new gym building will be developed and unveiled by the CEO of Mothercare to provide a place where women of all ages can have the best gym equipment and staff expertise at their disposal.

SECTION 7
FIFTH STAGE: ACTION PLAN

A budget analysis on how costs will be spread throughout the campaign is presented in Figure 6.0. A total of £10.17 million has been approved for the campaign.

Figure 6.0 BUDGET ANALYSIS: MOTHERCARE 360 CAMPAIGN	
(1) Television:	£ 2.0 million
(2) Billboard: Advertisement place in densely traffic areas	£1.0 million x 4 months
(3) A4 Leaflets: = 20,000* 83p =	£240
(4) Press Release: = 8 Days * £845 (600 words with picture) =	£6,760
(5) The Internet (Website) : = Point Click System	£0
(6) Promotional Booklets: Approx. 60 pages * £10* 1000 copies =	£600,000
(7) Gym Building Equipment and Professional Staff: -	£6.5 million

	Total £10.17 million

Notes :	
(a) Staff should be able to deal with extreme situations, e.g., women going into labour.	
(b) All prices have been deduced thorough market research around the Central London area and Yorkshire region, thereby getting the best prices at supreme quality in order to deliver an efficient campaign.	

A Gantt Chart for representing the schedule and timescale planning of tactics and strategies used for the Mothercare 360 Campaign are presented in Figure 6.1.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Fig. 6.1	Jun / 2010	Jul / 2010	Aug / 2010	Sep / 2010	Oct / 2010	Nov / 2010	Dec / 2010	Jan / 2011	Feb / 2011	Mar / 2011	Apr / 2011
2	Television		Production of Advertisement	Production of Advertisement	Production of Advertisement	Editing of Advertisement	Editing of Advertisement	Approved by Marketing Department	Any Last Minute Changes	Advertisement Launched on TV	Being shown on TV	Being shown on TV
3	Billboards - Coming Soon				Clear and Consistent Message Prepared	Clear and Consistent Message Prepared	Production	Production	Displayed	Displayed	Displayed	Displayed
4	A4 Leaflets - Gym Opening		Material / Copywrited material being written	Material / Copywrited material being written	Leaflet Completed / Last Minute Changes	Last Minute Changes Before Printing / Proof Reading	Production / Printing	Production / Printing	Distributed to London NHS Outlets / Posted at Places near Train Station	Distributed to London NHS Outlets / Posted at Places near Train Station	Distributed to London NHS Outlets / Posted at Places near Train Station	Distributed to London NHS Outlets / Posted at Places near Train Station
5	Press Release					Material / Copywrited material being written	Material / Copywrited material being written	Material / Copywrited material being written	Printed 2 times in January The Times Newspaper	Printed 2 times in January The Times Newspaper	Printed 2 times in January The Times Newspaper	Printed 2 times in January The Times Newspaper
6	Internet - Point Click System	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch	Monitoring Traffic Before Launch and After Launch				
7	Promotional Booklets	Material / Copywrited material being written	Book Completed / Last Minute Changes	Last Minute Changes Before Printing / Proof Reading	Production / Printing	Production / Printing		Printing Completed / Book Finalised				
8	Gym Building / Equipment / Professional Staff	Searching Best Building Location	Searching Best Building Location	Searching Best Building Location		Location Finalised / Interviews For New Staff / Gym Equipment Purchasing	Interviews For New Staff / Gym Equipment Purchasing	Interviews For New Staff / Gym Equipment Purchasing	Staff Selected / Gym Equipment Purchased / Gym Assembled		Last Minute Checks before Launch	Last Minute Checks before Launch

SECTION 8

SIXTH STAGE: CONTROL AND IMPLEMENTATION

In the control phase, whatever was planned will be tallied and compared with actual results. Gantt charts, performance monitoring systems, statistical measurements and internet traffic monitoring systems are good ways to measure results.

Mothercare should regard **measurements (testing effects)** towards advertising and databases of vital importance. These will act as forecasting tools to let Mothercare know whether the extent of advertising or targeting a certain segment should be increased, decreased or kept stable.

Contingency Planning is also an important tool which can come in very handy for Mothercare when it faces tight situations and unexpected results. This is because the Insurance market is unpredictable and which depends on many factors such as taxes, inflation, house prices, etc. It is impossible to predict them. The element of contingency planning will be used where different strategies have to be implemented due to variations in market factors, e.g. change of price packages through negotiation, dividing the gym into males and females in order to boost sales or even decreasing the number of staff to reduce costs.

8.1 Balanced Scorecard Approach

Mothercare will control the activities of achieving the marketing objectives for the opening of its new gym by adopting the Balanced Scorecard approach as illustrated in Figure 7.0

The Balanced Scorecard approach was developed by Kaplan & Norton in 1992 as a performance measurement framework that focused upon strategic non-financial performance measures in contrast to traditional financial metrics to provide managers and executives with a more 'balanced' view of organisational performance (Balanced Scorecard Institute (2010)).

The application of the principles of the Balanced Scorecard approach to the achievement of the marketing strategy is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 7.0

MOTHERCARE: BALANCED SCORECARD APPROACH

Indicators	Objectives	Performance Measures	Targets
Financial	To achieve 0% growth in sales through special marketing offers	Sales Growth Rate	50 % Sales Growth
Customer	Provide better customer service	Customer satisfaction survey (questionnaire)	80% Satisfaction Level
	Understand customer needs and requirements	Conduct customer needs analysis through surveys	Results from the surveys are fed back to the marketing and sales teams
Internal Processes	Grand opening of a new Mothercare gymnasium	Attendance of key staff, invites and the general public All necessary preparations completed on time. Number of customers signed in and joined.	Smooth , efficient and successful launch party
	To carry out a range of Marketing activities to create awareness of new gym	Generating 50% awareness in the immediate community three weeks before opening. Presenting gift vouchers to new gym members	Assess success of marketing activities and degree of task completion
Learning & Growth	Provide necessary training to staff to improve existing skills	Conduct training programs	Review the content and impact of training.
	Carry out performance appraisals	Review performance of each staff.	Performance of each staff needs to be carried out after every six months.

8.2 Operational Strategy and Issues

The operational strategy for Mothercare's gym will incorporate the activities for providing the necessary facilities as outlined in the marketing strategy (Figure 8.0). The operational strategy is concerned with the process of transforming the inputs and converting them into outputs along with the provision of the various support functions linked with the basic task (Hill, 2004).

Figure 8		Operational Strategy	
Goals and Objectives			<p>To ensure member services are efficiently being executed</p> <p>To ensure quality standards are maintained at all times</p> <p>To ensure the execution of all marketing and sales tasks is being carried out timely and efficiently</p> <p>To ensure staffing processes are in place and being adhered to</p> <p>To ensure the gyms administration systems are efficient and effective</p> <p>To ensure the guidelines set for facilities management are being properly adhered to and implemented</p> <p>To ensure a high level of customer service</p>
Implementation			<p>A breakdown of the key goals and objectives will be carried out by the head of operations. A document will be prepared outlining the goals and objectives, breakdown of activities to achieve these and person responsible for successful execution and completion dates.</p> <p>Each staff member will be informed of his duties and responsibilities.</p>
Monitor and review			<p>The breakdown of work document will be reviewed by the head of operations for managing the gym who will assess the extent to which work has been accomplished within set dates and decide any changes or improvements that need to be made to the existing plan.</p>
Performance Indicators			<p>Number of members</p> <p>Level of customer satisfaction</p> <p>Level of employee satisfaction</p>

Other operational strategy factors which will affect the Mothercare 360 Campaign are illustrated as Figure 9.0.

Figure 9.0

Other Operational Strategy Factors

Quality: A Mothercare gym will maintain a high level of excellence in delivering its service. Special attention will be paid to the needs of the pregnant women. All activities will cater to meeting their needs. Mothercare will incorporate maintenance of high quality into the delivery processes.

Product / service range: Mothercare's gym will provide women and men with the latest technological products for keeping fit. Specific exercise and relaxation programmes will be designed to meet the special needs of expectant mothers and fathers.

Meeting specific customer needs: Mothercare's gym will research and find how the standard services and programmes can be changed to meet specific customer requirements. Mothercare's core aim is to cater to the specific needs of mothers and fathers and satisfy these needs.

Member services: Mothercare's gym will have an in-house membership management process that will facilitate communication between members and the company, assist in maintaining high standards of customer service and work on membership retention initiatives.

Staffing: Experienced staff will be recruited using a combination of practical tests and interviews to ensure the satisfaction of the diverse needs of customers. Staff will be looked after through the provision of training and development, performance reviews and generous salary packages.

Gym administration systems: The administration systems of Mothercare gyms will pay close attention to compliance with all legal requirements, risk assessments, emergency management measures, financial procedures and smooth execution of all front line operations.

Programme Management: Utmost care and attention will be paid to the planning, reviewing, monitoring and updating of core fitness, recreational / relaxation programmes to ensure that the programmes meet the needs of the customers.

Facility and Equipment Management: The selection and maintenance of facilities and equipment will be meticulously looked after to ensure that they are being used in accordance with specifications and are being kept clean and tidy.

8.3 Integration of Marketing and Operations

The integration of the marketing and operations strategy will be carried by the application of the Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard is a strategic management and measurement system that assists organisations in bringing about an alignment of their strategic business objectives with other well-defined indicators. The Balanced Scorecard will align Mothercare's gym with its other retail outlets so that there is one unified, integrated set of indicators that measures key activities and processes that are at the core of Mothercare's operating environment (CMI, 2008).

Kaplan and Norton have presented a number of stages (CMI, 2008) to successfully implement the Scorecard in an organisation. These stages are applied to Mothercare's gym as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Balanced Scorecard: Marketing and Operations Integration

1. Preparation

The marketing and operations strategy of Mothercare's gym has been outlined in this section. These strategies must be approved by the senior management team at Mothercare. At this stage, the corporate strategy, marketing strategy, operations strategy, performance measures, the key objectives of the strategies and the two-three critical success factors are outlined to ensure achievement of each objective.

2. Decide what to measure

In this stage, the objectives and strategic goals and objectives of the marketing and operations strategies have been approved by management and key measures have been set that are linked to these goals and objectives. The financial, customer, internal, learning and growth perspectives of the strategies will be defined. It is of the utmost importance that these are clearly defined as they form the core of the success of the implementation of the strategy.

3. Finalise the implementation plan

Mothercare will conduct discussions with its employees and hold workshops to improve upon and finalise the strategy, goals and activities that will be measured to make certain that the measures selected are aligned with the critical success factors. Mothercare will set marketing and operational targets for each performance measure and clearly state how, when and where they will be recorded, state the name of person responsible and set completion dates.

4. Implement the system

Mothercare will prepare an implementation plan and communicate this to members of staff. The staff will be given necessary training and support for the achievement of set targets.

5. Publicise the results

Mothercare will collect the results of all the measurements, initially on a weekly basis, to ensure that the desired objectives are being met in accordance with those set. These results will be sent to senior management in a report written by the gym manager, initially on a weekly basis, for the first six months of operations.

6. Utilise the results

Mothercare will carefully monitor the results of its marketing and operations strategy and develop an action plan that will outline further improvements that can be made to the existing measures and to plan for the future.

7. Review and revise the system

Mothercare will review the activities undertaken to promote and operationalise its new gym to determine whether the degree to which the respective strategies have been a success. Further improvements will be identified, planned and incorporated into the process of implementation.

8.4 Risk Assessment and Recommendations

According to HSE (2009), risk assessment is a careful examination of what in the workplace can cause harm to people, so that practical steps can be taken to prevent the harm. The aim of carrying out a risk assessment is to identify steps that can be taken to control any health and safety risks to employees and others in the workplace (HSE 2009).

The high risk areas of the marketing and operations strategy are firstly the maintenance of a safe and healthy environment for everyone. The provision of having experienced staff at all times who can act quickly in an emergency situation is a high risk element. The health of pregnant women is the primary concern. Gaining consumer confidence, attracting the target market, providing products and services, developing programmes that are specifically designed to meet specific needs and maintaining a high level of quality and customer service are high risk elements that are essential for the success of the new project.

Consumer confidence: Whether or not Mothercare's gym will be accepted by the target market poses a risk to the success of the marketing and operations strategy. Hence, it is important that Mothercare conducts a detailed market survey of the feasibility of its new venture, and the demands and costs associated with it. To gain consumer confidence, Mothercare, through its marketing and operations, will make every effort to meet the needs of its customers.

Marketing situational models: The factors identified in the PEST, Five forces and SWOT analysis are susceptible to rapid changes due to the changing external and internal environment and the needs of customers. Hence, it is of great significance that Mothercare keeps a vigilant eye on these changes and be prepared to make any necessary changes to cope with the challenges that may arise.

Implementation of the Balanced Scorecard: The Balanced Scorecard was used to control marketing activities and integrate marketing and operations. It needs the support and commitment of everyone involved in the project for successful implementation. Hence, open and honest communication between the key people must take place at all times to ensure that corporate strategy and marketing and operations are aligned for quality service delivery.

Experience and skilled staff: Mothercare will need to ensure that it cultivates a positive working environment for its staff. It needs experienced and skilled members of staff who understand

customer needs and are willing to go that extra mile to satisfy a customer. Hence, recruitment and retention of skilled staff is very important for the success of the gym.

8.5 Maintenance of a Healthy and Safe Environment

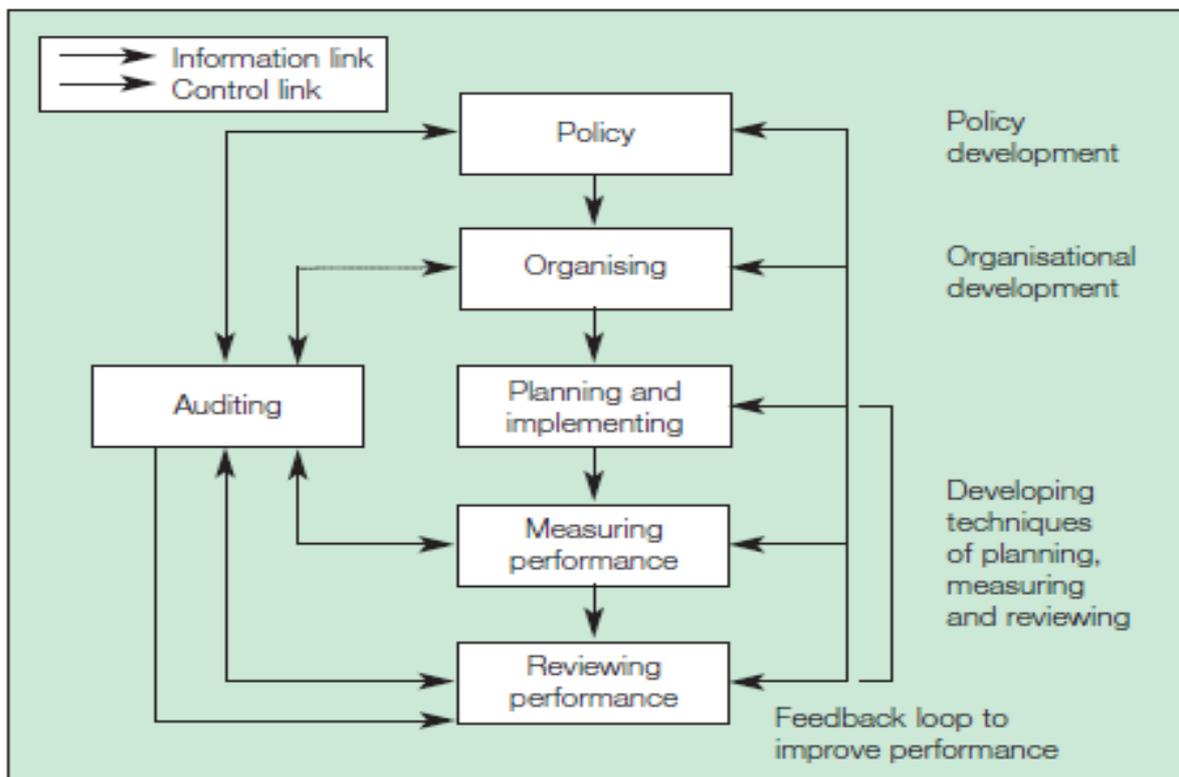
The health and safety of all pregnant women, prospective fathers and members of staff pose a risk to the success of the new venture. A risk assessment using a severity/likelihood matrix of Mothercare’s gym is illustrated in Figure 11.

Fig 11. Severity / Likelihood Matrix					
	Certain (5)	Very likely (4)	Likely (3)	Unlikely (2)	Very unlikely (1)
Slips, trips, falls (3)		12			
Lifting heavy objects without following correct guidelines (3)			9		
Spills on the floor (3)			9		
Repetitive strain injury due to body position (3)			9		
Conducting exercise without having discussed appropriate exercises with a fitness expert (3)			9		
Room temperature, lighting and ventilation (1)		4			
<p>The matrix shows that the risks caused by slips, trips and falls are likely and can result in serious injury. Risks caused by lifting heavy objects without following correct guidelines are likely and lead to minor injury. Risks caused by repetitive strain injury due to body position and repetitive movements due to bending and awkward working positions are likely to happen and can result in minor injury. Room temperature, lighting and ventilation pose a very minor risk but if not prevented can lead to major harm.</p>					

Staff at Mothercare’s gym will abide by the five steps presented in the ‘Key elements of successful health and safety management’ by HSE (1998) to establish and manage a safe and healthy organisation (Figure 12). Appointed health and safety personnel would be aware of the guidelines presented by the HSE and have suitable systems and procedures in place to abide by them. Mothercare’s gym will have a health and safety policy in place that has been approved by the board

and all staff members are aware of it. Appointed members of staff would carry a risk assessment and ensure that there are systems and procedures in place to reduce, control and eliminate the identified hazards.

Figure 12 Successful Health and Safety Management



Source: HSE (1998)

They will work at cultivating a positive health and safety culture that is based on competence, control, co-operation and communication. They will plan for health and safety by having clear objectives, knowing the hazards, assessing risks, involving staff, implementing standards of performance and developing a positive culture. They will from time to time measure performance to determine the success of the health and safety systems and procedures. They will review and monitor the performance to improve the organisation's performance.

A detailed risk assessment is shown in Appendix D.

SECTION 9

CONCLUSION

The UK market provides a blessing for mothers in the shape of child benefits, tax credit points, guardians' allowance, maternity-paternity allowance, childcare upbringing allowance and children's disability living allowance.

With the development of a new gym in London, the Mothercare Group will now provide mothers with the chance to clearly understand their pregnancy issues, exercise with professional trainers, and know more about their body. In the process, they can stay conscious of their health and ensure the safe delivery of their child. Even after pregnancy, women who want to regain their shape or women who just want to lose weight can join the gym at a competitive price.

Aside from membership, the gym has put on special marketing promotional offers and free gifts for women. The gym has generated a halo effect where consumers who have been satisfied with Mothercare baby products in the past would like to give the gym a try due to the good interaction and experience with the brand.

An effective marketing plan without a good operational strategy can result in risks and challenges for a company. In order to ensure that Mothercare runs its operations and marketing strategies smoothly, both processes should be closely aligned and well integrated with each other. This will enable Mothercare to increase its customer base, elevate market share and generate more revenue.

Overall, the application of the SOSTAC model to this project report has enabled me as a marketer to analyse Mothercare's environment, set objectives for a new campaign to be developed and apply strategies and tactics to develop a controlled action plan which can effectively monitor and measure progress with respect to time.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated income statement		52 weeks ended 27 March 2010			52 weeks ended 28 March 2009 restated ⁹		
		Underlying ¹ £ million	Non- underlying ² £ million	Total £ million	Underlying ¹ £ million	Non- underlying ² £ million	Total £ million
For the 52 weeks ended 27 March 2010							
	Note						
Revenue	4	766.4	–	766.4	723.6	–	723.6
Cost of sales		(676.0)	(3.4)	(679.4)	(645.0)	8.2	(636.8)
Gross profit		90.4	(3.4)	87.0	78.6	8.2	86.8
Administrative expenses before share-based payments		(37.9)	(0.8)	(38.7)	(33.6)	–	(33.6)
Share-based payments	29	(14.4)	(1.2)	(15.6)	(7.6)	–	(7.6)
Administrative expenses		(52.3)	(2.0)	(54.3)	(41.2)	–	(41.2)
Profit from retail operations before share-based payments		52.5	(4.2)	48.3	45.0	8.2	53.2
Profit from retail operations	7	38.1	(5.4)	32.7	37.4	8.2	45.6
Profit/(loss) on disposal/termination of property interests		–	1.0	1.0	–	(2.1)	(2.1)
Share of results of joint ventures	14	(0.5)	–	(0.5)	(0.4)	–	(0.4)
Profit from operations before share-based payments		52.0	(3.2)	48.8	44.6	6.1	50.7
Profit from operations		37.6	(4.4)	33.2	37.0	6.1	43.1
Investment income	8	–	–	–	0.4	–	0.4
Finance costs	9	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.7)	(0.5)	(1.0)	(1.5)
Profit before taxation		37.2	(4.7)	32.5	36.9	5.1	42.0
Taxation	10	(10.6)	1.7	(8.9)	(10.2)	(1.6)	(11.8)
Profit for the period attributable to equity holders of the parent		26.6	(3.0)	23.6	26.7	3.5	30.2
Earnings per share							
Basic	12	31.5p	–	28.0p	32.0p	–	36.2p
Diluted	12	30.7p	–	27.3p	31.0p	–	35.0p

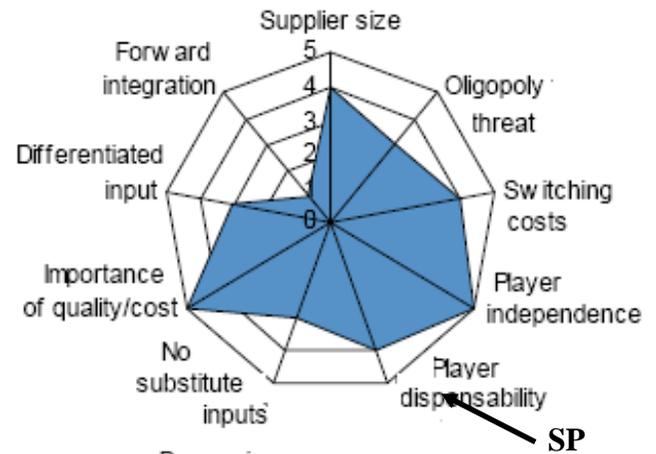
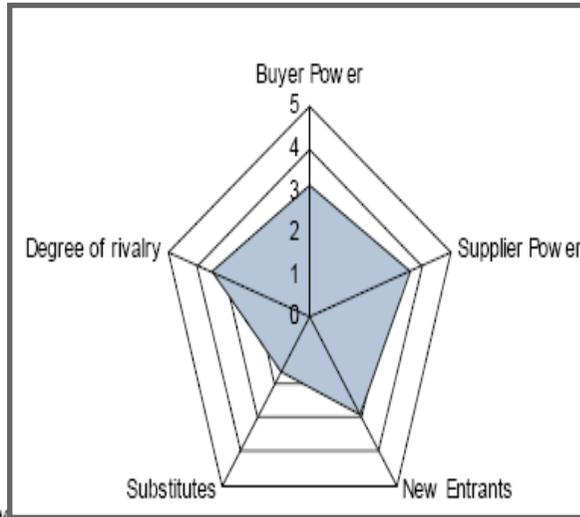
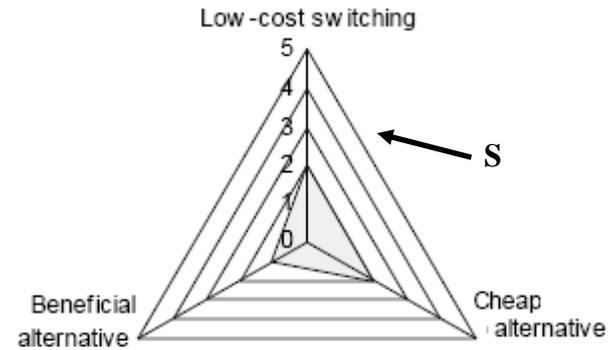
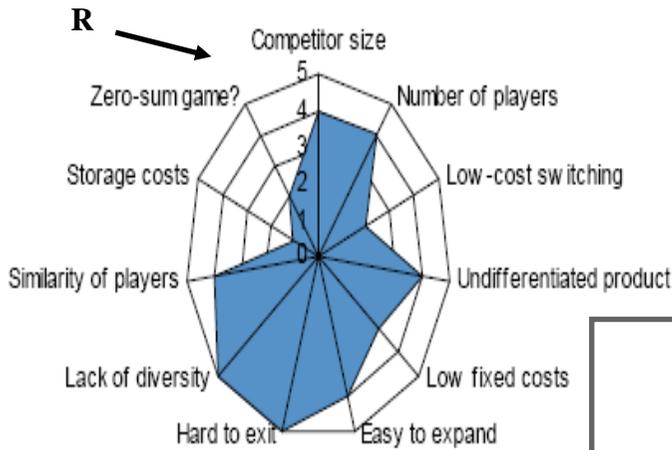
Consolidated balance sheet		As at 27 March 2010		
		27 March 2010 £ million	28 March 2009 restated ¹ £ million	29 March 2008 restated ¹ £ million
	Note			
Non-current assets				
Goodwill	15	68.6	68.6	68.6
Intangible assets	15	36.3	35.9	35.6
Property, plant and equipment	16	93.9	92.4	95.8
Investments in joint ventures	14	1.7	0.7	0.8
Retirement benefit obligations	30	–	–	2.0
Deferred tax asset	17	7.9	0.8	–
		208.4	198.4	202.8
Current assets				
Inventories	18	91.3	94.1	70.8
Trade and other receivables	19	57.7	54.4	51.1
Current tax assets		–	–	1.0
Cash and cash equivalents	20	38.5	24.8	22.7
Currency derivative assets	22	14.1	7.3	0.7
		201.6	180.6	146.3
Total assets		410.0	379.0	349.1
Current liabilities				
Trade and other payables	23	(120.6)	(108.7)	(95.6)
Current tax liabilities		(1.4)	(2.1)	–
Obligations under finance leases		–	–	(0.4)
Short term provisions	24	(9.0)	(11.9)	(24.0)
		(131.0)	(122.7)	(120.0)
Non-current liabilities				
Trade and other payables	23	(26.2)	(19.6)	(15.5)
Obligations under finance leases		–	(0.1)	(0.1)
Retirement benefit obligations	30	(55.1)	(25.4)	–
Deferred tax liability	17	–	–	(4.4)
Long term provisions	24	(9.3)	(13.7)	(12.1)
		(90.6)	(58.8)	(32.1)
Total liabilities		(221.6)	(181.5)	(152.1)
Net assets		188.4	197.5	197.0
Equity attributable to equity holders of the parent				
Called up share capital	25	44.1	43.8	43.6
Share premium account		4.9	4.3	3.4
Other reserve		50.8	50.8	50.8
Own shares	25	(8.9)	(10.6)	(9.8)
Translation reserves		1.3	1.2	–
Retained earnings		96.2	108.0	109.0
Total equity		188.4	197.5	197.0

Source : Mothercare Annual Report (2010)

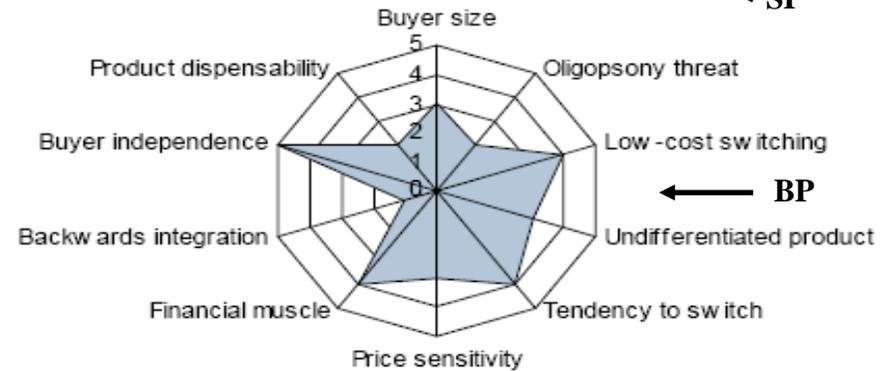
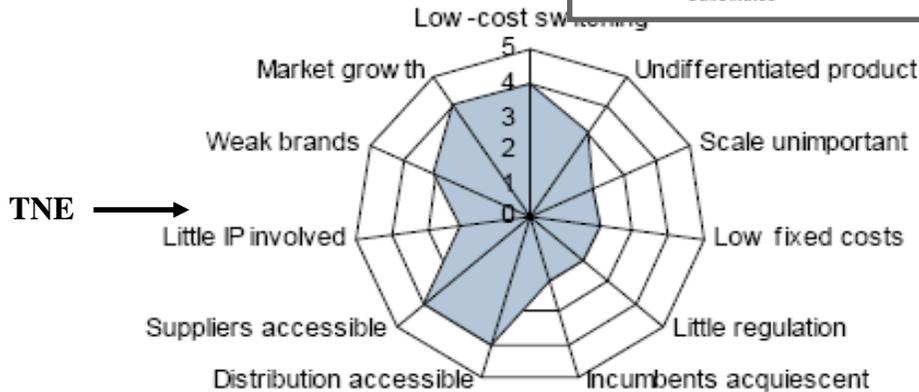
APPENDIX B (PORTER'S DIFFERENT VIEWS)

Source : DataM (2007)

Scores: 1= weak driver.
5=strong driver



- BP = Buyer Power**
- SP= Supplier Power** ← **KEY**
- TNE= Threat to New Entrants**
- R = Rivalry**
- S= Threat to Substitutes**



APPENDIX C: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - PATHWAY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

For Mothercare, our approach to Corporate Responsibility compliments our overall mission - to meet the needs and aspirations of parents and their children worldwide.

There are four aspects to our approach which are shown graphically below. These four, linked together by Group policies, target setting, governance and reporting make up our overall CR programme.

<p>responsible sourcing</p> <p>Ensuring that our suppliers and partners – particularly those we buy from directly – treat people with respect, offer decent working conditions and pay...</p> 	<p>environment</p> <p>Understanding and managing the impact on the environment – the carbon footprint of our stores, warehouses and vehicles, the waste we dispose of and...</p> 
<p>community</p> <p>Includes our commitment to corporate citizenship through supporting charities and...</p> 	<p>our people</p> <p>Treating our staff fairly and equally, investing in them and making sure everyone can develop and contribute...</p> 

 <p>How can we use less packaging on our products?</p> <p>We have been working with our suppliers to reduce transit packaging – as a result our distribution centre reduced its waste by 9 per cent.</p>	 <p>What can we do to help parents and families?</p> <p>Our stores are often a meeting place for parents in the community and the Mothercare Group Foundation makes grants to charities helping families and babies.</p>	 <p>What is it like to work here?</p> <p>Mothercare was voted the 5th 'Best Big Companies to Work For' by our employees in 2010, rising eight places from 2009. We continually strive to recognise effort and achievement amongst all our staff.</p>
 <p>Can we find ways to use less energy?</p> <p>Recent innovations include automatic meter reading equipment to monitor in-store energy consumption; lighting systems controlled by movement sensors; and CR Champions to encourage recycling.</p>	 <p>Can we reduce the waste we throw away?</p> <p>Reducing packaging helps reduce our waste but we are also increasing our efforts to recycle more of the waste we produce.</p>	 <p>Who made this and how were they treated?</p> <p>As members of the Ethical Trading Initiative, we monitor the actions and treatment of all our suppliers. We also support projects that improve workers' lives such as crèche facilities in India.</p>

Source : Mothercare Annual Report (2010) and Mothercare Approach (2010),

**APPENDIX D:
DETAILED RISK ASSESSMENT**

Hazard / Risk Assessment	Control Measure
Defective flooring / slips, trips, falls	<p>All areas of the gym will be regularly checked</p> <p>Any hazardous areas will be promptly dealt with</p> <p>Floors will be regularly cleaned to minimise slips and trips. Wet floor signs will be placed where the floor is wet.</p>
Water borne infections	<p>Working of showers will be checked regularly throughout the week</p> <p>Showers heads will be frequently disinfected and checked to ensure that they are working properly.</p>
Sports equipment storage area / injury, dust, fire	<p>All necessary equipment will be safely stacked</p> <p>Regular checks will be carried out of all storage areas to minimise injuries, dust and fire.</p> <p>Good housekeeping will be kept by keeping the areas clean and tidy</p>

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