

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Strategic Marketing Objectives.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Marketing Strategy.....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Product Strategy.....	5
3.2 Pricing Strategy.....	6
3.3 Market Positioning.....	6
<b>4. Analysis and Critical Evaluation.....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Important Aspects.....	7
4.2 Future Success and Recommendations.....	8
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>11</b>

# Garnier Ultimate Blends No Rinse Conditioner

## 1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the product 'Garnier Ultimate Blends No Rinse Conditioner' (GUBNRC). It was introduced by Garnier and offered to the UK market in January 2022, targeting the organic and sustainable beauty market.

This study provides new insights into Garnier, a mass-market, affordable cosmetics brand, part of the L'Oréal Paris group, based in the Hauts-de-Seine region of northern France. L'Oréal Paris is valued at \$47.5 billion, and Garnier at \$11.72 billion (September 2022), significant players in the cosmetics industry (Petruzzi, 2022). Other notable competitors include Unilever, Aveda Corporation and Johnson & Johnson (Industries, 2022).

The cosmetics market is vast, competitive, and growing with pressures of evolving beauty standards and sustainability whilst obtaining the highest brand loyalty among customers (Xaif, 2022). Furthermore, this is exemplified by Killip (2022), who states, "the market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.76% between 2022 and 2026", allowing growing access for potential customers.

Garnier has segmented the market through consumer lifestyle by targeting ethically minded individuals conscious of their global impact. More particularly, Garnier competes in the submarket of the green beauty market, targeting consumers (primarily young women) with similar needs and motivations for ethical practices, affordable pricing, and the universal benefit sought of excellent quality. Connelly (2013) states that the green beauty market "has grown to a 6-billion-dollar industry" and "could be pivotal in changing the idea of success to incorporate positive social and environmental initiative". Furthermore, this allows Garnier to target a growing number of progressive individuals who want to implement sustainability into their lives.

Garnier needs to consider a critical success factor in competing in the affordable green beauty market: its ability to build consumer trust through sufficient brand equity demonstrated through GUBNRC being sold in credible retailers. Additionally, Garnier must focus on their ability to innovate to remain the pioneer in drugstore ethical cosmetics to

stay competitive against competitors pledging its allegiance to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

## 2. Strategic Marketing Objectives

GUBNRC was introduced as part of Garnier's 'Ultimate Blends' hair-care collection to demonstrate a "new conditioning innovation to help save water with every wash" (Garnier, 2022). Therefore, displaying the environmental benefits of saving water, its vegan formulation and a 75% reduction in plastic use.

Consequently, Garnier's strategic marketing objectives would be to strengthen its positive brand associations and brand through its CSR efforts.

Additionally, the strategic marketing objective of defending against the growing competition in the affordable green beauty market through increased shelf space is to maintain their position as pioneers in the market.

## 3. Marketing Strategy

To critically discuss a marketing strategy, it is first necessary to clarify the term. Aker and Moorman (2018) define marketing strategy as four-dimensional "the product-market investment strategy, the customer value proposition, the assets and competencies, and functional strategies and programs". Varadarajan (2010) adds detail to this definition by focusing on marketing strategy being "crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources ... to achieve specific objectives".

Firstly, the product-market investment decision determines where Garnier should compete. Furthermore, by using Igor Ansoff's product-market growth directions, it is apparent that Garnier is operating in the product expansion area – a new product yet present market (Igor Ansoff 1957). Therefore, Garnier has decided to invest in maintaining its current strong position as a pioneer in the affordable green beauty market.

The customer value proposition explores the perceived benefits to customers. GUBNRC offers many functional benefits, such as an organic vegan formulation, a 75% reduced plastic bottle and a 100-litre water saving per tube (Garnier, 2022.). Additionally, many emotional benefits, such as a shared passion for sustainability and ethics, are offered.

Both strategic assets and competencies are vital in determining how Garnier competes in the cosmetics market. Garnier has a strategic competency of excellent field knowledge about natural formulations, sustainable production, and established distribution channels. This is demonstrated by their 'One Green Step' scheme, which focuses on saving water, energy, and responsible purchasing (Garnier, 2022). Garnier has a vast selection of strategic assets, such as excellent brand recognition and a reputation for pioneering the ethical drugstore cosmetic market.

A significant part of Garnier's marketing strategy is its functional strategies and programs, including the GUBNRC. An analysis of the marketing mix will be conducted, a blend of factors used by a business to influence and implement consumer behaviour to improve its products' sales (Borden, 1964).

### 3.1 Product Strategy

Furthermore, a vital aspect of Garnier's marketing mix is 'product' because, despite competitors such as John Frieda offering sustainable shampoo bars, no other competitor sold in credible retailers such as Boots and Superdrug offers sustainable 'no rinse' conditioners.

This 98% natural formulation is available in four blends altered to consumer needs. For example, "Coconut & Aloe Vera... is formulated ...to nourish dehydrated hair'. Compared to the other blends in the general 'Ultimate Blends' collection, this narrow product range suggests Garnier is testing consumer response. Furthermore, if consumers try GUBNRC, buyers will subconsciously become loyal to the offering if it satisfies their needs and be more reluctant to switch to competitors; this pattern is particularly apparent in affordable goods (Porter 1976).

### 3.2 Pricing Strategy

GUBNRC is sold in significant UK beauty and pharmaceutical retailer Boots for £6.99 (Boots, 2022). Therefore, it categorises itself as affordable through a psychological pricing strategy to increase attractiveness (Wedel & Leeflang, 1998).

Therefore, consumers intrigued by the 'no rinse' technology and new to the sustainable beauty market may be more likely to try the conditioner. Perhaps, this low price is to accumulate more remarkable experience, and Garnier will gain a long-term cost advantage (Lieberman & Montgomery, 1988). Compared to sustainable conditioners (which do not have the same 'no rinse' technology as Garnier) in the hair-care market, GUBNRC is more affordable. For example, Lush's 'Big Pressed Conditioner' retails for £9.00, demonstrating that GUBNRC is the only significant cheap sustainable conditioner offered in high-street shops. (Lush, 2022)

### 3.3 Market Positioning

GUBNRC is positioned as a creative, sustainable, and innovative product, targeting progressive consumers who want to implement ethical practices. Garnier sets itself as a pioneer through technology in the sustainable hair-care market due to introducing the first 'no rinse' innovation. Therefore, benefiting from first-mover advantages such as superior market knowledge, high market share and control over product shelf space (Lieberman & Montgomery, 1988). Moreover, this provides Garnier with a competitive advantage because late entrants into the sustainable conditioner market will fail to gain significant market share and will likely fail (Shaw & Shaw, 1984).

They have implemented USP-focused positioning because of Garnier's expert knowledge regarding their vegan formula and new conditioning innovations, which, if kept proprietary, perhaps, the beauty leader can maintain their high market share (Lieberman & Montgomery, 1988).

Additionally, Garnier positions itself as an innovator and value option achieved through green marketing to emphasise its environmental sensitivity and micromarketing through the emphasis on water reduction to reduce water stress globally, encouraging brand loyalty (Dacko, 2008).

#### 4. Analysis and Critical Evaluation

The purpose of this paper was to determine the success of Garnier's new offering, GUBNRC, compared to its strategic marketing objectives. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis to conclude whether the offering was successful holistically. Therefore, Garnier can ensure they have a holistic and balanced outlook on their success.

The most prominent finding to emerge from this paper is illustrated in 'Appendix A' which presents the quantitative summary statistics for customer reviews for GUBNRC. It is apparent in the histogram that 71.24% of customers rated the offering five stars, thus suggesting its high quality and positive brand association: achieving their strategic marketing objectives. This is further exemplified by the plethora of qualitative positive customer reviews in which the majority expressed excellent formulas and results, which are easy to implement into their routines (Superdrug, 2022). However, customer reviews are unreliable due to consumer biases and deception (Anderson & Simester, 2014).

Additionally, no rivals have introduced similar 'no rinse' conditioners; Garnier remains the sole player and achieves its strategic marketing objective of defending against the growing competition through increased shelf space and pioneering innovation. GUBNRC is sold in British retailers Superdrug and Boots, both having extremely high e-commerce sales in the UK, demonstrating GUBNRC's credibility and enhancing consumer trust (Statista, 2022). However, when critically evaluating Garnier's objective of environmental support through water reduction, there is not enough evidence to determine Garnier's broader global impact.

##### 4.1 Important Aspects: Now and in the Future

When analysing the likelihood of future success for GUBNRC, it is essential to explore the external environment. This can be analysed using PESTLE analysis (Aguilar, 1967). Rastogi et al., 2016, state that "PESTLE is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the impact of political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors on a project".

Furthermore, a major current economic issue, reflected in Appendix B, is the cost-of-living crisis, which explores the high inflation, outstripping wages, and benefit increases; inflation has been forecasted to “peak at 13.1% in the fourth quarter of 2022” (Hourston, 2022). Consequently, consumer disposable incomes continue to decrease by month, and despite GUBNRC being affordable, competitors such as Herbal Essences offer cruelty-free conditioners for only £2.00, which may attract Garnier’s customers. When customers’ budget is reduced, their purchasing decisions are altered (Du & Kamakura, 2008, Frank, 2003). Conversely, it can be argued that the impact of this effect is reduced due to the highest brand loyalty within the cosmetics market and Garnier’s innovative technology (Xaif, 2022).

Additionally, using PESTLE analysis, environmental pressures will significantly impact the likelihood of GUBNRC's future success due to the immense water scarcity which dominates Earth. Furthermore, whilst global water demand doubles, a quarter of major cities are experiencing enormous water stress (Schlamovitz & Becker 2021). Saleh (2021) adds detail to this issue by exploring how climate change in the “recent decades further stressed the scarce freshwater resources” globally for 4 billion people. Consequently, with time, GUBNRC’s innovative water-saving technology will become more crucial. Therefore, the likelihood of sales revenue, profit and success are increased.

#### 4.2 Future Success and Recommendations

Environmental and economic factors will affect the cosmetics industry, especially the ‘cost of living’ crisis and the immense water scarcity. To combat this, Garnier should significantly focus on water saving by running social media campaigns to educate consumers on the detrimental effects of water scarcity, especially in developing countries, to enhance their functional promotion programs. This strategy would be most successful with Garnier’s young consumers. Credit Suisse Research (2022) states, “young consumers show a strong willingness to increase spending on sustainable products”, as well as being the highest social media users.

Additionally, Garnier should advertise GUBNRC as a complementary product to their ‘Garnier Ultimate Blend Shampoo Bars’ to emphasise a routine-based approach. Currently, shampoo bars are trendy; if people recognised the conditioner as an addition to the shampoo, they would be more likely to test it. Moreover, Yan et al. (2011) state,

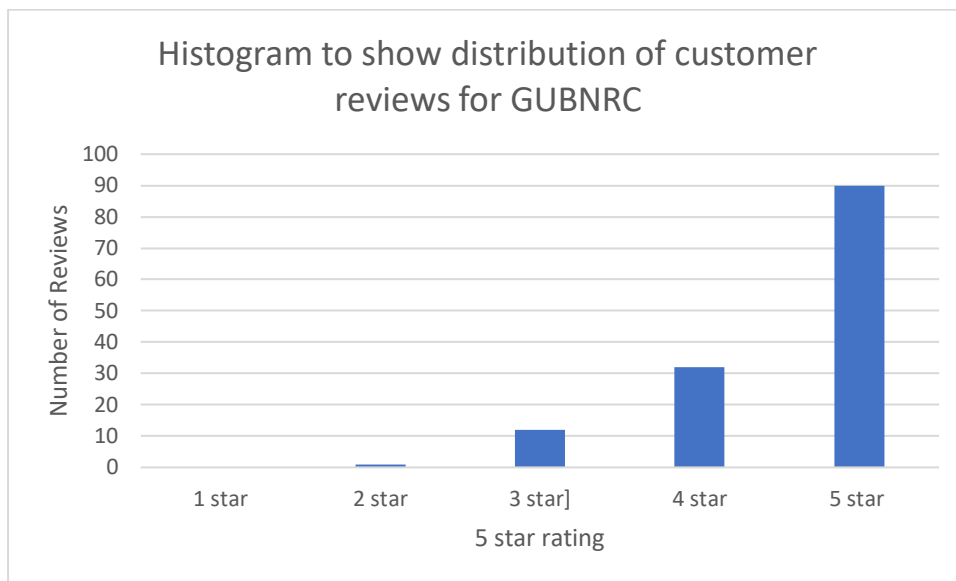
“because the cross-elasticity of demand for complementary goods is negative... firms can gain additional marketing power” through bundling price strategies.

Using SWOT analysis, a research-based technique to determine a firm's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, Garnier's primary strength is its loyal customer base (Pickton & Wright 1998). Therefore, leveraging this strength through a more essential and feasible new marketing strategy would be to reward loyal customers through a reward-based loyalty scheme centralised around sustainability. As a result, Garnier is less likely to lose customers to cheaper alternatives despite growing economic constraints.

To summarise, GUBNRC is an innovative hair-care product with water-saving technology introduced to the affordable green beauty market in January 2022. While success is apparent amongst customer reviews and ratings, efforts to make a more significant global change in water efficiency still need to be made.



## Appendix A

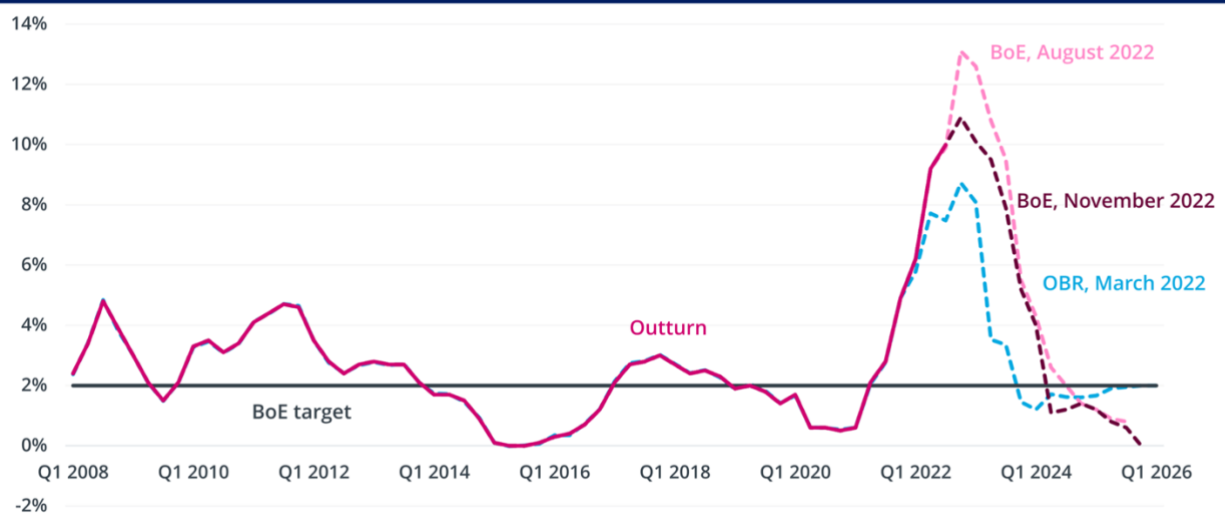


Source: <https://www.boots.com/garnier-ultimate-blends-delicate-oat-soothing-no-rinse-conditioner-for-sensitive-scalp-fragile-hair-10307045>

## Appendix B

CPI inflation Q1 2008 to Q1 2026, including successive Bank of England and Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts

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Source: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/chart-images/Inflation%20POST%20November%20Monetary%20Policy%20Report.png>

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