

Topic: Lean Management of Hilton Foods

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Executive Summary:

Hilton Foods Group deals in providing meat, seafood, vegan, and vegetarian, easier meals, and supply chain services. The business report is divided into three parts first part talks about the strategic direction of Hilton Foods, the second part is about implementing operations management and sustainability issues, and the third part is about the conclusion and recommendations. The strategic direction of the business is set based on five core values: collaborative, innovative, agile, ambitious, and responsible, which help in setting targets to achieve and move forward. The report highlights that Hilton Foods aimed at expanding its business operations in existing and new markets through product innovation and the introduction of new food categories, such as seafood was not a product of the company in the early years of business. It also highlights that Hilton Foods is making arrangements to launch its business operations in Canada by 2027 and is also determined to operate in the Asian market.

The report highlights that the business organization is focused on utilizing modern technology and innovative ideas to get a competitive edge and achieve business expansion goals. It has installed a new fish processing line, which has helped to reduce reliance on labor and improve operational efficiency. Hilton Foods has also partnered with different international food companies such as McDonald's, Agito, Coca-Cola, and several others for automation projects and increasing business reach to more markets. The report exhibits that Hilton Foods is committed to adopting sustainable business practices and reducing its carbon emissions to zero by the end of 2048. Hilton Foods uses lean management in its business operations to benefit from continuous improvement and processes for longer periods to enhance operational efficiency and the goodwill of company in the market.

The report highlights that lean management in operations is used to standardize the workflows, as the business has implemented standard operating procedures (SOPs), the Just-in-time philosophy, the theory of constraints, business process improvement, and business process reengineering. The company is facing challenges related to lean management operations, such as production delays, machine breakdowns, perishable products, and a variety of products, which make it difficult for the company to implement. The business report shows that Tyson Foods and Premier Foods also face problems like Hilton Foods in implementing the lean management principles in operations management successfully. Hilton Foods has taken several steps to reduce its carbon emissions, such as the installation of renewable energy at business premises, a 15% reduction in carbon emissions from livestock in Europe, a 42% reduction in food wastage, 76% of seafood from sustainable sources, and 50% water usage in Ireland. The recommendations include adopting sustainable business practices can help attract more customers and increase the profitability of the company.

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1. Introduction:

Hilton Foods Group Plc is a UK-based business organization that deals in international food packing and supplies to customers. The company can be traced back to the 1960s when the primary business operations were processing, slaughtering, and deboning to provide fresh and clean meat to the customers. It formed a partnership with Tesco UK in 1994 to provide high-quality meat to the customers, and in the year 2000, it formed a partnership with Hilton Foods, Holland and Albert Hein, aimed at capturing more market share and expanding business operations to more markets (Hiltonfoods, 2025).



Image 1. (Hiltonfoods, 2025)

Hilton Foods Group Plc is doing business in 10 countries of the world and operates in more than 20 markets to supply products to partners and customers. It has more than 7,000 employees working at all business centers with 24 modern high-performance facilities to meet the expectations of customers (Hiltonfoods, 2025). It is dealing mainly in five business areas which include seafood, meat, easier meals and services, vegan and vegetarian products. The business report is aimed at exploring the strategic direction of the company and its impact on business operations. The report is also aimed at finding more about lean management, planning and control, and capacity management for Hilton Foods. The business report also contains current issues related to sustainable operations management of Hilton Foods, and then the conclusion and recommendations about the business will be described.

2. Strategic Direction:

A clear, set direction for business organizations works as a guide for management and other employees to put in their efforts to reach the desired destination. The strategic direction of the business organization is the mission, vision, policies, and values that move toward the desired position in the market and industry. It can be further explained that the mission statement of Hilton Foods is to produce nutritious protein through sustainable business practices to play a better role in improving the environment. Hilton Foods is mainly driven by five core values: collaborative, innovative, agile, ambitious, and responsible (Financialtimes, 2025). The business organization moves around empowering teams and promoting collaboration in the working environment, innovative approach is beneficial to improve the products and go ahead of the competitors, agility is to be flexible for the customers and change with the changing needs and preferences of customers and bring change to the business operations, ambitious is about setting challenging goals and inspire teams and employees to put more efforts to achieve business goals (Hiltonfoods, 2025).



Image 2. (Hiltonfoods, 2025)

2.1 Product Innovation and Market Expansion:

The strategic direction of Hilton Foods revolves around increasing business volume through expanding product ranges to deliver more products to customers at all business destinations. It is aimed at growing the business at all international destinations and increasing the product categories, so more products can be provided to existing and new customers to increase the profitability of the company (Fernandes, 2024). Hilton Foods is making arrangements to launch its business operations in Canada by 2027 and is also determined to operate in the Asian market. The business is also considering expanding its business operations through cross-selling, as it reduces operational costs and increases profitability. Hilton Foods is selling coated seafood in New Zealand from the production facility in the UK, and selling slow-cooked meat at business destinations in Ireland from the same production facility (Hiltonfoods, 2024).

2.2 Technology and Innovation:

The business organization is focused on utilizing modern technology and innovative ideas to get a competitive edge and achieve business expansion goals. It has installed a new fish processing line, which has helped to reduce reliance on labor and improve operational efficiency. The company has also installed roll-out of flow wrap packing machines for mince products to keep the products fresh for a longer period and avoid wastage of food (Thakur, 2024). Hilton Foods has also partnered with different international food companies such as McDonald's, Agito, Coca-Cola, and several others for automation projects and increasing business reach to more markets. It is also using robotics at processing facilities to reduce labor reliance and avoid production errors. The company also uses just-in-time inventory management systems to reduce inventory holding costs and reduce delays in the production of products (Singh & Karthik, 2025).

2.3 Sustainable Business Practices:

The strategic direction of Hilton Foods has shaped its business operations and has had a positive impact, as focusing on food safety, reducing per unit production cost, and improving product quality and services are linked with its strategic direction of sustainable business practices. The business is concerned with environmental protection and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN to become a sustainable and environmentally friendly business organization. Hilton Foods is committed to reducing its carbon emissions to zero by the end of 2048, and it achieved fully recyclable, reusable, and compostable packaging in the year 2022, which also shows the commitment to establishing a sustainable supply chain (Europa, 2024).

The business is working to reduce its carbon footprint by creating awareness among suppliers of the products and raw materials, as Hilton Foods is determined to establish better relations from farm to fork, so everyone in the supply chain is putting some effort into becoming sustainable and beneficial for the environment (Juthi, et al., 2025).

3 Operations Management:

Hilton Foods is concerned with improving its business operations continuously so it can be the first choice of its customers and can sustain its profitability. The company is using operations management to remain on track to achieve business goals and to reduce its operating costs so the affordable prices of the company's products can attract and retain customers for a longer period (Venkatesh, et al., 2024).

3.1 Lean Management in Operations:

Hilton Foods uses lean management in its business operations to benefit from continuous improvement and processes for longer periods to enhance operational efficiency and the goodwill of company in the market (Venkatesh, et al., 2024). Lean Management in the business operations of Hilton Foods has several benefits and challenges, which are given below:

3.1.1 Benefits for Hilton Foods:

Lean management in operations is beneficial for Hilton Foods in standardizing the workflows, as the business has implemented standard operating procedures (SOPs) at all business facilities aimed at maintaining consistency and ease for the employees. It has also benefited in ensuring that production processes are easily understandable for the employees operating the facilities, and the processes are also measurable and repeatable, which also reduces efforts and resources and allows the workers to produce more products in less time (Uwa, 2024).

Hilton Foods uses Just-in-Time (JIT) production principles which benefit the business by delivering the raw materials as needed which helps in reducing inventory holding costs. The company has established better collaborative relationships with retailers like Tesco and Woolworths to ensure better planning about the demand at their stores, as data analytics used at the stores helps in predicting shopping patterns of the customers, and the exact demand is conveyed to the company (Nwatu, 2024).

The business uses the theory of constraints (TOC) to identify its constraints and put effort into reducing the impact of constraints. Hilton Foods faces the constraint of low production from the packing machines and labor shortages, which is addressed by applying the TOC to ensure minimum downtime of machines, ensured to increase production, and convince the labor to put more effort to improve efficiency, which results in dealing with the constraints positively (Antony, et al., 2024).

Hilton Foods uses business process improvement (BPI) as a tool to identify inefficiencies and then take measures to improve the processes. BPI is used in Hilton to map the process of raw seafood, plant-based inputs, and meat, and then inefficiencies and excessive handling are identified and

eliminated by focusing on process improvement. The company also uses robots and advanced machines to reduce time and resource consumption in the processes (Ranta & Ylinen, 2024).

The company uses principles of business process reengineering (BPR) in redesigning and automating the production processes at the business premises. It uses robotics, AI-driven systems, and end-to-end automated meat processing and packing to eliminate inefficiencies and optimize the production processes to deal with the production constraints and inefficiencies by using BPR principles at production facilities (Dagher & Fayad, 2024).

3.1.2 Challenges for Hilton Foods:

The business organization also faces challenges in using operations management, such as the just-in-time inventory approach, which can create risks of production delays due to supply chain disruptions, machine breakdown, and failure of suppliers to meet the delivery timelines (Psomas & Deliou, 2024). Another challenge of lean management in business operations for Hilton Foods is the automation of processes as real-time data is required for JIT. The company also needs to invest large amounts in automation projects and to train employees to operate the advanced systems (Pourmatin & Ilkhani, 2024).

Another challenge for Hilton Foods is the high variety of products and perishable products, which hinders the use of lean management in business operations. Another challenge for Hilton Foods is the change resistance from employees, as they can be afraid of losing their jobs due to the automation of business processes, and they can be pushed to learn something new and different, which is not acceptable for many employees. The company also faces the challenge of being more careful about the spoilage of food and packaging waste to reduce food wastage during the production processes, as a single spoiled product can lead to damage company's goodwill in the market (Veseli, et al., 2024).

3.1.3 Other Examples:

Tyson Foods has also used lean management principles in its business operations to improve and capture more market share. The business is reducing its overproduction by forecasting the accurate market demand for its products. It is also reducing waste during production through automation and advanced sensors (Hoover, 2024). It also uses lean management to reduce defective products by using real-time quality checks. Lean management is also used for value stream mapping (VSM) to check and identify production line inefficiencies, which helps the business to improve its financial performance (Tysonfoods, 2014).

Lean management is also used in business operations by Premier Foods Plc, as they took the initiative of appointing continuous improvement (CI) managers at different working sites of the business. These managers were responsible for checking the business processes and then suggesting improvements (Guzman, 2024). The managers created awareness among the staff to work on the concept of continuous improvement at all business destinations, suggested total productive maintenance so that the machines involved in production processes can be improved, and production efficiency can be improved to meet product demands in the market (Guzman, 2024).

3.2 Capacity Management, Planning, and Control:

These are crucial tools of operations management for Hilton Foods to improve operational efficiency and reduce obstacles. The following are the benefits and challenges:

3.2.1 Benefits for Hilton Foods:

Hilton Foods uses capacity management to utilize its workforce, production facilities, and machines to their full capacity so the operational costs are minimized and profitability is improved. It also helps to reduce idle time, production inefficiencies, reduce waste during processes, and creates a sense of responsibility in the employees to work for improving profitability, as it can be seen in

Appendix B, which shows there is a gradual increase in the profit in 2024 compared to the previous year 2023 (Hiltonfoods, 2024).

Planning and control are beneficial for the business to reduce the gap between budgeted production and actual production. It is also beneficial to know the reasons for the variance in the consumption of raw materials and production overheads, which leads to improved operational efficiency of the company (Hiltonfoods, 2024). Planning and control also help Hilton Foods in matching the production capacity and customer demand at every production facility, and then measures are made to reduce the gap between demand and actual production. These management tools are also helpful in improving schedules, reducing lead time, reducing production costs, and ensuring good quality products. The waste reduction, accurate production forecasts, and low wastage of materials are helpful for the company to achieve sustainable development goals for improving environmental health (Hao & Demir, 2025).

3.2.2 Challenges for Hilton Foods:

It is harder to predict customer demands accurately due to the impact of promotions, seasonality, and economic factors like consumer income, so these fluctuations make it harder for the business to accurately predict capacity and its management. The perishability of products also makes it difficult for the business to plan capacity and control activities, as the spoilage of more products increases the production demand, while low wastage of products leads to excessive production quantity. Another challenge faced by Hilton Foods is that supply chain disruptions impact the production schedules adversely, which affects the production of products, and unfavorable variance in production and demand is created (Jagtap, et al., 2024).

3.2.3 Other Examples:

Tyson Foods also faces challenges of fluctuating demand from international markets, retailers, and food service providers due to changes in customer preferences, seasonality, and the shift to other brands. These challenges make it difficult for the company to use capacity management, planning, and control precisely. Another challenge faced by the company is supply chain disruptions, which make it difficult to get the required raw materials and adhere to the planned production schedules and to meet the customers' demand. The major reasons behind supply chain disruptions for Tyson Foods involve African swine flu, livestock availability, and natural events (Shakur, et al., 2024).

Premier Foods faces challenges of low production flexibility, skilled labor availability, and inaccurate forecasting, which impact the capacity management, planning, and control. It can be further explained that older production facilities of Tyson Foods are not flexible to increase production to meet the increased demand, and the unavailability of skilled labor also adds to the severity of the situation (Madilo, et al., 2024).

4 Sustainability Current Issues for Hilton Foods:

Hilton Foods is facing several challenges connected with sustainability due to increased pollution in the environment and rising temperatures of the Earth. Every year the businesses are pushed to take steps to improve environmental health and reduce their carbon footprint. The company is facing the challenge of reducing carbon emissions and climate change action, and for this purpose, it is targeting to achieve 100% renewable energy at all business destinations by the end of 2027. Hilton Foods has achieved 76% renewable energy installations in Europe and 64% sustainable energy globally, showing better performance (Hiltonfoods, 2023).

It has also targeted to achieve a 15% reduction in carbon emissions from cattle in Europe, and the company has taken solid steps through partnering with Lincoln University aimed at reducing carbon emissions from cattle manure and digestion. It is also taking steps to eliminate the problem of deforestation through growing more plants and creating awareness about reforestation among the public. The company sources 100% of paper and board from suppliers who adopt sustainable

business practices and are certified (Hiltonfoods, 2023). The company also targets to achieve 100% sustainably sourced seafood and has achieved 76% of seafood from sustainable suppliers to ensure a reduction in carbon emissions and improvement in environmental health. The company also achieved a reduction in water usage at its Ireland production facility of up to 50% compared to the usage in 2020, exhibiting positive progress in water availability to the public (Hiltonfoods, 2023). It has also reduced food wastage up to 42% at all its production facilities since 2020. The company has achieved a reduction in plastic packaging by 1971 tonnes of plastic and now uses 70% of recyclable packaging for its products (Hiltonfoods, 2023). The company focuses on valuing its employees by empowering them and improving products by taking sustainable measures to reduce its carbon footprint.

4.1 Sustainability Current Issues for the Food and Beverage Industry:

The industry is facing several challenges related to sustainability, as the food industry contributes to carbon emissions from production processes and methane from livestock for meat and milk. The industry is also facing challenges of climate change, which is causing low rains, floods, droughts, unexpected storms, and supply chain disruptions. It is also facing the challenges of packing waste and food waste ending up in landfills, damaging land for agricultural purposes (Galanakis, 2024).



Image 3. (Spnews, 2023)

The food and beverage industry is also taking several steps to deal with the current challenges, such as creating awareness to use sustainable energy to reduce carbon emissions, avoiding food waste and plastic packaging through biodegradable packaging, and enhancing process efficiency to reduce food wastage. The industry is also taking steps to make investments in regenerative agriculture, which will help to reduce water wastage and enhance supply chain effectiveness. The farmers are also guided to use cover cropping, rotational grazing, and organic fertilizers to improve soil health (Sousa, et al., 2024).

5 Conclusion and Recommendations:

The above discussions help in concluding that the strategic direction of Hilton Foods is set under five core values: collaborative, innovative, agile, ambitious, and responsible. The company has set direction to promote teamwork, use modern technology, take instant actions, set challenging but achievable goals, and be a sustainable and responsible corporate citizen. Hilton Foods uses lean management in operations to standardize the workflows, implement standard operating

procedures, use JIT philosophy, and other principles to improve production processes and increase company profitability.

The recommendations for business organizations in the food and beverage industry include that to become successful, efficient, profitable, and sustainable, they should use lean management principles in operations management, as it will help them to improve production processes and reduce inefficiencies effectively. It is also recommended that business process reengineering can play a crucial role in identifying unnecessary activities and processes, which will help to improve the operational efficiency of the businesses. It is also recommended for the food industry that sustainability is more important than earning profit, so the priority should be given to adopting sustainable business practices. The sustainable business practices will help to improve environmental health as well as the goodwill of the companies in the market. It is also recommended that the steps to reduce carbon emissions should be taken at every possible point, and the supply chain should convey a message about sustainability.

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Appendix A – Avoiding Academic Irregularity Checklist



Plagiarism/ghost-writing checklist – MMN230224

“This piece of coursework is my own original work and has not been submitted elsewhere in fulfilment of the requirement of this or any other award”

Before you submit coursework, in accordance with University regulations, you should be able to confirm that the coursework that you are submitting is your own original work and that you have:

Put a cross the box on the right side of the statement to confirm:

Read and understood the guidance on plagiarism in the Module Handbook;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cleary referenced, both within the text and on the end reference page, all sources used in the work;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Based your work on academic sources from academic search engines such as the American Business Index (ABI). Student sources <u>should not</u> be used;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Used inverted commas and the full reference details (including page numbers) for all text quoted from books, journals, web- based or other sources;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provided the sources for all data in tables and figures that are not my own work;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Not made use of the work of any other student(s) past or present without acknowledgement. This includes any of my own work, that has been previously, or concurrently, submitted for assessment, either at this or any other educational institution, including school;	X
Not sought or used the services of any professional agencies such as ghost writers or other individuals, to produce this work;	X
Retained all the material collected in the process of developing your coursework; and	X
In addition, I understand that any false claim in respect of this work will result in disciplinary action in accordance with University regulations.	X

Student Name: Matric:

Date:

21-04-2025

Appendix B Hilton Foods Consolidated Income Statements

Consolidated income statement for the 52 weeks ended 29 December 2024

	Note	2024 52 weeks £'m	2023 52 weeks £'m
Continuing operations			
Revenue	5	3,988.3	3,989.5
Cost of sales	7	(3,531.4)	(3,559.2)
Gross profit		456.9	430.3
Distribution costs	7	(48.3)	(47.7)
Administrative expenses	7	(310.2)	(297.1)
Share of profit in joint ventures and associates	16	0.4	0.6
Operating profit		98.8	86.1
Finance Income	9	1.8	0.6
Finance costs	9	(39.6)	(38.1)
Finance costs - net		(37.8)	(37.5)
Profit before income tax		61.0	48.6
Income tax expense	10	(19.4)	(10.6)
Profit for the period		41.6	38.0
<hr/>			
Attributable to:			
Owners of the parent		39.3	36.4
Non-controlling interests		2.3	1.6
		41.6	38.0
<hr/>			
Earnings per share attributable to owners of the parent during the period			
Basic (pence)	11	43.7	40.6
Diluted (pence)	11	43.3	40.2