

Sephora in Scotland

In Summer 2026, more than 1000 shoppers queued up for hours as the popular beauty business Sephora opened its first store Scotland in Edinburgh St James Centre. The French business then added another Scottish store in Glasgow, in the Silverburn shopping centre.

This shows strong **organic (internal) growth** by opening new stores and targeting a new market. It's also very encouraging to see physical retail stores continuing to be popular, which will bring excited shoppers to the shopping centres and boost footfall for nearby businesses to benefit from too.

*This is a textbook example of **internal growth** because:*

- Existing products were sold
- No other business was involved
- A new geographical market was entered
- The aim was to attract new customers and increase sales

Adapted Localised Marketing

A particularly interesting aspect of Sephora's launch was its use of localised advertising. Before the stores opened, advertising hoardings displayed the slogan:

"Twice the stripes, twice as bonnie!"

This slogan cleverly combined Sephora's famous black-and-white striped branding with the fun Scottish word "bonnie", meaning attractive or beautiful. The phrase immediately connected the French brand to Scottish culture while still maintaining Sephora's established brand identity; very clever!

This demonstrates strong **branding** because the company:

- Maintained consistent global branding through its distinctive stripes
- Adapted marketing messages to suit local customers
- Created publicity and social media hype
- Helped Scottish consumers feel recognised and included

Promotional Activities and Public Relations (PR)

Sephora also used a variety of **promotional** activities to generate excitement around the openings.

The Edinburgh launch featured Scottish-themed celebrations, including a ribbon-cutting event, performances from Scottish entertainers, a tartan-themed photo booth and appearances by performers associated with Scottish culture.

Images from the opening showed Scottish-themed elements such as tartan displays and celebrations, helping create a memorable customer experience and reinforcing the local connection.

These activities are examples of public relations (PR) because they generated positive media coverage and strengthened Sephora's reputation without relying solely on traditional advertising methods.

Links to Higher Business Management Marketing

This story links to several marketing topics:

Promotion

The company used:

- Store launch events
- Social media activity
- Public relations
- Giveaways and competitions
- Experiential marketing through in-store events

Branding

Sephora used its recognisable black-and-white striped branding while adapting messages for Scottish consumers.

Customer Satisfaction

By responding to customer demand for Scottish stores, Sephora increased convenience and accessibility for customers who previously had to shop online or travel elsewhere in the UK.

Exam Tip

If asked: "Explain the growth strategy used by Sephora,"

You could write:

Sephora used internal/organic growth by opening stores in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This allowed the business to sell its existing products in a new geographical market, helping to attract new customers and increase sales revenue.

Sunny Scotland

It was a very good summer with many weeks of sunshine; perhaps a distant memory now! One of the most important topics in Higher Business Management is the External Factors topic (PESTEC).

So, try and remember that the 'E' for Environmental factors includes the weather. And the long spells of sunshine have been excellent news for lots of markets, with hot weather helping demand for outdoor goods, drinks, fans, summer clothing and online sports merchandise as consumers tried to make the most of the scorching conditions.

It's a recent example, so try and use it in any External Factors questions you face this year, hopefully it doesn't make you too upset if you have to write about our lovely summer in the middle of winter!

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