

# GHD CASE STUDY: SUSTAINING AN ACCELERATED GROWTH STRATEGY

## ABSTRACT

WHEN GHD ENTERED THE HAIRSTYLING MARKET IN 2001, THE BUSINESS MODEL IN THE BEGINNING WAS MAINLY A BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS (B2B) ONE THAT FOCUSED ON SALONS. FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF IMMENSE GROWTH, IN 2017 GHD SHIFTED ITS FOCUS FROM B2B TO A DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER (D2C) MODEL.

GHD is a multinational hairstyling company whose headquarters are based in London, United Kingdom.

In line with its new D2C strategy, in 2017 GHD focused on increasing the company's digital sales and marketing efforts. GHD's D2C approach focused on a few key areas, including: 1) develop an e-commerce growth strategy, 2) build a key influencer marketing network and campaign, 3) introduce a sell-out model in salons; and 4) bring Amazon on board as both a retail and marketing platform.

Of all the decisions made to grow the brand online, the decision to partner with Amazon was a difficult one and was not made lightly. Stefano Filipazzi, GHD Italy's Managing Director, recognised the move came with potential risks to GHD's core business, which depended on the relationships it had forged with salons over the years, as well as opportunities for growth. By the end of 2022, GHD had grown to become a major organisation that was experiencing and navigating a significant stage of growth.

In January 2023, in the lead up to a strategy meeting with the company's Board of Directors, Stefano was pondering the company's next move. There were several options to consider and each one brought an element of risk. Should the company explore expanding more aggressively into new markets? Should it invest in its own retail locations? Or should it stay the course and focus on growing in existing markets with a more targeted B2C and digital strategy? As the premium hairstyling market was heating up, Stefano knew that deciding the best way forward was going to be challenging.

This case is for educational purposes and is not intended to illustrate either effective or ineffective management of an organisational situation. The situations and circumstances described may have been dramatized or modified for instructional purposes and may not accurately reflect actual events.

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## AUTHORS

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## PROFESSOR & SCHOOL DEPUTY DIRECTOR

### Biography

Paolo Taticchi is Professor in Strategy and Sustainability & School Deputy Director (MBA, Global Engagement, Executive Education) at UCL School of Management.

Highly active in executive education, Paolo has trained thousands of managers and executives of Fortune Global 500 companies; and is a sought-after speaker regularly invited to give keynote talks at world-class academic, governmental and industry events.

Paolo's research on corporate sustainability and performance measurement is internationally recognized. Paolo's latest books include "Corporate Sustainability in Practice", which was published in January 2021, and "Sustainable Transformation Strategy", published in May 2023.

Outside of the academy, Paolo has significant consultancy experience in the fields of strategy, education, and sustainability. He has worked in this capacity for firms of various sizes, and in a range of different industries. Today, he advises (or serves in the advisory board) influential organizations and is one of the scientific advisors of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition in Italy.

He has received numerous awards for the impact of his work. His projects, quotes and opinions have been featured over 350 times in international media outlets. In 2021, Paolo was indicated by Italian's leading business daily Sole 24 Ore as the most influential Italian under the age of 40.

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### Biography

Melina is a Research Assistant at UCL School of Management, where she supports various projects focused on business strategy and sustainability, including case studies and white papers. Melina is also a consultant supporting organisations with their marketing and business communications needs, and sustainability reporting.

In collaboration with Professor Taticchi and Melissa Demartini, Melina co-authored a book titled "Sustainable Transformation Strategy", published in May 2023.

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Previously, Melina worked in the Media Sponsorship & Marketing field for 15+ years in Canada, where she collaborated with various Fortune 500 companies and brands to develop strategic partnership marketing initiatives, including several programmes that garnered awards from the Sponsorship Marketing Council of Canada. More recently, Melina worked as a Sustainable Content Marketing Strategist for a UK based consulting agency specialising in the sports and sustainability field.

Passionate about the field of sustainability in sport, Melina is a current member and volunteer with Sport and Sustainability International, a not-for-profit organisation that is focused on accelerating sustainability in and through sport. A mother of two young girls, Melina is motivated to support, learn from, and collaborate with individuals and organisations that are striving to create a better world for future generations.

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