

Strategic marketing and communication- The case of Philips Sonicare toothbrush

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Introduction

Introduction to the organisation

Philips is a multinational Dutch conglomerate founded by Koninklijke Phillips N. V. in 1891 (Ramanathan and Jagadeesha, 2022). Headquartered in Amsterdam, the company focuses on consumer oral health and healthcare technology by operating in more than 100 countries globally. With its commitment towards innovation, the company has already invested €1.8 billion in 2023 in research and development with the aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025 (Fitzgerald and Millett, 2024). Additionally, having a significant market share in the UK for the consumer health care products, Philips have already generated a revenue of €18.2 billion in the year 2023 with a similar growth expectation in the coming years (Philips annual report 2023, 2024).

Introduction to the product

The Philips Company is offering a wide portfolio amongst which the Philips Sonicare toothbrush is one such premium electric toothbrush which is known for its advanced sonic technology. The electric brush boasts superior gum health improvement, plaque removal and various other customizable features including 62,000 brush movements per minute. The product line includes various models like Sonicare ProtectiveClean, Sonicare DiamondClean smart and Sonicare for Kids, thereby, holding a strong position in the UK market by catering to different needs and preferences.

Values offered by the product to the customers

The various values include-

1. Superior cleaning performance- The sonic advanced technology assures plaque removal even in difficult-to-reach areas effectively with deep cleaning. Substantially research prove that Sonicare electric toothbrushes are 10 times effective in plaque removal as compared to manual toothbrushes thereby significantly improving gums health (Marcia et al., 2023).
2. Long term oral health benefits- According to various studies, better oral health outcomes have been observed by the regular users of Sonicare toothbrushes. 11% fewer tooth extractions and 21% less tooth decay was noticed amongst users of electric toothbrushes than manual ones showcasing the long term oral health benefits of using electronic toothbrushes like Sonicare (Pelka et al., 2023).
3. Customizable settings- Different intensities and multiple brushing modes are offered and tailored according to individual oral care needs by Philips Sonicare including features like BrushSync technology (signals the brush to replace it by tracking its head usage), pressure sensors (which prevents hard brushing) and Sonicare app

offering personalised brushing programmes thereby encouraging optimal oral health and hygiene practises and enhancing user experience (Huang, 2023).

4. Convenience and user experience- The SoniCare app provides various features for Philips Sonicare toothbrush models like travel cases, rechargeable batteries and Bluetooth connectivity for personalised coaching and real-time feedback which has collectively improved adherence to good oral hygiene practises and user engagement. A study concludes that Sonicare users are found to have better brushing habits and overall satisfaction in comparison to other users (Adam et al., 2023).

Critical analysis of the market context

Market trends

1. Growth trends
 - ✓ The value for electronic toothbrush in the UK market is €360 million approximately in 2023 with an expected CAGR of 6.88% from 2024 to 2029 (Mordor Intelligence Research & Advisory, 2024). The demand for effective and innovative oral care solutions is increasing because of rising awareness about maintaining oral hygiene and benefits of using electric toothbrushes over manual ones.

Electric Toothbrush Market Size



Figure 1- Electric toothbrush market

(Source- Mordor Intelligence Research & Advisory, 2024)

- ✓ The demand for healthcare products remains resilient including premium oral healthcare solutions despite high inflation at 10% and UK's current economic climate characterised by dampened discretionary spending of the consumers (Erker, 2024).
- ✓ The UK government has also accelerated its focus on preventive healthcare initiatives including oral hygiene in 2023 (Listl et al., 2023).

2. Consumer preferences

- ✓ Organisations like Public Health England are conducting awareness campaigns about the significance of maintaining oral health and hygiene wherein following researches by Oral Health Foundation concludes that increasing adults are preferring to invest in advanced oral care products (Oral Health Foundation, 2024).
- ✓ A survey conducted by British Dental Association in 2023 reveals that more than 65% adults in the UK prefer electronic toothbrushes now signifying a critical shift towards premium healthcare products (British Dental Association, 2024). Sonicare is rightly meeting the consumer demands who are increasingly seeking toothbrushes offering personalised care, advanced features and superior cleaning performance.
- ✓ Generation Z and millennials are increasingly willing to invest in advanced products being more health conscious and that almost 75% of younger demographics in the UK are reported to already or intend to switch to electronic toothbrushes (Rosdiana, 2024).

Analysis of the marketing environment



Figure 2- Analysis of marketing environment

(Source- self-generated)

The marketing environment analysis the following factors-

1. Political factors

- The electronic toothbrush market has been significantly impacted due to the regulatory environment in the UK. Various initiatives like dental health programmes by NHS under the UK government has raised awareness about oral health and hygiene thereby indirectly heightening the demand for advanced and oral care products like the Philips Sonicare toothbrush (Westgarth, 2024).
- The company's pricing strategies and supply chain have been potentially affected because of Brexit which has brought uncertainties regarding the trade tariffs and policies (Hassan et al., 2024).
- Safety regulations in the UK have made a very rigorous compliance which have eventually reinforced the audience trust in premium oral care products like Sonicare (Listl et al., 2023).

2. Economic factors

- The economic environment in the UK is currently such that the consumer spending on premium products is significantly impacted including electronic toothbrushes. This is because of inflationary pressures pointing to 10% in 2022 and uncertainties surrounding Brexit. Yet the demand for health and wellness products including oral health has remained unchanged (Coibion et al., 2023).
- The increasing disposable incomes among the growing middle class have accelerated the market for premium quality oral hair products. For instance, a report by Mintel concludes that more than 50% of the UK consumers are willing to invest in high quality health and wellness products, clearly supporting the market positioning of Philips Sonicare (UK Oral Care Market Report 2024, 2024).

3. Social factors

- The dynamic trends in the UK are progressively emphasising on the significant role of oral hygiene in overall health with various organisations like Public Health England conducting health campaigns underscoring the significance of regular dental check-ups and brushing. This has increased the awareness and adoption of electronic toothbrushes among consumers (Kite et al., 2023).
- There is a significant positive shift noted towards health and wellness products particularly among young and middle aged demographics. According to a recent survey, more than 70% of young and middle aged groups are either already

using an electronic toothbrush or intent to do so driven by the motivation for better oral health and technological convenience (Lucía et al. 2023).

4. Technological factors

- The younger generation in the UK like Generation Z and millennials are technology enthusiasts. With the increasing awareness about oral hygiene they have already or intend to invest in electronic toothbrushes for better long term oral health outcomes.
- The Phillips have continuously invested in research and development processes and ensured enhanced user experience through continuous development of cutting edge products. Their commitment towards innovation is evident from the introduction of Sonicare 9900 Prestige in 2023 spotlighting the latest SenseIQ technology which removes 20 times more plaque and senses and adapt as per the teeth requirements and cares accordingly (Huang, 2023).

5. Legal factors

- The UK government has strict compliance and regulations regarding advertising standards product safety and consumer protection.
- It is mandatory for the companies to adhere to the standards laid by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to ensure safety and reliability of the products (Quigley et al., 2023). The Phillips Company has rightly addressed these regulatory standards concerning battery safety in electronic models which highlights the significance of regulatory compliance and stringent quality control to maintain audience trust and market credibility.

6. Environmental factors

- UK consumers are increasingly shifting towards sustainability. The Philips have committed to use eco-friendly materials and minimise its carbon footprint thereby becoming carbon neutral by 2026, attaining sustainability and resonating with their consumer values (Boiral et al., 2024).
- The government of UK has also taken initiatives to promote recycling and reduce plastic waste which has reshaped product and packaging designs. The Phillips have also put in efforts to appeal eco conscious consumers and improve brand reputation by demonstrating eco-friendly packaging and following sustainable product lines (Tumu et al., 2023).

7. Global factors

- Global market dynamics- The Asia Pacific region is projected to have 10% CAGR through 2028 with 35% of global electronic toothbrush market (Shakeel et al.,

2023). This region includes rapidly growing middle class with rising health awareness thereby representing a significant growth opportunity for the Philips.

- Global supply chain- Many companies faced vulnerabilities towards product availability and cost due to Covid-19 pandemic disrupting global supply chains (Chakraborty, 2023).

Segmentation, targeting and positioning

The segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies of the Philips Sonicare toothbrush are discussed as below-

Segmentation

1. Demographic segmentation

- Age: Young generation between 25 to 35 years of age who are tech savvy and open to invest in high quality health products
- Gender: Both males and females
- Income: Individuals who are typically earning above €35,000 per annum as disposable income for whom higher end products are affordable (Reed et al., 2023).
- Occupation: Executives and professionals who have the financial sources to buy premium products and prioritise personal care

2. Geographic segmentation

- Urban areas- Urban areas having higher concentration of young audience with disposable income such as Manchester, London, Birmingham, Edinburgh and likewise (AlHalawani et al., 2024).
- Accessibility- Regions offering advanced health care infrastructure and retail outlets making it convenient for the audience to access and purchase product and support services

3. Psychographic segmentation

- Lifestyle- Often engaged in health and fitness activities and eating habits, prioritise health and wellness, early adopters of technology and seek latest technological innovations, environmentally aware by following sustainable practises (Andrew and Dymond, 2023)
- Personality traits- These are achievement oriented professionals having high value for professional and personal success and are willing to invest in premium products which reflect their status. These are innovative individuals who like to try products with innovative and advanced technologies offering cutting edge solutions.

4. Behavioural segmentation

- Benefits sought- Audience looking for premium dental health benefits like better care and plaque removal, Value easy to use and time saving products and prefer customised and personalised care routines through app integration and smart connectivity so that individual dental needs can be catered.
- Usage rate- These are heavy users, who use electronic toothbrushes diligently multiple times a day and highly care about their oral hygiene, and brand conscious Who exhibit loyalty towards well-known brands such as Phillips.

Demographic segmentation	Geographic segmentation	Psychographic segmentation	Behavioural segmentation
Age- 25-35 years Gender- M/F Income- Individuals typically earning above €35,000 per annum Occupation- Executives and professionals	All across the UK Urban urban areas like Manchester, Birmingham, London, Edinburgh and likewise Regions with easy accessibility	Lifestyle- Health conscious, tech savvy and eco conscious Personality traits- Innovative and achievement oriented	Benefit sought- Advanced oral care, customization and convenience Usage rate- Brand loyal and heavy users

Figure 3- Segmentation based on various factors

(Source- self-generated)

Targeting

Target market profile

The target market in the UK for the Philips Sonicare toothbrush comprises of young executives and professionals ageing between 25 to 35 years living in urban areas and earning over £35,000 per annum. These individuals are residing in major urban areas like Birmingham, Manchester, London and are typically tech-savvy, health conscious and eco-conscious. They have a priority for premium products which offer advanced oral care

solutions including customisation and convenience. These premium personal care products directly align with their bustling lifestyles and innovative and sustainable values.

Persona

Annie is a health conscious, Eco conscious and tech savvy professional who values personal healthcare and wellness besides sustainability. She has a hectic lifestyle and seeks high-quality efficient and premium products that can integrate into her schedule seamlessly. Any frequently visits the gym uses fitness apps and expects sustainable solutions from her chosen brand. She is looking for an advanced technology embedded electronic toothbrush that provides premium dental care, customization features and convenience to meet her particular oral hygiene requirements.

Value proposition statement

The Philips Sonicare toothbrush offers premium oral care solutions for Health and environment conscious young executives in the UK who value latest technologies and sustainability through innovative features like personalised brushing modes, smart sensors and app connectivity. The Sonicare electronic toothbrushes provide an incomparable cleaning experience to the user by effectively removing plaque and enhancing gum health, all while aligning with sustainable practises unlike other electronic toothbrushes in the market. Subsequently, the Philips Sonicare toothbrush make an ideal choice for individuals with hectic lifestyle who seek efficient, premium and eco-friendly dental care solutions.

Positioning

Positioning strategy

The positioning strategy of the Phillips Sonicare toothbrushes will include-

- Premium innovation- The company will position itself in the electronic toothbrush uk market as a premium brand with focus on superior oral care through advanced technologies. The brand will differentiate itself from the competitors through various technological innovations like SenseIQ technology. Hence the positioning targets the audience who are ready to invest in cutting edge premium quality toothbrushes offering significant oral health benefits.
- Health and wellness leadership- The brand shall focus on its commitment towards health and wellness emphasising on features like enhanced gum care and better plaque removal with overall improvement in oral health.
- Sustainability commitment- The brand underscores its initiatives towards environmental sustainability by promoting recyclable packaging eco-friendly materials and energy efficient technologies. This strategy enhances the company's appeal to the audience who prioritise sustainable products thereby directly aligning with global sustainability trends (Leiserowitz et al., 2023).

Positioning map

The Phillips is trying its best to beat the competition from its key competitors like Quip Electric toothbrush, Oral B Pro 1000, Fairywill Sonic Electric toothbrush and Oral B Genius X by introducing the new Philips EcoPulse Electric toothbrush. The positioning map for the same is below-

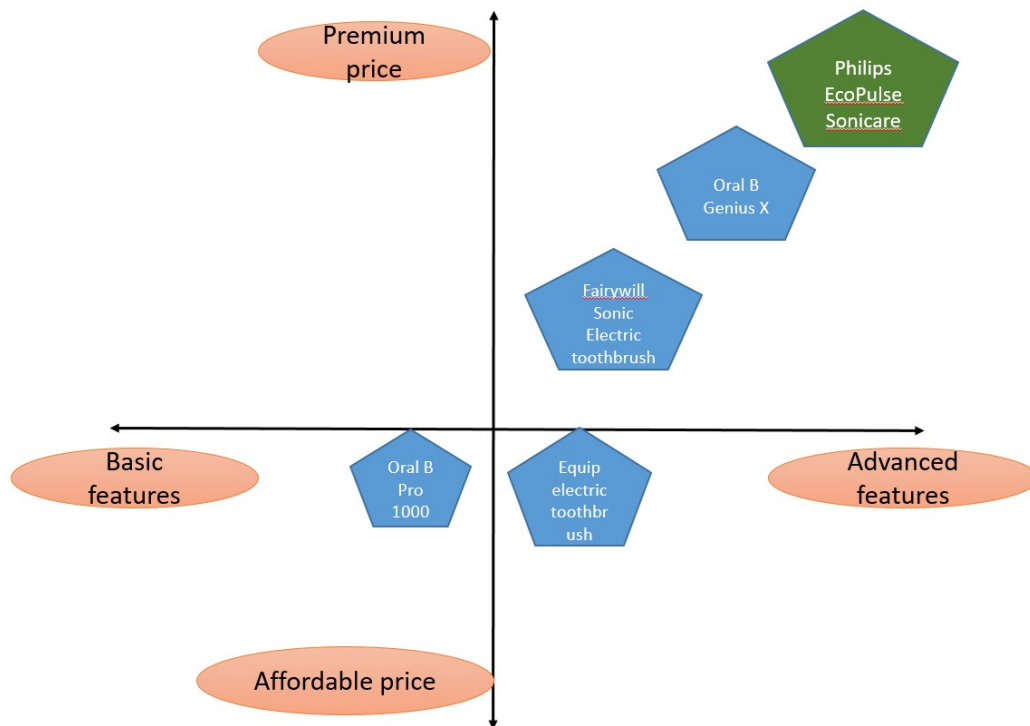


Figure 4- Positioning map for Philips Sonicare EcoPulse toothbrush

(Source- self-generated)

Recommendations based on current STP strategy

Based on the current STP strategy, Philips can enhance personalization by leveraging data analytics (like purchase history), Strengthen digital presence through interactive content and advanced digital campaigns, expand sustainability initiatives, strengthen collaborations and partnerships, focus on localised marketing and try to optimise customer experience to the maximum (Abdul et al., 2024).

Marketing mix

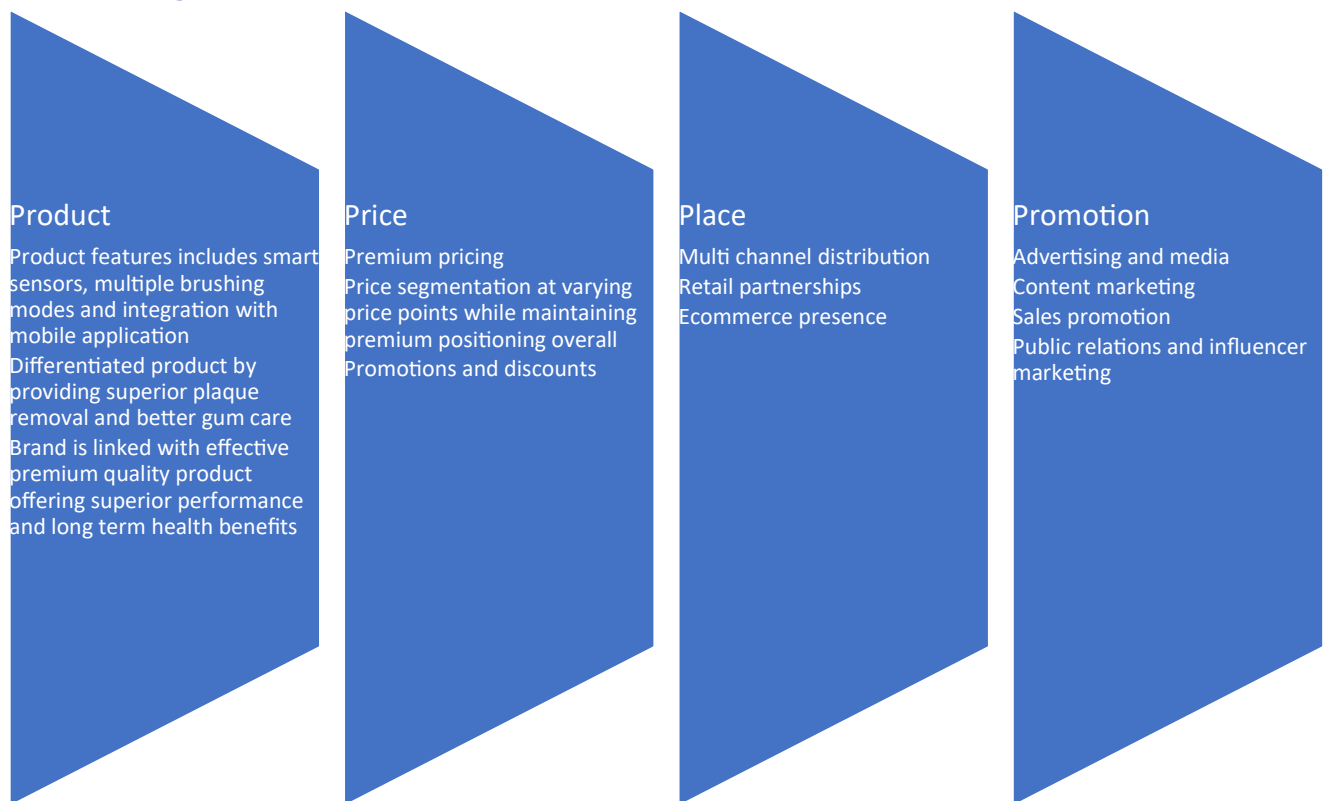


Figure 5- Marketing mix for Philips Sonicare EcoPulse toothbrush

(Source- self-generated)

1. Product strategy

- Product features- The name of new Philips Sonicare Electronic Toothbrush will be EcoPulse Sonicare. The new toothbrush will include significant features like smart sensors and multiple brushing modes which will integrate with mobile application to track oral health habits of the consumer (Thurnay et al., 2023). This will not only appeal the tech savvy audience who are looking for technology embedded oral care solutions but also reinforce the position of the brand in the UK market as a leader in oral care sector.
- Product differentiation- The brand will position itself as a high quality oral care toothbrush featuring latest technology which provides better plate removal and gum health. The new toothbrush will also provide more customisable options to the audience such as teeth whitening and sensitivity in teeth.

2. Pricing strategy

- Premium pricing- The company shall follow premium pricing strategy which would directly reflect the latest technology and high end quality. The Sonicare toothbrushes will be positioned in the higher end of the UK market through

premium pricing strategy, thereby, directly aligning as a professional grade premium quality product (Chang et al., 2023).

- Price segmentation- The prices will vary for different models so that broader audience can access the product while maintaining an overall premium positioning at the same time. This price segmentation will allow the company to target different consumer segments ranging from buyers willing to invest in premium oral care solutions to budget conscious buyers.

Model Name	Price	Target segment
EcoPulse Sonicare Essential	£80	Budget conscious users
EcoPulse Sonicare Optimal	£100	Middle range users
EcoPulse Sonicare Pro	£140	Health enthusiasts
EcoPulse Sonicare Elite	£220	High end users

Figure 6- Varying prices for different toothbrush models

(Source- self-generated)

- Promotions and discounts- Occasional promotions and bundle discounts will be offered by the company particularly through pharmacies and online retailers to attract price sensitive audience while maintaining the premium perception of the brand in the market.

3. Distribution strategy

- Multichannel distribution- The new Sonicare electronic toothbrush shall be widely available by means of various channels such as supermarkets like Tesco and Morrisons, online retailers like Amazon and eBay, pharmacies like Boots and Lloyds Pharmacy and specialty stores like ASDA to ensure broad accessibility and market coverage (Mizdrak et al., 2023).
- Retail partnerships- Partnerships with major pharmacy chains and retailers Like Superdrug and Boots in the UK can help in maximising visibility and availability of the Phillips toothbrush. Dedicated display areas and in-store promotions are often included as a part of these partnerships for Philips EcoPulse toothbrush.
- Ecommerce- Philips have majorly partnered with online giant retailers like Amazon and can continue to expand its ecommerce presence thereby offering convenience for the audience. The audience can view detailed product

information, reviews posted by the other customers and also avail online only promotions.

4. Promotional strategy

- Advertising and media- Targeted advertising shall be done through different channels like online platforms, television Channels like BBC One, ITV and Channel 4 and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter featuring testimonials from well-known dental professionals. They would highlight the USPs of the new electronic toothbrush and build overall credibility in the market.
- Content marketing- Educational content will be used by the brand to inform the audience about advantages of maintaining proper oral care and benefits of using the new EcoPulse Sonicare toothbrush. This content will be disseminated with the help of social media, blogs and Phillips website. For instance, DrTomy is a famous dental blogger who can share educational blogs on his page in partnership with Philips (Dudhela and Chaurasiya, 2023).
- Sales promotions- Strategic partnerships will be formed with retailers who would offer discounts or promotions for limited time. Campaigns will be run around particular times of the year such as Black Friday sale, Christmas sale and likewise.
- Public relations and influencer marketing- The brand shall collaborate with influencers in health and wellness areas and dental professionals who would endorse and share reviews about the new electronic toothbrush. This will help in building trust and credibility resulting in strengthened position of the brand as a trusted leader in the oral care UK market. For instance, Dr Uchenna Okoye (TV presenter, dentist and author) and Dr Rachael McCracken (Clinical lecturer having dense presence in dental community) (Buontempo and Kelleher, 2024).

5. Process strategy

- Customer service- Online resources for troubleshooting problems and dedicated helpdesk as a part of comprehensive customer service can enhance the overall customer experience and reinforce brand loyalty.
- User experience- User friendly product features easy to navigate online shopping clear instructions for use are few processes of purchasing Philips toothbrush which must be streamlined.

6. People

- Customer interaction- Both in store and online representatives must be trained enough to provide knowledgeable support to the customers. Additionally, the

brand has always tried to focus on customer interaction through engaging marketing campaigns and responsive customer service.

- Brand ambassadors- The endorsements by influencers and dental professionals reinforces the effectiveness and credibility of the product.

7. Physical evidence

- Packaging- The premium packaging clearly reflects the high quality of the product which also aligns with the sustainability goal.

Recommendations based on current marketing mix strategy

Few recommendations can be made based upon the current marketing mix strategy as discussed above-

- Philips can try to maintain an adaptable and robust supply chain by diversifying it so that risks can be mitigated and better resilience and reliability can be ensured to maintain market share and continue meeting consumer demands in the UK market (Chakraborty, 2023).
- The company can further invest in personalised and interactive online experiences given the rising trends of digital engagement. This could include enhanced app integration or try-before-you-buy virtual feature for a more customizable oral care schedule.
- Brand loyalty and customer engagement can be enhanced further by including online dental consultations with professionals and interactive webinars as a part of customer education.
- Subscription services can be introduced or enhanced for replacement of toothbrush heads and other accessories thereby ensuring convenience and brand loyalty.
- Given the increasing interest in sustainability practises, Philips could promote and highlight a better eco-friendly and sustainable production practises thereby strengthening its environmental initiatives (Fitzgerald and Millett, 2024).
- Philips offer personalised assistance to address any customer query and provide exceptional customer support, a point where many companies fail to offer so. The company must also actively seek customer feedback and incorporate it to improve its products and services continuously.
- Most importantly, Philips must continue to innovate to cater to the dynamic needs and preferences of the audiences (Thurnay et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The Philips Sonicare has successfully established its presence in UK's electronic toothbrush robust market Through a strategic plan of premium positioning advanced technology and

commitment towards wellness and sustainability. The brand successfully addresses the dynamic needs of the tech savvy, eco-conscious and health conscious young consumers' oral hygiene. And in-depth market analysis clearly concludes the wide opportunities for the company to cater to the discerning needs of maintaining oral health of the targeted consumers. In conclusion, the strategic positioning aligned with consumer preferences and current market trends by the Philips Sonicare positions the brand for sustained growth and success in the highly competitive electronic toothbrush UK market.

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