

Centre for Knowledge Transfer

Project Snapshot

Company: Snacks Unlimited
Business: Food Manufacturer
Project: New processing technologies / product development

Food and Technology Food for Thought

Savory food manufacturers, Snacks Unlimited, needed to satisfy increasingly competitive markets with ever shortening new product life cycles. How do they do it? A KTP of course.

Prior to a KTP with LSBU, Snacks Unlimited was struggling with their product development process. It was uncoordinated and there were considerable delays in bringing new concepts to market, often missing vital opportunities. Since Sophie Phanor, KTP Associate has been on board the company has seen 12 new low fat products developed, manufactured and sold to major food retailer Weight Watchers, improved efficiency and procedures in product development and successful networking with suppliers. As a result they can now bring new products to market more quickly, satisfying customer needs and strengthening their relationships with key retailers.

"We took on a KTP project in order to develop new products, and the outcomes have been brilliant. During the KTP our company had doubled in size," commented Tony Butler, Sales Director at Snacks. "We launched new products which accounted for 80% of the total turnover last year. This is a direct result of the KTP project. We are delighted with the results and we are looking into a future KTP project."

Snacks Unlimited have now launched 8 new low-fat products under the Weight Watchers brand. In addition,

some of the existing Weight Watchers products have now been re-formulated, and four new own brand products have been initiated.

"Consumer demand for healthy low-fat products has increased over recent years, and this KTP has helped Snacks Unlimited respond to this trend," said Sophie. "Being able to produce tasty products with only a typical 3% fat content and having the opportunity to use the Weight Watchers brand image, gives the company a strong competitive edge against rival producers."

LSBU academics Dr Ken Spears and Adri Bester provided valuable expertise in food science and technology. "The challenge of this KTP was to develop snacks with fat contents of 3%, when typical snacks contain between 35% to 40% fat," remarked Ken. "This project has allowed us to experience 'live' commercial products and the opportunity to develop new curriculum areas in snack foods and nutritional requirements." Both academics found working with such a supportive, industrial partner such as Snacks Unlimited extremely beneficial. Liaising with a global brand like Weight Watchers meant Ken and Adri could really appreciate the demands and requirements involved.

Astonishingly, Sophie also managed to find time to help the company gain excellent grades in BRC Global Food Standards Accreditation with zero non-conformance for the second time. Sophie also set up a quality control laboratory and established an in-house technical management team which enables them to exercise quality

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control across production, improved operations and maintaining high standards.

The KTP has had an extreme impact on Snacks Unlimited, with significantly increased sales and profits, improved staff morale and increased manufacturing productivity.

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