

TUCO



Have you had your 5-a-day?

Peas Please campaigns to get more
people eating their fruit and veg

FIT FOR A QUEEN

We take a look around
Queen's University Belfast

FORKS IN THE ROAD

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SNAP HAPPY

The TUCO Competitions introduces
the Photography Challenge

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE TEAM

Are you making the most of your wholesaler relationship? Are you utilising their knowledge, products and services, or are they just delivering to your door each morning? It's time to see them as a member of your catering team

Take a minute to think of all the different markets a national wholesaler delivers to. Before they drop off at your kitchen door, they might have completed a delivery at a high end restaurant or a high street chain. It makes you realise that these companies might well be a fountain of knowledge that you could tap into.

While the benefits of using a wholesaler are clear – it's cheaper buying in bulk, you have just one or two deliveries, fewer invoices means admin savings, the items are delivered in temperature-controlled vehicles, and multiple depots means you're unlikely to run out of a product – it's easy to forget that they can do a whole lot more for you.

How often have you spoken to a wholesaler's development chefs about food trends and what menus or concepts could work in your university or college? Do you know how they can help you achieve your sustainability goals or support your allergen management? It's time to get friendly with your wholesaler.

"Delivered wholesale links the big food brands as well as smaller more artisanal products with foodservice and partnering

with the right kind of wholesaler can bring many benefits to the university caterer – from best value kitchen basics to new products to try, as well as innovative recipe solutions," says Rhian Hawkings, marketing controller at Creed Foodservice. "When you are feeding hundreds of students on several sites with stretched budgets, a close caterer-wholesaler relationship is worth a great deal."

It sounds cheesy, but a wholesaler can be like an extra member of the team. Not in the delivery of items, but the people behind the scenes. Development chefs will always be happy to visit you on-site to discuss new ideas for a menu or concept, or get you down to one of their workshops or training days.

Catherine Hinchcliff, head of corporate

marketing at Bidfood, says: "Bidfood's food development chefs work closely with university caterers to create dishes specifically for them; this is a collaborative process whereby our chefs use insight on the latest trends to help improve and refine menus."

BUYING OWN-BRAND

Something else that wholesalers can offer is their own-brand products. It might not be something you're willing to do at home, but when budgets are tight, the truth is there's not much difference in taste and you can save money.

"We have a comprehensive range of over 850 grocery, chilled, frozen and non-food products, from store cupboard essentials through to premium finished products, which provide great value for money without compromising on taste or quality," says Martin Ward, Country Range Group trading director.



“Delivered wholesale links the big food brands as well as smaller more artisanal products with foodservice”

It can come in handy when there's a dish that uses more expensive ingredients as it allows you to cut the cost on some other ingredients used in the dish.

"In an educational establishment where cost saving is paramount wherever possible without sacrificing quality, own-brands created by wholesalers provide an effective opportunity to afford qualitative catering equipment or hygiene maintenance products at a lower cost-effective price," says Mike Hardman, marketing manager at Alliance Online.

And if you're not converted yet, Hinchcliff believes you will be soon.

"If food prices continue to rise – driven by currency fluctuations, Brexit and other factors – we believe universities may well start to turn more to own-brand products and ingredients to mitigate the impact on margins," she says. "In reality it is about taking a best of both approach – branded and own-brand – to unlock value for customers."

DELIVERING SUSTAINABILITY

As large national businesses, wholesalers have their own sustainability targets, just like universities. It means that by using a wholesaler with environmental issues at its heart, it can support you in your aims.

Wholesalers like JJ Foodservice are taking action on reducing carbon emissions. Its Telematics project began in January 2018 and by August the amount of time its vehicles were left idling had reduced by 70% per month, resulting in a 2% decrease in total carbon emissions.

Then there are the products on offer and wholesalers are looking to offer more ethical and sustainable products to customers.

Bidfood has a new plastic-free range of 150 products, its Catering Supplies team has worked with WRAP to produce a guide to recycling packaging, and its Professional Supplies team now offers a range of environmentally-friendly cleaning products.

"It's up to wholesalers to offer university caterers a choice of sustainable food and catering supplies that lives up to these standards," says Hinchcliff. "Whether that's sustainable menu options; ethical brands; accredited, assured or certified ranges; environmentally friendly cleaning chemicals; or environmentally friendly packaging; these choices are important."

Talk to your wholesaler about what more they could be doing for you, it might make all the difference.



Thomas Ridley Foodservice makes a delivery to Homerton College

DELIVERING TO HOMERTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Homerton College, Cambridge is one of the largest colleges within Cambridge University; with 600 students living on site and 1,181 who are affiliated with the college. The college also runs a thriving summer school which requires around 1,100 meals every day and a conference centre that caters to a diverse range of events, all of which makes Homerton College's food and beverage manager, Rob Gamble, an extremely busy man.

"The scale of operation at Homerton College necessitates a professional and collaborative approach to the supply of food and beverages. Our kitchen team invest a lot of time in producing original seasonal dishes and Thomas Ridley Foodservice has been a key partner for over 10 years."

Rob outlines the impressive and long-standing relationship between Homerton College and its wholesaler Thomas Ridley Foodservice: "We have a policy for food and beverage sourcing, first of all, is it local, if not, is it British or European and if we can't source to those principles, for example bananas, then we will source from a local company. Thomas Ridley has similar principles and that makes our relationship work exceptionally well. We have a commitment to serving only ethically traded tea, coffee and sugar and will seek to serve Fairtrade certified products. Working towards all of our produce being seasonal and local wherever possible, we create menus that reflect the seasons and aim to have at least three items per dish that are seasonally abundant."

The cuisine at Homerton is extensive. The seasonally adapted menu mixes homemade favourites with classical and contemporary dishes, offering something for every taste and diet.

"Innovation is also a key part of our relationship with Thomas Ridley," says Rob. "We are constantly looking for new ingredients and products that our guests will enjoy, and our account manager is absolutely brilliant at bringing new things into the kitchen and sharing the latest trends and updates. It's like having another person in the team who helps out with ideas and new product tastings."