



Waste Prevention

THE 2019 RETAIL FOOD WASTE PREVENTION INNOVATION CHALLENGE, DEVELOPED BY ECR COMMUNITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH CO:CUBED, IS NOW UNDER WAY. ESM REPORTS.

At the most recent ECR Sell More, Waste Less meeting, which took place in Lisbon last October, ECR Community's Shrink & OSA Group launched details of the 2019 Retail Food Waste Prevention Innovation Challenge, a new initiative that will engage with start-ups on the development of new ways to deal with the problem of food waste in the retailer supply chain.

This process is now under way, with ECR Community working alongside six leading European retailers – Tesco, Delhaize, Asda, Lidl, Sonae and Albert – as well as Co:Cubed, a collaborative innovation platform, to seek out entreprenuring businesses capable to contributing potential solutions to the food waste issue. From a longlist of around 200 start-ups, reviewed in terms of suitability, scalability and innovativeness, a 'final cut' of around 20 start-ups will be determined, of which five will go on to pre-

sent at the next ECR Sell More, Waste Less meeting, taking place in Brussels on 26 and 27 June, in a 'shark tank' style forum.

"We're searching the world for relevant start-ups at the moment," says Colin Peacock, strategic coordinator of the Shrink & OSA Group. "These solutions will not only have applications in retail, but also other sectors in which there are expiry date issues, such as pharmaceuticals, the medical industry, and restaurants and catering – any sector in which the short shelf life of products can be an issue."

Several aspects of the supply chain will be considered as part of the study, including processing and packaging; distribution and logistics; and in-store – essentially everything from the moment a product is produced to its eventual consumption by the shopper.

Focus Areas

Five core areas relating to the food waste issue have been targeted by the group:

- Supply Chain Visibility – How can retailers get better insights into stock movement from farm to store? How can shelf life and cosmetic standards be more objectively defined and measured to remove slack and emotion?
- Store and Warehouse Optimisation – How can retailers increase inventory, sales and supply data accuracy for improved supply and demand forecasting? How can they optimise their workforce to save time and reduce wastage?
- Extending Shelf Life – How can new ingredients, treatments and packaging help retailers transport, store and preserve fresh produce sustainably, in ways that can extend shelf life?
- Clearance and Reductions – How can retailers optimise not only the markdown process itself, but also the operating procedures that they have in place to rotate stock and manage clearances?
- Repurpose and Reuse – How can retailers better manage surplus through partners and by repurposing produce coming to the end of its shelf life?

Each of the collaborating retailers has also identified the product categories in which food waste is most prevalent to it, illustrating the need for cross-category action. Dairy & Chilled was identified by Tesco, Asda, Albert, Sonae and Delhaize as a core concern; Bakery was identified by Tesco, Albert and



Waste Not, Want Not Fruit & Veg and (opposite) Bakery are waste hotspots in-store

Delhaize; Meat & Fish was identified by Lidl, Sonae and Delhaize; and Fruit & Veg was identified by Lidl.

For all retailers, however, the key issue is maintaining profitability in categories in which food waste is most prevalent.

“Working with each of the retailers has given us a good steer as to what areas we should focus most on,” says Peacock. “Dairy

& Chilled has come out as a key area because there’s lots of value inherent in that category, and it’s difficult to give away to charities. Similarly, in bakery, retailers are often left with lots of unsold stock at the end of the day, but, at the same time, they don’t want the consumer to be presented with an empty bread rack at four in the afternoon. It’s a difficult balance.”

Industry Roll-Out

ECR Community anticipates that following the ‘pitch day’ at the end of June, pilot workshops will be rolled out in July, ahead of a review of their implementation and effectiveness at the following ECR Sell More, Waste Less meeting later in the year.

“The start-ups will be measured up against six or seven criteria – are they a ‘one man and a test tube’ type operation, or do they have the capability to scale up and roll out into stores quite quickly?” says Peacock. “Or, are they simply looking for a partner that will help them transfer their learnings from another sector into retail? The next few months will tell a lot.” ■

If you know of a start-up or technology entrepreneur that you believe could be considered by the group, please contact colinmpeacock@ecr-shrink-group.com. ESM will keep you abreast of all the latest developments in this programme, both in the publication and via our website, www.esmmagazine.com.

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Exceed your customers' expectations



In today’s food retail market, consumers demand fresh, high-quality products, and excellent service. As a result of increasing consumer demands, food retailers must cope with the growing volumes of diversified stock and multiple store formats. E-commerce requirements must also be factored into distribution centre (DC) processes. In such an energetic and changeable environment, you need a reliable partner that can help you to exceed your customers’ expectations.

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