



Innovation Manager

job description



the finer details

Which site am I based at?

YVHQ but will travel to multi sites

Which team am I a part of?

Development

Who do I report to?

Head of Innovation

Who do I look after?

Aligned Senior Development Technologist

Team size?

3

Do you have responsibility for a budget?

Not for setting one but for maintaining a budget.

Qualifications & Experience

Essential:

• Technical Skills – Expertise in product

The purpose of your role

Under the direction of the Head of Innovation, the Innovation Manager will lead & manage, with the support of a Senior Development Technologist, the creation and development of insight led new and existing products in the yogurt, ice cream, and desserts categories for specific accounts.

This individual will collaborate and lead with cross functional teams to deliver cutting-edge, high-quality product concepts that are aligned with customer and business priorities.

The role requires the overall ability to be the interface of the development process with the customer and the internal functions to deliver products from Gate 0 to 3 approval and ensure a successful product handover to the Process Development teams. This requires expertise in recipe development and raw material capability alongside managing multiple critical paths

This role is critical in shaping the future of the Yeo Valley Product Portfolio.

Key responsibilities:

- Nominated Lead Yeo Valley Innovation Development contact for all internal and external projects associated with allocated account customer for yogurt/dessert/ice cream.
- To manage specific NPD projects from kitchen concept to Gate 3 approval (kitchen vs factory), ensuring the relevant stakeholders are involved at the right stage and aligned, and the business has clear visibility on the NPD agenda for each customer and the state of play on current projects.
- Coordination and management of critical paths aligned with stakeholders' key dates and stages. Ability to identify, solve and communicate problems and resolutions internally and externally. Understanding the broader impacts across the department.
- Liaise closely with Insight Manager to provide expertise in food and eating trends and recipe formulation through insight led NPD, food safaris and trawls.
- To develop and maintain excellent customer relationships with defined retailers through a customer 'intimate' approach. Must be able to explain difficult or sensitive information and be willing to step in & support more junior team members in this area.

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Formulation & sensory analysis

Project Management -

Experience in managing multiple product development projects simultaneously, with a focus on meeting deadlines and managing resources effectively.

Knowledge of Ingredients -

Strong understanding of the functional properties of yogurt, desserts & ice cream

Teamwork -

Ability to work well with a collaborative, cross-functional team environment and lead in own area of expertise. Ability to encourage & lead within own team

Innovation Focus -

Passion for staying ahead of trends & a desire to proactively explore innovative ingredients and product concepts

Problem solving -

Excellent troubleshooting skills and ability to analyse complex technical challenges & implement solutions. Support & mentor team members to reach solutions

Communication -

Excellent verbal & written communication skills with the ability to present ideas and data clearly to technical & non-technical stakeholders

Driver's License is essential due to multi-site locations

Qualifications:

Food qualification or previous food manufacturing or catering experience

Minimum 5 years of post-graduate experience in a food NPD role, preferably within

Ability to troubleshoot – assist Process Development to resolve technical challenges that arise during product development, collaborating with internal teams to ensure solutions are implemented effectively

To understand the role and requirements of Technical, Sourcing, Operations, Supply Chain and Sales & Marketing through the development cycle, and work closely with these teams to ensure each departments requirement are met, and obligations delivered.

To work collaboratively with Process, Technical, Sourcing and Operations teams on new products, raw materials, packaging & factory processes.

To manage & track the costing from the signed off kitchen concept through to the 12-week post launch review.

To advise on design for manufacture, ensuring that all operational, supply chain and technical capabilities and limitations are understood, potential issues are identified early on, and workable solutions progressed collaboratively with the relevant team.

To manage sample requests from customers or internal colleagues for new business, new customers, product range presentations, entertainment.

To present and discuss new concept and product ideas with the customer.

Plans trends safaris to build insight in order to influence the concept solutions and customer brief

Working collaboratively with commercial team to complete the Feasibility Gate and discuss with relevant stakeholders

Driving the profit for SP28 – understand how the brief impacts the business at sales, volume and margin level. In addition to overall business objectives and impacts

Differentiation and optimisation – where relevant, ensure customer differentiation but optimise efficiencies and process at site

Build innovation presentations to support category rationale and objectives to sell product ideas

Commercial acumen – cost recipes and ensure they meet the cost of goods targets agreed with commercial. Ensure budgets are met and integrates with others to achieve department objectives.

Liaise with current and new suppliers to source new ingredients

Create kitchen samples with a hands-on approach.

Responsible for ensuring your product meets the most up to date policy and brands standards for each relevant customer

Liaise with technical/site for new ingredients/processes amends

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dairy, desserts or ice cream.
Ideally have some people management experience

Desirable Skills:

- ♥ **Industry Knowledge:**
Strong knowledge of Brands, values & processes as adopted by the retailers.
- ♥ **Business Acumen -**
Strong commercial awareness with the ability to identify & maximise opportunities while minimising costs.

Personal Attributes:

- ♥ **Creativity Flair & Data relevance –**
Strong creative mindset and an ability to transform data and trends into ideas which are fit for consumers today & tomorrow
- ♥ **Detail-Oriented –**
Meticulous attention to detail in both product development and documentation
- ♥ **Adaptability –**
Able to work in a fast-paced environment and adjust to changing priorities & project timelines. Resilience and supporting others is key.
- ♥ **Analytical Thinker –**
strong, analytical skills, capable of interpreting data to guide decision-making processes
- ♥ **Tenacious & “can do” attitude**
- ♥ **Self-driven** with a growth mindset & can use initiative
- ♥ **Desire** and ability to influence & drive change
- ♥ **Hands on** & practical approach to working

♥ Leading, coaching, developing and where relevant influences Snr Development Technologists in delivering the customer development plans and is accountable for their performance and results.

♥ Has overall accountability of the results and performance of their customer accounts with regards to NPD success and reaching targets/objectives

What good looks like for this role

General Profile:

The Innovation Manager is an experienced professional with both strong conceptual and practical expertise in product innovation, particularly in the yogurt, ice cream, and desserts categories. This role requires an advanced understanding of product development, market trends, and consumer needs, coupled with a strong grasp of related disciplines. The Innovation Manager will take on complex challenges in developing new product concepts or improving existing ones, working independently and receiving minimal supervision. They may be tasked with leading specific projects or managing certain aspects of broader innovation initiatives. In addition, they will be a resource for colleagues, providing guidance and sharing insights to help less experienced team members grow in their roles.

Business Expertise:

The Innovation Manager has a clear understanding of how innovation fits into the broader business strategy and integrates with other departments, including marketing, and manufacturing, to achieve departmental and organisational goals. By leveraging industry insights and aligning product concepts with business objectives, they ensure that new products are not only creative but also commercially viable. The role requires a keen awareness of the competitive landscape and market shifts to differentiate the company's offerings, as well as a deep understanding of consumer preferences and trends in the yogurt, ice cream, and dessert categories.

Leadership:

The Innovation Manager will manage a supporting Senior Development Technologist, guiding them in the creation and execution of new product concepts. They will also be responsible for adapting departmental plans to meet short-term objectives, ensuring alignment with broader strategic goals. In this leadership capacity, the Innovation Manager will identify and address technical and operational challenges that may arise during the development of new products, balancing short-term needs with long-term innovation goals. They will recognise how decisions impact the broader innovation strategy and adjust to ensure the success of their team and the department overall. Additionally, the Innovation Manager will play a key role in fostering a collaborative and innovative team environment, encouraging both creative thinking and operational excellence.

Impact:

While guided by company policies and strategic objectives, the Innovation Manager significantly influences the team's ability to meet targets related to

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• **Good IT skills** -Microsoft and database systems

• **Influential-**
Ability to pull cross functional teams in one direction with right level of data and detail to make decisions

product quality, timeline adherence, and overall innovation goals. Their contributions directly impact the department's capacity to bring new products to market successfully and drive consumer engagement. The role involves balancing immediate project goals with long-term innovation strategy, ensuring that their team delivers consistent results while adhering to quality and YV food policy standards.

Interpersonal Skills:

The Innovation Manager will frequently guide and influence both internal and external stakeholders, helping them adopt new perspectives or approaches to innovation. They will leverage strong interpersonal skills to build consensus, encourage collaboration, and ensure that all parties are aligned with the strategic direction of new product initiatives. Providing technical guidance to team members, colleagues, and even external partners, the Innovation Manager will be accountable for the performance and results of their team, ensuring that objectives are met on time and to the highest standards of quality

HR use

Date of last review:

Job reference no:

Job level:

Job family:

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