



Serving up some excitement for Chinese New Year

In the run up to Chinese New Year, Sharwood's, the UK's number one brand in Asian cuisine, set about inspiring consumers to recreate classic Chinese dishes at home.

Three brand-new TV adverts, supported by radio advertising and press inserts, showed consumers just how simple it is to cook beef and black bean sauce, kung-po chicken, and sweet and sour chicken when using Sharwood's.

Over the last three years, Chinese New Year has contributed, on average, £5.9 million of additional retail

sales for the cooking sauces category. Sharwood's is perfectly placed to make the most of this seasonal opportunity and bring innovation to the category.

This year, Sharwood's teamed up with Tesco, Asda, Morrisons and the Co-Op to create exciting in-store activity including product sampling, to help bring Chinese New Year to the forefront of our consumers' minds.

Meanwhile, colleagues enjoyed their own Chinese New Year celebrations with a Sharwood's lunch prepared across many of our sites.



Sharing some Mr. Kipling love

Who needs cupid when you have Mr. Kipling? With our special edition Fondest Fancies back for another Valentine's Day, we've been cheering up Twitter and Facebook users



with a series of Mr. Kipling love-related pictures and videos, encouraging consumers to try our love-ly Fondest Fancies!

The activity didn't stop there. Celebrities working in the world of love, including Take Me Out star and love guru Paddy McGuinness, also received a special Mr. Kipling Valentine's

treat as we encouraged them to get talking about Mr. Kipling on social media.

Seasonal events, such as Valentine's Day, are key opportunities for our brands to increase sales and drive awareness among consumers. In the run up to Christmas this year we sold more cake than at

any other time in the previous two years! Easter is the next big event in the calendar for our cake brands and we've already started to create a buzz around the Mr. Kipling brand with our famous Pink Elephant ad returning to the nation's TV screens this month.

We're backing small businesses

A new innovation website and supplier survey are just two of the ways we're helping small firms

Following media coverage surrounding our 'Invest for Growth' supplier programme, we've been taking time out to explain to politicians and others the facts about our supplier relationships and how we're backing small businesses.

Currently more than 625 of our suppliers are classified as small and medium sized businesses with less than 250 employees, including many with less than 50 staff. This adds up to over half of our total supplier base. Over the last year, we spent more than £80 million with these suppliers helping support local jobs and the local economy up and down the country.

To help check we're building the right relationships with our suppliers, we've been

conducting supplier surveys on an anonymous basis to identify any areas for improvement. Encouragingly, the vast majority (over 81%) of our small and medium sized suppliers surveyed believe we're a customer of choice. But they also believe we can do more to encourage them to share new ideas that can help us grow. In response, we'll be further promoting our new innovation website that we launched last year to make it easy for suppliers to submit their ideas.

Mark Hughes, our Procurement and Operational Services Director says "we are passionate about our supplier relationships and supporting small businesses. It's critical we work together to help the business grow. If we do well, our suppliers will do well."

Worksop's recipe for success

Our colleagues in Worksop have been setting out their key goals for the year by launching their new Recipe for Success programme.

Aligning with our core business values, the

programme will focus on reducing production waste and improving engagement on the site with focus groups and pulse surveys.

Colleagues united behind the programme in a special launch earlier this month.

A visit to remember

Our Lifton site has been uniting with its local community and encouraging children to get excited about the food industry by holding a site visit for over 30 pupils from a local primary school.

During the visit, pupils were challenged to design, cost and market a new product as they learnt about the various stages involved in developing new food products. The children were then tasked with presenting their product ideas to a panel of colleagues

in a Dragons' Den style presentation.

"When we presented to the Dragons we felt quite nervous" said Year 5 pupil, Sefi Oak. "But when we got up there our presentation flowed and we all got a certificate which we are really proud of."



Beavering away to reduce food waste

Continuing our efforts to reduce food waste, our Ashford site recently teamed up with a local scout group to redistribute surplus stock to disadvantaged families.

The group of Beaver scouts packaged over 40 food parcels full of Batchelors products before sending them out to the local community. Colleague Nicola Mallett, who runs the group, says: "It was a great opportunity for the Beaver Scouts to help support the community they live in. They really enjoyed taking part and they've now all been awarded their community badges."



"We asked colleagues to buy a Cancer Research unity band in return for a small donation, and wear it on the day"



Colleagues at our Worksop site united on World Cancer Day

United against cancer

To get our charity partnership with Cancer Research UK off to a flying start, colleagues across our sites united in the fight against cancer on 4 February to support World Cancer Day.

This is a global event that aims to raise awareness of cancer and encourage early detection and treatment. As a

national ambassador of the campaign, Cancer Research helps drive awareness each year through extensive TV and radio advertising and social media interaction.

But their vital research relies on donations, and so to support them, we asked colleagues to buy a Cancer Research unity band in return for a small donation, and

wear it on the day to symbolise our support for their mission to help beat cancer sooner.

With all sites getting involved, and colleagues at PBS even running bingo games, quizzes and cake sales to boost donations, together we raised over £1,000 for Cancer Research: a fantastic start to our two-year partnership.

From St Albans to America



In 2003 Stuart Furber joined the business as an IT graduate trainee. Eleven years later and Stuart is now project managing international growth opportunities in the US. We caught up with Stuart to hear his story and find out how Premier supported his journey across the business.

What did your first job role at Premier involve?

It seems like a long time ago now but I came into the business as an Information Systems graduate trainee. To begin with my main role was to support and develop our HR software systems but I've done a lot of different things since then.

How did you progress within ISC?

Over the years my job developed into a project management role. This involved managing some significant projects in the ISC department, including various SAP implementations, and acting as IT project lead across most of our recent business divestitures.

How did you move across to the international side of the business?

Last year I expressed an interest in moving to the international business unit as I wanted an opportunity to work with new customers and suppliers in a growing area of the business. Although my previous experience had been

with ISC, the company was very supportive of a cross-functional move and helping me make the transition. I received a lot of personal encouragement from both Mark Vickery, Group Director for Information Systems and Change and Peter Ellis, General Manager of the International SBU.

What does your new job involve?

I'm currently managing a couple of projects that will provide a platform for future growth of our cooking sauces category in the US. I'll hopefully be making my first trip to America in the coming months – it's all very exciting! It's great that the company supports cross functional moves.



On the menu... with Gavin Darby

The media is full of stories about the difficulties faced by the big supermarket chains. There's no doubt it's tough going: the big retailers are having to adapt quickly to changing shopping trends which are seeing more people shop more often at discounters, convenience stores and online. This is putting pressure on the whole supply chain.

But where others see challenges, I believe there are real opportunities for our brands. The big supermarkets are by far our biggest and most important customers. Our strategy of focusing on category growth aligns our interests with theirs and many of the things the retailers are doing – such as focusing on the fastest selling lines – we've also been doing. As our biggest customers fight back, all the work to get our business in shape over the last couple of years will put us in a great place to benefit.

Our biggest opportunities will come from working even closer with our customers and bringing new products and ideas to them that will excite consumers. The recent development of exclusive new Loyd Grossman products, developed hand in hand with Tesco, is just one great example of how close relationships drive great results.

Our ability to turn challenges into opportunities will be a critical success factor with our customers. It's also an important theme for the year.

Gavin

Carlton leads from the front

Our Carlton site has been bringing our new people strategy to life by launching a new development programme for frontline leaders aimed at unlocking potential and building a workplace that feeds business and personal growth.

Over the coming months, line leaders will complete a range of modules, aligned with our values, to help them develop important skills such as communication, people management and financial management.

At the launch of the programme Carlton HR

Manager Amanda-Scott Tabron said: "Front line leaders at Carlton are the largest population of supervisors and perform a significantly important role in leading and supporting our operators.

"It's therefore incredibly important to ensure they are given the right tools, from both a skills and behaviour point of view, to be successful in their roles. Their learning and development is just the beginning of a very exciting cultural shift at Carlton based around people development and living the company values and behaviours."



Your What's cooking? recipe

Chicken Thighs in Black Bean Sauce

MEAL TYPE:

Main

Product:

Sharwood's Black Bean Cooking Sauce 425g

Preparation Time:

10 mins

Cooking time:

25 Minutes

Serves:

4

INGREDIENTS:

500g Chicken Thighs (skinned and boned)
3 tbsp Light Soy Sauce
2 tsp Brown Sugar
1 tbsp Vegetable Oil
1 Medium Onion (peeled and roughly chopped)
2 Green Peppers (seeded and diced)
1 x 425g Sharwood's Black Bean Cooking Sauce
200ml water

METHOD:

1. Place the chicken thighs into a bowl and add the soy sauce, oil and sugar. Leave for 30 minutes.
2. Heat a griddle pan. Remove the chicken thighs from the marinade and place on to a griddle pan. Cook for a couple of minutes each side until they are nicely marked. (Alternatively you could use an oven grill or frying pan to give the chicken a little colour). Remove and place on a baking tray.
3. Now place the chicken thighs into a preheated 180C oven for 15-20 minutes until they are cooked through and piping hot. Remove, reserving any cooking juices, and slice up the chicken thighs into strips.
4. Heat a large pan. Add the oil and then cook the onions and peppers until they start to colour. Add the chicken thighs, reserved cooking juices, the sauce and the water (use to wash out the jars).
5. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 10-15 minutes.

WIN!

What year were these brands founded and what, according to Chinese astrology, is their Chinese zodiac sign?

SHARWOOD'S

MR KIPLING

OXO

BISTO

BATCHELORS

LOYD GROSSMAN



To be in for a chance of winning, email your answers to whatscooking@premierfoods.co.uk by Friday 13 March.