

SHOWCASING EXCELLENCE: UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Faced with increasing competition, the launch of an innovative street food concept has meant the University of Manchester is one step ahead when providing a unique offering for their students and staff.



In 2018, the University of Manchester made the decision to turn their main canteen space into an indoor street food market – a risk maybe, but one which resulted in instant success. With over 40,000 students and 11,000 staff studying and working The University of Manchester, there is certainly a lot of tastes to account for.

Being based in a city centre location, the University is faced with ongoing competition. In 2018, they were keenly aware of the imminent arrival of several chain restaurants nearby and needed a new idea to stand out from the crowd. Taking inspiration from the food trends in and around Manchester, and still wanting to support the City's independent businesses, the decision to overhaul their main canteen space was taken.

Prior to the development of the Market, the EATS canteen was operational for ten years in a building centrally located on Oxford Road. However, with several supermarkets and fast food outlets moving in, it was facing direct competition for staff and student's custom. The canteen was becoming a financial challenge.

"Inviting local independent traders to use our space has provided a unique offering for our students and staff; the choice and variety is unparalleled," says Alison Shedlock, Head of Hospitality and Events. "Since starting the Market, we have seen a turnaround of £250,000. The Market only requires the overhead costs of cleaning, heating, electricity and staff to manage the shared eating area. We have welcomed over ten traders to our space who pay rent per week."

The Market is also a great opportunity for the local, independent businesses to access a new client base. One trader indicates that, in any given day, 50% of their customers are new.



The reaction from customers has been overwhelmingly positive; in a recent survey, 100% of respondents were happy with the choice, and most respondents said they ate in the Market at least once or twice a week. 90% of respondents said they thought the Market was innovative.

Sustainability is a key focus for the University and stands as one of their core pillars. This ethos is no different for the Market; all traders use recyclable, biodegradable packaging for takeaway food – or washable crockery for eating in. Bins for waste and recyclables are provided to ensure efficient recycling by customers. 100% of customers said that the Market met their sustainability standards.

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University of Manchester's Street Food Market

All of the University's outlets sit under the Food On Campus brand. Branding has been a key focus over the last 12 months to achieve a consistent message and a unique look and feel across all outlets, with heavier investment in some units which were due a refresh. Alison comments: "we are also continually evolving our range based on sales data, buying smarter and trying to offer something innovative and unique in each of our outlets."

Hand-in-hand with the innovative food trends and ethical consuming, comes the rise of vegetarian and vegan diets. Alison agrees, having witnessed huge changes in the eating habits of her customers over the last decade. "A third of students in one of our halls identified themselves as vegetarian or vegan," she notes. The launch of The Greenhouse, a dedicated vegetarian/vegan outlet, proved to be a success. Each year the University also organises a Sustainable Food Fair to raise awareness of what its suppliers are doing to becoming more socially responsible businesses, and the University are committed to being Single Use Plastic Free by 2020.

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Using suppliers on the TUCO framework means the University can be sure their suppliers share the same sustainable values: "Our long-standing relationship with TUCO has resulted in substantial cost savings, and most of our hospitality purchasing uses the TUCO frameworks. We also place staff learning and development high on the agenda, and regularly utilise the Academy to assist us in getting the most out of our teams."

For Alison and the team, the focus is clear; continue to innovate and take risks – offering their customers unique food and drink to ensure the University is the number one choice around campus.

About TUCO

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It provides a platform where members can **Share and celebrate achievements; **Learn** via a range of courses, professional advice, training and study tours; **Grow** their business through latest market research, trends and analysis; and **Buy** via TUCO's EU compliant catering frameworks and wide range of suppliers – maximising value through the combined £140m+ annual spend of TUCO members.**

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University of Manchester Savings 2017/2018

Cash savings through TUCO frameworks

£235,956.90

Process savings through TUCO frameworks

£12,000

TUCO
The University Caterers Organisation