

TUCO ONLINE & CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

Facing significant challenges with their manual ordering process, the team at Cardiff University needed a new solution to save them time and money. Annabel Hurst and her team would oversee the introduction of TUCO Online; an eProcurement system, resulting in numerous positive outcomes for the team and the institution.



With the Catering and Hospitality department at Cardiff University offering services to 33,500 students and 5,000 staff members spread across the City of Cardiff, as well as high-street cafés and restaurants, it's no wonder the team felt the pressure to deliver a seamless experience to their customers. Unfortunately, the manual ordering process was causing several significant challenges and process inefficiencies, and not helping the team meet their targets.

"We were facing numerous frustrations with our old system – significant time was being spent on processes such as managing queries, updating product catalogues, stocktaking, maintaining allergen information. I was losing a lot of resource to these manual tasks", comments Annabel Hurst, Head of Catering and Foodservice at the University.

Annabel approximates that around 188 hours per week were being spent on manual processing using the old system – not to mention difficulties in ensuring compliance with new laws such as Natasha's Law, the lack of analytics to help make informed decisions for the business, and inaccurate data for their financial accounts. "We knew we needed a change if we were going to deliver improved efficiencies, as well as cost savings".

In April 2022, Cardiff University went live with TUCO Online – a revolutionary web-based eProcurement system that provides a dynamic online purchasing portal to support with recipe costings, goods receipting, invoice reconciliation, stock management, and more.

From go-ahead to go-live the process took exactly one year; but it wasn't without its challenges. "For larger suppliers, many of whom were already using TUCO Online, the onboarding process was smooth. However,



for the small independent businesses, particularly those that don't use systems and are paper-based, additional support was required," Annabel comments. "Luckily, we found that the TUCO Online onboarding team were really supportive in guiding our suppliers through their queries and any problems they were experiencing."

The team were also unable to run the system in a test mode before launch to ensure a smooth transition. They managed to work around this stumbling block by soft-launching for three months prior to the 'go-live' with just two of their sites. The timing of launch was also significant; many departments were adapting to a post-Covid environment and therefore managing multiple large projects at the same time. Annabel notes: "having the support of the TUCO Online team and access to the training provided was especially useful as we launched in such an uncertain time".

"In my previous life, working in independent organisations, there wasn't any of this support [that TUCO provide]. When I look back, I realise how much harder I had to work to negotiate better prices, manage suppliers and organise training. Such easy access to peer support was not at the end of a portal."

- Annabel Hurst,
Head of Catering and Foodservice,
Cardiff University



About TUCO

TUCO is the leading professional membership body for in-house caterers operating in the higher and further education sector.

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.

About TUCO Online

A revolutionary online ordering and kitchen management solution, designed to streamline procurement processes, improve efficiency, reduce costs and deliver significant business enhancements to TUCO members.

If you would like to find out how TUCO can support your in-house catering department or for more information about TUCO Online, email us: info@tuco.ac.uk or visit www.tuco.ac.uk

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The launch was a success and the results of implementation speak for themselves. The introduction of TUCO Online means that the University is projected to make significant savings across credit capture, avoidable waste, time savings and price file control. The team are also seeing immediate improvements in areas such as:

- Legislative risk reduction
- Recipe costings & menu engineering
- Stock control & waste reduction management
- Improved management information
- Direct labour cost savings
- The ability to flex to any University wide system in the future

A key feature of the new system that has been essential to the team has been the ability to create menus which, in turn, produces full nutritional and allergen labelling. Annabel agrees: “the whole

labelling process is seamlessly done. With the information being updated daily by suppliers, all our team are required to do is double check the packets/boxes in the stores.”

“Although it's only been a few months since launch, we can confidently say the introduction of TUCO Online has delivered multiple benefits. Being TUCO members also meant we were able to introduce the system at a heavily subsidised cost,” comments Annabel.

Annabel and her team are no strangers to the benefits of being TUCO members, and Annabel is quick to comment that the support provided is invaluable: “In my previous life, working in independent organisations, there wasn't any of this support. When I look back, I realise how much harder I had to work to negotiate better prices, manage suppliers and organise training. Such easy access to peer support was not at the end of a portal.” The team at the University take advantage of their membership through added-value services such as attending regional meetings and events, reading the TUCO Magazine, using TUCO research for insightful planning and accessing the TUCO Academy for staff training.

Annabel summarises: “implementing TUCO Online has enhanced collegiality, leadership and management and provided financial resilience. We're looking forward to working with the team in the months ahead as we develop the system further.”

Implementing TUCO Online is projected to save Cardiff University **£141,000 in the first year, and continued process efficiency savings thereafter.**

TUCO
The University Caterers Organisation