

# LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY ENHANCING TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE EFFICIENCY THROUGH EPROCUREMENT

When Gagan Kapoor, Director of Residential, Catering and Domestic Service, arrived at Loughborough University although he found a good business, his aim was to further enhance service efficiency. Along the way, Gagan recruited Hayley Hall to a Business Analyst role which harnessed her potential and skillset. Gagan and Hayley, alongside the Executive Chef Dan Brazill, introduced **TUCO Online** – an eProcurement system – which has not only resulted in huge cost savings for the university but has also had a significant impact on the team’s professional development.



***“How can we introduce one product, one technology, one service and use it for multiple channels? TUCO Online was that solution.”***

- Gagan Kapoor,  
Director of Residential,  
Catering and Domestic Service,  
Loughborough University.

**Arriving at the University in 2015, Gagan’s overarching aim was to ensure the right people were in the right role, work to people’s strengths, and ensure their potential is harnessed. That, he notes, would be key in achieving more efficient and effective processes, resulting in not only cost savings for the university as a business, but a better customer experience for the students and staff on campus.**



“It was a good business. But I came in with a fresh pair of eyes and said, ‘can it be better’?”

Authenticity was key; “we focused on a recruitment drive to make sure we have the right chefs to give us those levels of authenticity”, Gagan comments. It was all

part of a plan to deliver the team’s vision: “providing a Range of Exceptional, Inspiring and Sustainable Retail, Residential and Delivered Catering Services”.

Part of the goal was to enhance efficiency. The processes Gagan found within the Catering

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- Hayley Hall,  
Business Analyst,  
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department relied on a lot of manual work, with room for errors which could be costing the business significant amounts of money. With his fresh pair of eyes, Gagan focused on turning these processes automated via an eProcurement system: “How can we introduce one product, one technology, one service and use it for multiple channels? TUCO Online was that solution.”

At the height of Covid, when a pop-up retail store was erected overnight in the University’s dining hall, Gagan worked closely with Hayley Hall who had been a Retail Catering Manager at the University for over 20 years. He quickly came to realise there was a role for Hayley to contribute to the wider department as a

Business Analyst, and oversee the delivery of the eProcurement system. “I didn’t know that I could do it”, Hayley comments, “but he gave me a series of small tasks, I completed them, and that was that!”.

TUCO Online is an eProcurement system that provides a dynamic online purchasing portal delivering improved efficiency, complete visibility, reduced costs and compliance across the entire organisation.

The team worked collaboratively with Procurement and IT colleagues to introduce TUCO Online in 2021, but it wasn’t without its challenges. Not all the suppliers were on the system at the beginning, and they found some initial functionality issues such as

ingredient items hadn’t been uploaded into the system. The team had to fundamentally look at every single process – challenge and review. There was a large-scale training exercise to complete as well. These teething issues were resolved quickly, and soon the benefits of an automated system were clear to see.

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“The biggest benefit is more efficient procurement checks and controls”, Hayley says. “Within a few minutes I can tell you exactly how much we’ve spent with every supplier on every single product from every single outlet. I can use that data to request rebates from suppliers and conduct checks to ensure we’re only paying for exactly what items we want to receive”. The benefits can also be seen in the numbers: “we have managed to identify and claim £80,000 worth of credits that would previously have been missed. I have been able to claim back £195,000 in rebates and marketing funds for the university as well as a documented cost saving of £78,000 which has been made through cost analysis, changing suppliers of products to alternatives, or through supplier negotiations working in partnership with Dan.”

The switch from a manual process to an automated one has saved the team time and

money, but it has also freed up a staff member from the previous team and redeployed them to a role where they can contribute more effectively to the success of the business. Gagan is keen to note: “none of these initiatives are to replace people – our people are irreplaceable. We were able to reassign that person to a high-level activity and utilise their skills for the better of the business rather than a ticking box exercise.”

Gagan is also quick to praise Hayley’s work, not only the cost-savings, but also the development of her professional journey and the pride it brings. And Hayley herself agrees; “this role has brought out a lot of my confidence and has given me individual recognition for the work I’m doing. This year I’ve saved [the university] over £300,000 - it’s made a difference, not only to the university, but to me; it’s put a value on my work.”

And what of the customer experience? TUCO Online

has allowed the team to cut the cost on the certain food items because they have visibility of what they’ve saved and are able to pass that saving onto the customer, from working with the suppliers. When a lot of other institutions and food service operators have had to increase prices over the years, Loughborough was able to freeze price hikes for three years, meaning when it is now time to implement an increase, the feedback has been positive.

Loughborough’s students also benefit from increased choice and authentic food and drink.

Gagan summarises; “Yes, it’s not just a story of numbers or of technology. It’s a story of us trying to get it right for the customers. It’s a story of a sustainable business. But most of all, it’s a story of personal and professional development”.





## Loughborough University's TUCO Online journey in numbers:

- **Savings** of approximately **£350K** on an **£8.3 million spend**, equating to a **4.2% saving**
- Claiming back **£80,000** worth of credit
- Claiming back **£195,000** in rebates
- Cost saving of **£78,000** through cost analysis, changing suppliers of products to alternatives, or through supplier negotiation

## Loughborough University's non-financial benefits of TUCO Online:

- ✓ Monitoring the cost of items purchased across all the companies that are available to us, allowing the team to make very quick decisions on a daily basis when there are items unavailable
- ✓ High-level reporting section to enable full visibility of the yearly spend to assist with budgeting
- ✓ A view of proposed price increases allowing the team to be proactive with price increases before they happen
- ✓ Better supplier account management

## 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 £160m+ 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.**

**Find out how TUCO can support your in-house catering department or for more information about TUCO Online -**

email us: [info@tuco.ac.uk](mailto:info@tuco.ac.uk)  
or visit

[www.tuco.ac.uk](http://www.tuco.ac.uk)

**TUCO**   
The University Caterers Organisation