

## Food Innovation Consultancy Challenge: 'Live' Learning and Professional Development with an Industry Client

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**BAM 2019 Conference**

*Building and Sustaining High Performance Organisations during Uncertain Times:  
Challenges and Opportunities*

**Aston University, Birmingham**

3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Professional Development Workshop (PDW)**

Food Innovation Consultancy Challenge: 'Live' Learning and Professional Development with  
an Industry Client

**Workshop Tutor**

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# Food Innovation Consultancy Challenge: 'Live' Learning and Professional Development with an Industry Client

## Abstract

What makes you stand out in the market for that great graduate job? In the competitive market for graduate jobs, securing a good degree no longer sets you apart from other candidates – this workshop will show academics how to improve student employability through 'real life' learning in collaboration with leading UK industry businesses. The Food Innovation Consultancy Challenge is part of Sheffield Business School's 'live' strategic pillar offering students consultancy opportunities collaborating with key industry partners. The module forms one-third of students final year grading and has a significant impact on their degree classification. It is designed to improve professional skills through applied learning from a topical real life challenge. Through seamless teaching it provides integrated, exponential, problem-based and active learning, and develops team working and individual skills to get students 'career ready'.

Over eighty students worked with Asda Stores plc on a sugar reduction project on Asda Brand biscuits in line with Public Health England targets to help reduce childhood obesity. Students were presented with a brief by the client and using primary and secondary research, along with commercial evaluations provided recommendations for Asda Bourbons, Custard Cream and Milk Chocolate Digestives. The project allowed students to reflect on their career development and future plans, and by using appropriate models and career management theory provide individual input to a group task. The module included a speed dating session with Asda management and culminated with the students presenting their recommendations at Asda House to an academic and Asda panel. The author would like to share the success of the student experience and recommendations to the client with BAM delegates. This academic model is one that satisfies student and industry requirements by providing work experience and self-reflection, action planning and improving student employability. The module was such a success that it appeared in the press in The Grocer and on the BBC. It has become the focus of 'live' module delivery across the whole of the courses within SBS.

## Further Questions

1. The PDW is aspiring to share the benefits of this innovative teaching and learning with fellow academics, and the amazing feedback received from the industry client and the students. This will be communicated through an introductory presentation and short video of the results achieved at Sheffield Business School. Prior to the BAM Conference the module will also be featured on social media including LinkedIn and Twitter.
2. The central message will be communicated ahead of the BAM Conference but in detail at the introductory presentation of the PDW (see point 1).
3. Attendees will be very excited by the results of the module, and in these difficult times recruiting students will take the concept back to their institutions to work with and develop the ideas in line with their own strategies. The attendees will gain new knowledge, and see how this type of learning improves student engagement and commitment and satisfies the needs of potential employers. It will most certainly generate additional discussion about how it can be improved further. The attendees will themselves learn new skills as the session will be very interactive, the key success to this module is identifying something that stands out within each subject area. At SBS we chose sugar reduction as it can contribute significantly to reducing childhood obesity.

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4. The theme will be of great interest to delegates as it is a real life challenge and one that benefits students and industry.

5. Each delegate or contributor will be encouraged to provide their ideas, which will be documented and discussed within the group and further ideas taken away to improve the existing module for next year.

6. The workshop will emphasise professional development as it supported by professional development theory. Ultimately it is about student career reflection and planning and the real challenge gives additional skills and allows the students to learn more about themselves in a competitive environment. Students discuss the module at interviews, and feedback is the potential employers are amazed by its uniqueness.

7. It is expected between fifty and seventy attendees will attend the PDW.

### **Workshop Overview**

To ensure the PDW is delivered within a maximum of 2 hours it will be delivered as follows:

#### **1. Introduction (20 minutes)**

Introductions around the room, to include which institution / courses are in attendance.

Meet the students involved in the module.

The expectations of the attendees from the session will be documented. A powerpoint presentation on the 2018 19 FICC including the challenge and outcomes with the client. This will include a short video of the 6 months module created by Sheffield Hallam University Marketing.

#### **2. Open Forum (10 minutes)**

The attendees to provide initial feedback on the SBS 'live' module, highlighting the strengths and weakness. This feedback will be documented on flip charts.

#### **3. Group Work (45 minutes)**

The attendees will be split into smaller working groups of fives. They will be asked to consider the SBS model and see how a similar model could be applied at their institution, and the courses they teach on.

#### **4. Open Forum (20 minutes)**

Each group will discuss in the room to the entire group the findings from their team members

#### **5. Action Plan (20 minutes)**

Each attendee will be given an action plan template to write down how they will take the model forward within their own institution

#### **6. Close (5 minutes)**

Summarise the session and see if the attendee expectations were achieved.

Thank everyone and encourage them to take the model back to their institution.

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