



Food Innovator

In Denmark, new food trends are popping up like mushrooms. Some consumers want climate-friendly, organic food that is locally produced. Others want to be informed about calorie-content when they eat in restaurants, and they want 'homemade' food – cooked by someone else. These demands are producing a challenging environment for food producers, who often do not focus on developing the most appropriate products. However, change is underway. A new tool, Food Innovator, should help businesses to involve consumers in the development of new products.

We are all users and consumers of food. However, production-based innovation is rarely a response to direct demands from consumers. Without some user input there is a risk that there may not be a market for the products being produced.

User-driven innovation, as opposed to production-based innovation, means that it responds directly to the consumer. The consumer is actively involved in the innovation system, which means that product developers can respond to specific ideas and demands.

An innovation tool for the food industry

Food Innovator is a new tool that focuses on user-driven innovation. The project objective is to develop an innovation tool for the food industry that will allow the consumer to be involved in product development, thereby increasing efficiency and profitability in the industry through the creation of products that the consumer really wants.

The tool will exploit the insights of so-called first movers, i.e. the 3% of the population that recognize emerging trends and anticipate consumer behaviour by one to two years. Such valuable information will allow food producers to be a step ahead in terms of future demand. Food Innovator is the result of a collaboration between the network organization Øresund Food, and the trend-spotting firm Firstmove.

What is Food Innovator and what does it do?

Small- and middle-sized companies rarely have the money or time to embark on innovation projects. But it is often within these types of companies that pa-

lettes of new ideas and creativity can be found. Food Innovator is a tool that companies can use to generate ideas. It aims to appeal to the market through its inclusion of users/consumers.

The tool will give the companies easy access to new ideas within their own firms and from among their customers. But why is innovation necessary? Kirsten Poulsen from Firstmove describes it as:

'a dimension of progress that is necessary for our society to survive, grow and improve. It can make things more efficient; it may be service innovation, a new concept or a new product'.

A collaborative innovation effort

Øresund Food and Firstmove have joined forces with several other partners in developing the many facets of Food Innovator, drawing on the knowledge and know-how of companies with expertise in different fields. Its partners include Kvistgaard Consulting, which specializes in developing dimensions of experiences. Innovator, which is involved in completes development and transformation projects, and Videntes, which operates a network of small innovative companies and thereby has a firm grip on many of the companies for which Food Innovator is aimed at.

Stryhn's, Dragsbæk and Lantmännen are all companies participating in the project and will support the idea that the new tool will be useful for other interested food companies. These three companies are testing it within their own innovation processes.

The Food Innovator tool is being created through a combination of datacollection, analysis and workshops. Involving firstmover consumers and experts in food, innovation, experience, management and other creative areas, as well as a conceptualisation and development process among the partners.. Work on the tool is in progress: Øresund Food and Firstmove aim to have a pilot ready for testing in spring 2010.

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