



CHALLENGES FACING THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET IN THE FRENCH FOOD-PROCESSING INDUSTRY

The food-processing industry is the leading industrial sector in France. In 2010 it recorded a combined turnover of €147 billion. >>

Approximately 400,000 people are currently employed in the sector making it the second highest commerce and industry employer. Over 90% of the 10,000+ food processing companies in France are SMEs. These statistics place France among the top three countries in the world for food-processing, alongside Germany and the United Kingdom.

As in other industries, globalisation has created a more competitive environment for food processing companies. French companies now face new challenges to remain at the forefront of the sector – they must constantly look to adapt to changing consumer demands to remain profitable. Innovation as well as mutualisation have been the most effective

tools in achieving these goals and shaping future success. Encouragingly, the improved image of the food-processing industry and its subsequent appeal to the younger generation is also helping to facilitate growth.

In recent years there have been a number of factors that have impacted employment in the food processing sector: innovation in automated production, the acceleration of working rhythms, increased competition between manufacturers, improvements in health and safety standards and in supply chain processes – this constantly shifting environment increasingly requires professionally qualified personnel who are adaptable to the changing face of the food industry. Vocational training, therefore, has become a major talking point for companies and employees.

While restructuring has impacted employment quantitatively, the changes in production methods utilised across the industry have modified qualitative employment requirements such as training. Thus, the French food-processing industry is confronted with a double challenge:

- To recruit and establish **loyalty** from blue collar workers, who can adapt to continuously evolving manufacturing processes and changing health and safety regulations.
- To **replenish the loss of 'intellectual capital'** by training and developing existing employees to move into senior roles left vacant by those retiring.

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Social media events >>

HOSTED BY NIGEL WRIGHT RECRUITMENT

Following the release of its 'Impact of Social Media on Recruitment' report back in February, Nigel Wright has been promoting the wider debate around social media to consumer sector executives across Europe. >>

Three events, which have focused on social media in marketing and recruitment, have taken place in London, Copenhagen and Oslo over the last six months.

In London, Nigel Wright's Senior Manager Oliver Reed was joined by two highly experienced social media practitioners, who shared their knowledge of the best ways in which to maximise the return from social media marketing.

Maurice Flynn - who has worked with P&G, Unilever, Sky and Audi on digital strategy - presented on the rise and potential of Facebook to the marketer. He encouraged companies not to simply copy and paste website platforms into Facebook, but to embrace the social experiences and activities that websites are intended support. Maurice cited the branding of simple games and the enabling of individuals to relay their experiences, as vital elements in the success online customer engagement.

Nigel Wright was also delighted to introduce Julie Davison, a former Marketing Director at Levi's, lastminute.com and Alliance Boots. Julie has a history of building brands that connect with customers. She sees social media as a key thread running through how organisations build successful brands today and emphasised that it is the company's responsibility to develop fresh content that supports the brand and actively encourages social participation.

Julie shared details of Levi's 'Ones to Watch' social media initiative which helped to create a positive 'buzz' around the Levi's brand among its 'young' target consumer base.

Oliver, who heads up Nigel Wright's UK Consumer Division, also highlighted the importance of effectively utilising social media to manage your personal brand. Professional networking sites such as LinkedIn, although fantastic tools for networking, can work against candidates if they are not used properly.

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The events in London, Copenhagen and Oslo were all well attended and everyone went away with plenty of ideas on how to implement social media into their businesses. As Simon Day noted "I thought the speakers were excellent and there was a great mix of people there too. The benefit was 50% learning and 50% inspiration... I'll see what I can make of it in the coming months!"

It was interesting to note that during the discussion at the end of each event, questions were raised concerning the real 'commercial' value of social media for business. Determining how social media fits into overall brand strategy and also assessing the likely impact it will make will clearly be an ongoing area of debate for many companies in the consumer sector.

Nigel Wright Group is planning further social media events in Paris and Amsterdam later this year. The business also advisers its clients on social media 'best practice' and those interested in arranging a workshop led by a Nigel Wright Consultant should email: info@nigelwright.com



Distribution of employment by region

