

## **Weetabix – Business Unit Manager**

### **About the client**

The Weetabix Food Company is one of the strongest brands in the UK. It has a range of 36 different breakfast cereals and bars which are available in 80 countries. With a strong brand backed by a continuous flow of innovations, Weetabix continues to enjoy a very strong market position.

### **The brief**

Weetabix retained Nigel Wright to find a new Business Unit Manager to join its fast paced lean manufacturing team. The Business Unit Manager would lead and coach multifunctional staff across the Manufacturing Business Unit. They would be responsible for ensuring that production targets were met as well as improving process efficiency, across the site.

Weetabix had recently been through a transformation to modernise its working practises. Its leadership focus is now on 'participative management' where managers are encouraged to actively seek out cooperation from employees in the decision making process. This aligned the Weetabix leadership strategy to its wider 'lean manufacturing' culture and was a key step towards its ambition to achieve World Class Manufacturing (WCM) status. Allowing staff to become full partners in the overall 'management piece' would lead to increased productivity, improved quality and reduced costs.

It was essential, therefore, that this individual came from a lean, FMCG culture. They would be an experienced manufacturing leader in the food processing industry, with a continuous process background. Crucially, they would be adept at driving and maintaining cultural change. Weetabix required candidates with the right style, the right competencies and the right cultural fit for the organisation. This 'chemistry' is unusual in the food manufacturing industry and also increasingly in demand.

### **Our approach**

Because of the difficult nature of this assignment, it was necessary to focus primarily on search, to identify the best and perhaps 'hidden' talent, in the market. Our consultant thoroughly researched the UK food manufacturing sector and mapped all of the major food companies that adhere to the principles of lean manufacturing. To compliment the search, our consultant was also able to take advantage of Nigel Wright's extensive network of senior operations professionals, in the UK manufacturing industry, to refer candidates.

They also spent time meeting the team and other key personnel to make sure they fully understood the needs of the business as well as the culture of participative management.

To ensure full market coverage, Nigel Wright's marketing team also produced a branded advert and a Weetabix micro-website that provided further information about the opportunity as well as the company and its culture.

### **The result**

We shortlisted six strong candidates for this role, all of whom matched the desired criteria. All of the candidates were progressed to the next stage, which included an onsite assessment day at Weetabix. Our consultant also provided a psychometric test package to the client, to form part of the assessment.

The successful candidate was a perfect match for Weetabix. Coming from a blue-chip manufacturing background, this individual was considered to be leadership talent 'on the ascent' in the food and beverage manufacturing industries. The business in which they were

identified is renowned for its 'empowering' participative culture and therefore this candidate could implement WCM processes, based on first hand experience, of working and leading in that environment.

Weetabix were confident that this charismatic, enthusiastic and natural 'people person' was the ideal fit for the role.

#### **Client Testimonial**

*Nigel Wright challenged us to think about what we wanted rather than just simplifying the brief. The consultant stayed close to us and updated us weekly on how the process was going. It was a very organised process. All of the candidates knew what was expected of them and they all received feedback at the end. We would always use the services of Nigel Wright. They know how to find good people that will fit into your business. Nigel Wright has demonstrated that it understands the job market, unlike many, and it has a real talent for getting an ideal match, based on competences and cultural fit.* **Head of UK Manufacturing**