



Witwood Food Products (Latest News)-----Witwoods gets the five-star treatment----Witwoods invests in cleaner labelling----Witwood Food Products is a market leader in the development and supply of innovative food coating concepts breadcrumbs, tempura batter for chilled food and frozen food companies worldwide. -----New witwoods identity reflects focus on innovation-----New Key Account Manager Fits The Bill At Witwoods-----Significant growth and record sales year for coatings specialist-----Doing it for the kids - reduced fat and sodium kids' products-----New Witwood range offers a true taste of India-----

TAILOR MADE INNOVATION AS STANDARD FROM WITWOODS

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With innovation still very much the food industry buzzword; Witwood Food Products is taking its approach to innovation to the next level.

The Banbury-based coatings specialist ran its first interactive customer innovation session more than two years ago. Since then, the process has evolved to encompass wide-ranging activities and a format that is developed on a customer-by-customer basis to meet their individual requirements.



Says Susan Arkley, Witwoods' NPD Controller, "One thing we've learned over the last twenty years is that no two customers are the same. A 'one size fits all' approach to innovation simply wouldn't work.

"Innovation means different things to different people, and so there's no fixed approach for us – everything is tailored to meet customers' specific needs. We are constantly monitoring global products, eating habits and trends for stimuli that we can introduce into our development activities in the UK.

"We've visited production and manufacturing facilities all over the world, we've brought together a range of people from within the supply chain to brainstorm ideas with our customers and with our customers' customers, and to talk about new approaches and product ideas that take into consideration the environments in which the finished products will be prepared and cooked.

According to Susan, close customer relationships and a bespoke approach to product development have been at the heart of Witwoods' approach since the company was founded more than 20 years ago:

“Whilst this has evolved over the years to incorporate more sophisticated techniques and processes, the core principles remain the same,” she says. “We work on the basis that the more knowledge we have about our customers' capabilities – and they about ours – the more successful and productive the long term relationships that ensue.”

“This in itself is not new - it's widely accepted that the more any business knows know about its customers, the better the service it can deliver. For us, it's all about adding value to the innovation process and ensuring customers get the best from NPD activity. By combining our global knowledge with customers' specific market perspectives we are in a much better position to generate creative new market-focused product concepts.”

She believes that this holistic approach is now starting to permeate throughout the industry and other manufacturers are beginning to adopt similar approaches to innovation and NPD:

“The food sector is constantly bringing new challenges; and it's this that makes it such an exciting industry to work in. Those manufacturers who can't continue to excite their customers with new ideas simply get left behind.”



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