







0930	Check in with arrival refreshments		
1000: Seminar Host: Jo Scott			
1010		<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Gráinne Moody Director Food & Drink Division, Invest NI</p> <p>Invest NI is the Regional Economic Development Agency for Northern Ireland. Agri-food and drink processing is Northern Ireland’s largest manufacturing industry. The industry’s success is down to our pure, lush countryside, and farmers who are dedicated to traceability, and processors who are passionate about making great tasting quality products.</p> <p>Invest NI supports businesses to compete successfully and function efficiently. We offer support across a variety of areas. Our support is tailored to specific business needs and includes advice, mentoring and finance.</p> <p>Gráinne is passionate about Northern Ireland’s food and drink sector having spent much of the last 20+ years working directly with food and drink businesses on accelerated growth projects, helping them to scale up their investments, identify new international opportunities, and grow their businesses. She manages a team of 22 people who work directly with businesses in the sector to help them grow, innovate, and take advantage of new market opportunities outside of Northern Ireland. Gráinne has extensive experience in strategy development and implementation, particularly in agri-food, working with industry, stakeholders, and local and national government.</p>	

Session ONE:	Segmenting and targeting consumers		
1020		<p>How do we win with Tesco? - The Power of Insights in unlocking category and brand growth</p> <p>Alex Edge Commercial Insights Lead dunnhumby</p> <p>Helping retailers and brands deliver better experiences through Customer First strategies.</p> <p>dunnhumby empowers brands and retailers to do this through more relevant and engaging experiences. We help our clients build Customer First strategies with cutting edge solutions, and we never stop innovating – ensuring the decisions clients make encourage Customers to return, time after time.</p> <p>Alex leads the commercial insights team at dunnhumby. Helping CPG organisations drive sustainable category and brand growth through Tesco using strategic insights.</p>	
		<p>How snack brands can win the generation game</p> <p>Jonny Forsyth Senior Director of Mintel Food & Drink</p> <p>Mintel is an independent market research agency which is 50 years old and captures global consumer behaviour, product launches and purchase intent.</p> <p>Jonny has worked as an analyst at Mintel since 2007 and advises clients on 'big picture' industry trends that will shape and disrupt the food and drink industry sector over the coming years.</p>	

Lumina Intelligence

The UK foodservice consumer – who are they and what makes them tick?

Andy Crossan
Insight lead, Lumina Intelligence

Lumina Intelligence provides consumer, operator and market intelligence for the food, drink & nutrition sector.

Inspiring the food, drink & nutrition industry with deep, actionable insights powered by the best analytics technology.

Andy is passionate about delivering enthralling, insightful stories that result in positive changes for audiences.

He has over a decade of experience across multiple wide-ranging commercial and category insight roles – both on agency side and recently supplier side too with Hain Celestial (brands such as Hartley's and Sun-pat), where his experience was omnichannel.

Public speaking is a passion of Andy's, making appearances on Channel 4 and BBC Radio 4 in the past as well as appearing at multiple insight conferences and summits.



vypr

From Idea to Aisle with Vypr

Holly Franklin
Mid Market Lead

Vypr is the world's leading Product Intelligence Platform, operating in the consumer insights space to help companies make better decisions and create winning products. Built on behavioural science and agile principles, Vypr delivers fast, actionable intelligence that enables brands to accurately understand consumer behaviour, act decisively with data that tells a clear story, and accelerate product performance. From product names and packaging to services, pricing, and digital experiences, Vypr connects you to thousands of consumers worldwide, with insights delivered in as little as 24 hours.

Trusted by M&S, Hallmark, BrewDog, and Starbucks, Vypr gives decision makers the confidence to refine and optimise outcomes on shelf, in store, and online.

Holly has over 10 years' experience working within market research predominantly supporting FMCG companies to understand consumer behaviour. Holly is passionate about building long term partnerships with clients to help ensure you are getting the most out of Vypr.





Q&A

Chaired by Mark Thomson
Co-founder and Insight Director
TRKR Ltd

TRKR, part of the NIQ Partner network, supports FMCG suppliers across all categories, with a specific focus on Category Management and New Product Development. Clients range from Peperami and McBride, to BrewDog and Albert Bartlett. TRKR also led the Growth Through Insights project for Invest NI in 2024 and 2025.

Mark is co-founder & Insight Director at TRKR, leading Category Management and Bespoke Insight projects for clients. Mark not only supports clients with accessing EPOS and Panel data from NIQ and Kantar, he also then creates compelling retail trade arguments and often presents to retail buyers alongside TRKR clients as their outsourced insight expert.





Mark has helped several brands achieve national listings with Tesco and Sainsbury's in particular, as well as winning private label tenders with M&S.

Prior to TRKR, Mark spent 15 years at Kantar Worldpanel as Business Unit Director where he headed up the Ireland and Scotland business units, responsible for a combined turnover of £6m.



1140

Comfort break

<p>Session TWO:</p>	<p>Positioning your brand</p>		
<p>1200</p>		<p>From Insight to Impact: Positioning for Brand Growth</p> <p>Sharon Noonan Marketing Consultant</p> <p>Marketing consultancy in the food, drink, hospitality and tourism sectors.</p> <p>Limerick-based Sharon Noonan is a marketing consultant who works with food and drink companies and hospitality providers in a mentoring, training, and business development capacity. Originally from Ballymena, Sharon grew up in her family’s greengrocer business — an experience that gave her a lifelong appreciation for the hard work and heart that goes into running a small family enterprise.</p> <p>Today, she channels that passion into helping her clients discover the best ways to communicate with their target markets and tell their stories with impact. Sharon is also the host of <i>Best Possible Taste</i>, Ireland’s longest-running food and drink podcast, which gives producers a platform to share their brand stories and connect with a wider audience.</p> <p>She has also produced two radio documentaries: <i>Devlin’s Yellowman – A Taste of Childhood</i> and <i>What a BLAST – Celebrating 10 Years of Blas na hÉireann, the Irish Food Awards</i>.</p>	
		<p>Connecting and engaging with shoppers and retailer buyers</p> <p>Jeremy Garlick Partner Insight Traction</p> <p>Insight Traction are an FMCG strategy consultancy. Their clients are in FMCG and Retail, varying from large multinationals (Essity, Mondelez) to many smaller UK based companies. They work on insight driven growth stories (category strategy, channel strategy), shopper effectiveness and “getting heard in retailers”. Their Knowledge Bank gives subscribers access to images and content that help them win with shoppers. They write a fortnightly Blog and a monthly column in the Grocer.</p> <p>Jeremy Garlick was Head of Insight at Sainsbury’s, Waitrose and Premier Foods, and Consumer Insight Manager at PepsiCo.</p>	



How to use pricing to ensure success in international markets

Andy O'Brien
Director
Epic conjoint

EPIC Conjoint are the leading provider of conjoint solutions for pricing, PPA and marketing testing. Working with the likes of Diageo, Heineken, Kelloggs, Pepsico, Kraft Heinz and Danone, EPIC has democratised the use of conjoints for businesses of all sizes.

Starting in management consulting in London, Andy worked with Kantar, Unilever, innocent and food start-up Little Dish in sales, marketing and category roles. Andy then went on to manage sourcing & retail development for the parent group of Red Letter Days before leading the FMCG practice at EPIC Conjoint. Andy has spoken at conferences in the US, Europe and Far East on pricing and conjoint analysis.



The Lidl Shopper and the AI shopper Journey



Avril O'Hehir
Chief Financial Officer | Board Director
Lidl Northern Ireland & Lidl Ireland
Grocery retailer

With over two decades of leadership in the FMCG retail sector across Ireland and international markets, Avril O'Hehir is a seasoned CFO known for driving strategic transformation, operational excellence, and sustainable growth. Since 2018, she has served as Chief Financial Officer and Board Director of Lidl Ireland GmbH and Lidl Northern Ireland Ltd., overseeing Finance, IT, Legal & Compliance, Corporate Development, Internal Audit, and Customer Care.

Avril brings a proven track record in leading complex change initiatives, including business reorganisations, acquisitions, and digital innovation. Prior to her current role, she was CFO of Lidl Romania, where she launched the Schwarz Group's first IT shared services centre—an initiative that set a new benchmark for operational efficiency across the group.

Her career spans senior leadership roles in Finance, IT, HR, and Corporate Development, reflecting a breadth of cross-functional expertise. Avril holds a first-class MBA from Warwick Business School, UK and a BA in International Business from Technological University, Ireland.



		<p>Q&A</p> <p>Chaired by Mark Thomson Co-founder and Insight Director TRKR Ltd</p>	
1320	Networking Lunch Break		
Session THREE:	Invest NI's Food & Drink Consumer Insights Service Company success and perspectives		
1420	Discussion Panel Hosted by Jo Scott with guests:		
		<p>Jerome Lunney Founder Poco Picante</p> <p>Poco Picante is a Latin-inspired food brand based in Co. Fermanagh established in 2024, that manufactures a range of 100% natural fire-roasted salsa sauces. Our products have a core focus on using fresh ingredients, no added sugar and bringing a more authentic offering than what's currently available on the market. The business was inspired by travels through Latin America and born out of a desire to bring genuinely innovative, plant-focused foods into our diets.</p> <p>I have a strong background in the Food industry, initially studying a degree in Food Science at QUB, before gaining broad experience working with retailers and manufacturers in the UK & Australia, across functions in technical, supply chain and NPD. More recently I have been working on Poco Picante, a startup brand aiming to satisfy consumer demand for healthier global flavours.</p>	



Alison Seaney
Director
Big Pot Co

Producer of handmade soups, stews and meals. All our products are hand crafted in small batches to ensure quality and taste. Our ethos is Real, Simple, Goodness!

Alison's passion & curiosity for food started at a young age on the family farm.

Alison is an accomplished R&D and food industry professional with a strong background in product, process and technical development. A graduate of Loughry College and Queen's University Belfast in Food Technology, she began her career on the Kerry Group graduate programme and later earned a Diploma in Management from the Irish Management Institute. After gaining senior level experience leading innovation across pork and convenience categories, Alison took voluntary redundancy to launch Big Pot Co - A result of a lifelong passion for real, honest food-rooted in tradition, backed by expertise, serving real food, the way it used to be. She went on to complete a Masters in Agri-Food Business Development at the University of Ulster and Babson College. Today Big Pot Co is the market leader in fresh soup in Northern Ireland, with a growing footprint across Ireland and the UK. Alison is passionate about consumer insight, product innovation and business growth.

Outside of work, she enjoys golf, skiing, travel & dining out with friends and family.



Jonathan McWhinney
Commercial Director
Thompson's Teas

Northern Ireland's best-selling tea and one of the fastest growing across UK & Ireland. A 4th Generation Family business, blending only finest teas from Africa and India for over 120 years

Commercial Director for Thompson's Tea – Jonathan is responsible for the Commercial strategy which includes UK & Ireland sales and more increasingly exports across the world. Having worked for the business for over three years, he previously worked in Tesco for 12 years, both in the retail side and then commercially as a Category Buying Manager for Northern Ireland Packaged Food and Scotland Fresh Food.





Laura Murphy
CEO
Oatco Superfuel

Oatco Superfuel is a Northern Ireland based health food brand on a mission to fuel busy lives with natural energy that lasts. Oatco has quickly grown into one of the fastest rising challenger brands in the category, currently supplying over 500 stockists across the island of Ireland and delivering more than 500,000 oat products annually. The range includes Super Bites (energy balls) and high protein overnight oat pouches, designed to make healthy eating simple, enjoyable, and accessible supporting gut health, heart health and delivering natural energy on the go.

Laura Murphy is an award-winning entrepreneur and founder of Oatco Superfuel. Starting her first business during the pandemic, she has since built Oatco Superfuel into one of Northern Ireland's fastest growing food brands and launching into major retailers like Tesco, Dunnes Stores, Spar and Musgrave. Laura has scaled her brand to over 500 stockists and a growing online community. With a focus on convenience, health, and taste, Laura is passionate about creating products that fuel busy lifestyles and showcasing the potential of Northern Ireland's food industry.



Global Food & Drink Trends

1500



Trend based Opportunities in Food & Drink – Global Trend Inspiration

Charles Banks
Co-Founder & Director
thefoodpeople

thefoodpeople, established for over 19 years, are a global trends business, specialising in future foresight in the food and beverage sector. A united group of trend spotters and innovators, we're a team of psychologists, chefs, marketers, product developers, academics, flavourists, historians and anthropologists. But more than that TFP are 'champions of change' that bring their inherent experience, as well as an obsession for food and drink, natural curiosity, intuition and tenacity. This is underpinned by our vision 'to shift the future of food and drink'. What drives us is our desire to shape a better future across society by harnessing the power of trends.



