

SHOWCASING EXCELLENCE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

The University of Edinburgh is proving you can bring consistency to in-house catering without compromising on the quality and creativity of the food and the setting it's served in



Venture into the Roslin Institute Building at the University of Edinburgh and you'll find a café called Dolly's. It takes its name from Dolly the sheep, the world's first-ever cloned mammal who was created to international acclaim back in 1996 by researchers at the Institute.

As far as creating an identity goes it's the perfect choice – a name intrinsically linked to a scientific breakthrough achieved just a stone's throw away.

Unfortunately, that's not always the case. And that becomes a problem when you have a multitude of names combined with a myriad of different designs across 17 outlets.

When you're a multi award-winning university catering function – the biggest in Scotland – serving great food, you want everyone to know who's running the show.

Ian Macaulay, assistant director (catering), explains: 'Over the past 10 years outlets had developed and were named largely by the

local schools and departments they served. While this is good in terms of having a clear association for those in the building, it did lead to a lot of different fonts, styles of signs used and logos.

'We did not want a generic brand across all the outlets as we wanted them to retain this association. But at the same time we wanted a route which would tie all of them together – perhaps with the name still visible but not the first thing you see.'

That's why 18 months ago Ian and his team set about coming up with a solution that was flexible enough to allow for individual identity while bringing consistency across the university's outlets.

The rebranding exercise included focus groups and research.

'What was apparent was a lack of clarity or understanding that the university in-house team actually ran these catering facilities and also many of the environments

have different feels,' says Ian. 'Some are very busy, whereas others have more seating and feel a place you can dwell in more.'

It was decided that every outlet should adopt one of 4 Rs to reflect its 'personality' – Revive, Relax, Refresh and Refuel – along with a colour scheme drawn from a choice of four Pantones.

In addition, each now displays the university crest to make it clear the operation is in house. It also appears on packaging. It reflects a firm belief that there's no need to spend time and money attempting to mimic the high street by creating a new brand when you already have one.

'The brand is the university,' says Ian. 'The University of Edinburgh is the strongest brand we have. When we introduced reusable "keep cups" and put the university crest on them they sold like wildfire and cut out disposable waste. For students and staff it's about belonging to an institution.'

KEEPING UP WITH TRENDS

However powerful your branding, ultimately it's the quality of the food and drink on offer that affects the bottom line. The university continually challenges itself to not only raise standards but also ensure menus are regularly reviewed and matched to different contexts.

Take one of its latest outlets as an example. Brücks café is on the King's Buildings site where science and engineering is based. It's in a residential area out of the city centre where staff and students have few options for places to eat.

A rationalised menu was introduced offering three street food options that are changed on a weekly basis.

TUCO has done a lot of work on food trends for 18-25 year olds,' says Ian. 'Powerful information provided by TUCO's Food Trends Report has been used to influence how we develop the offer at Brücks.'

Since it opened in a new refurbished building, Brücks has been a big hit with customers. Whereas the previous incarnation with its 'old panini Costa type model' had an average spend of £2.90 that has now risen to £3.50 and overall income has risen by 56%.

BRÜCKS STREET KITCHEN

'It's showing we are developing our offer to meet the needs of this target market,' says Ian. 'Other colleges such as arts, humanities and social sciences are located in the city centre, so surrounded by competition; and of note is the lack of chains, it's independent outlets. Students appear more attracted by the independent/artisan approach to catering



ANNUAL SPEND THROUGH TUCO FRAMEWORKS

Total expenditure

£2,314,951

Cash savings

£210,048

Process savings

£18,000

TUCO annual subscription

£100

Total net savings

£227,948

instead of global brands, so we try to complement what's on the high street.'

The University of Edinburgh's catering operation is an active member of TUCO. Aside from achieving substantial savings via its frameworks - almost £228,000 last year - many staff take part in study tours, events and the annual TUCO Competition. Indeed, last time out the team scooped five prizes, including best speciality coffee in the Barista Skills Challenge.

'It's great because there's our own training and then we have these opportunities for baristas to go to competitions. The competitions further reinforce our training.'

Ian and his colleagues have been on a

number of TUCO study tours and he will be heading off to northern India later this year. They provide another way to inform and inspire staff to create interesting new dishes, he says, particularly important when 42% of your students are from overseas.

'The tours are critical in helping to further develop our chefs' knowledge and skills. It's also really interesting when you sit down with other heads of catering - a lot of the issues, frustrations and challenges are so generic,' says Ian. 'We have the same funding structure and students - people are dealing with the same issues. The benefit is talking them out; it's about learning from each other as much as the learning in the study tours themselves.'



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

37,500 students

9,000 staff

250 catering staff

£12m catering turnover

17 cafés/restaurants, 4 hotels and catered halls for 2,000 students (becoming Scotland's largest hotel in the summer)

10 years of being a Food for the Brain award winner





ABOUT TUCO

TUCO is the leading professional membership body for in-house caterers operating in the higher and further education sector and is used by universities and colleges throughout the UK. It provides a platform where members can Share and celebrate achievements; Learn via a range of courses, professional advice, training and study tours; Grow their business through latest market research, trends and analysis; and Buy via TUCO's EU compliant catering frameworks and wide range of suppliers – maximising value through the combined £150m annual spend of TUCO members.

TUCO
The University Caterers Organisation

**Find out more
about TUCO**

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