

THE NEW FOOD & DRINK PROFESSIONAL:

Industry Growth by Focusing on People

Future Challenges

Recommendations for Future Actions

Future Challenges

- 1. The right skills and career planning: a tool for innovation in the European Food and Drink Industry*
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The right skills and career planning: a tool for innovation in the European Food and Drink Industry

- Improving skills in F&D sector employees may be a part of the formula for breaking the decline in innovation and the decreased global importance of the European food industry
- Soft skills
 - are critical for knowledge diffusion and likely related to successful entre and intrapreneurship
- The professional development of Food Industry personnel
 - Beneficial for the professionals – who reported difficulties in finding favourable jobs - but also for the industry - who may operate more efficiently in a **flexible labour market**
- Also, we should incentive Mobility – geographical and across employment area
 - Contributes to innovation: new ideas, new places
 - Improves the job market: more flexible for employers and employees
 - Develops soft skills

The right skills and career planning: a tool for innovation in the European Food and Drink Industry

- **Tools for continual professional development must be**
 - **constantly updated**, aiming at responding to the needs of an ever evolving industry
 - Allowing not only a regular **update of skills by the professionals, but also the planning of their careers**
 - Giving information on career paths and forecasts on job market needs at an EU level
- **Other pros for such tools**
 - In times of unemployment in Europe, especially among youth, it is crucial that young graduates (and also the not so young!) **are supported in their career planning**
 - Recognition of training (skills) across Europe **will be facilitated**
 - **Potentially** increasing the mobility of qualified personnel Europe and hence be a key to future sourcing of labour
 - Moreover, such tool should envisage clear guidelines and incentives for promoting cross sector career pathways

The European Food and Drink Industry Professional: building an identity

- The weak social recognition of the role of a “Food Industry Professional” is a threat to the industry that faces problems in attracting a highly qualified workforce.
 - One good example is the non-existence of food related job titles for professionals by the International Standard Classification of Occupations.
- Increasing the social recognition of food professionals will also improve public opinion of the food industry and of the food products. In the long run, this will be achieved by a **continuous promotion of food science and technology as a core activity for societal development**.
 - This must be done in close partnership with current professionals, educational organizations, industry and policy makers.
- Actions like the **adoption and dissemination of a food professional code of conduct** or the **recognition of job titles for food industry professionals** by the International Organizations will be key parts for building a professional identity.
 - Moreover, such actions will contribute to a more efficient labour market, thus improving the attractiveness of the profession.

Society's view of the Food Industry

- In a more and more health conscious society, the Food Industry is often vilified by the public as businessmen caring about profit and putting the well-being of consumers a distant second
- **It is urgent to communicate to the public the essential role of the food industry and its professionals in their daily life**
 - in times of seriously rising unemployment in the EU, is able to maintain jobs
 - The current world demographics - 7000 million people , 50% living in urban areas - are only possible because of the food industry, which provides safe and nutritious foods to urban populations all year long
- This general and wide communication to the public is also **key for attracting more students to a career in the food industry and related sectors**
- Two main messages are evident:
 - i) the **food security and nutritional issues** we are facing can only be tackled **using real science and technology** in food, and
 - ii) the food industry is a **job creator and an industry for the future**
- The professionals are the natural ambassadors for the cause and should be involved in this task.

The role of Education and Training Institutions

- TRACK_FAST identified those skills that F&D employers mostly want: Soft skills were the number one “desired” skills
- There is a need for **integrated policies that span educational life**, from basic to higher education and beyond, in which development of soft skills in professionals (not only in food) is the focus. This means that, at the EU level, there is need to carry the **necessary groundwork for such policy change**
- The rich and diversified educational background of food science and technology professionals is an important strength. However, it is important to assure these professionals have the right (soft and food-specific) skills for the job
- The training of professionals with different educational backgrounds in the **skills needed by the industry is an opportunity for higher education and training institutions**. Also, a **continuous effort** for identifying such needs is critical

Recommendations for Future Actions

A continuous and cooperative effort in

- training food sector professionals
- improving the image of the food industry
- contributing to an efficient labour market.

Such efforts **should build on the many on-going projects in the field of food sector development, minimizing costs and maximizing results:**

Several organizations already excel in these activities. But a better coordination is needed

Recommendations for Future Actions

Such coordination should focus on ***building a long lasting forum for professionals, academia and industry***, aiming to:

- Establish a permanent academia-industry dialogue on the skills needed at each moment, and the forecasting of future needs
- Act as a resource centre for careers within the food industry
- Promote the societal role of the food industry and the professionals
- Liaise with policy makers and relevant national and international organizations
- Lobbying for the recognition of food professional occupations at an international level
- Assuring that the professional development needs of food industry professionals are considered in policy making

Time for your voice!

Round Table Discussion

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- **Benjamin Vallin**
 - Directorate General Enterprise and Industry, Food and healthcare industries, Biotechnology - High level forum for a better functioning food supply chain
- **Claire Bosch**
 - Secretary General of Fevia Vlaanderen (Belgium Food Industry Federation) and member of the TRACK_FAST consortium
- **Jochen Hamatschek**
 - President of the German Food German Association of Food Professionals
- **Julian Drausinger**
 - Chairman of the Communication Training & Technology Transfer Working Group, European Technology Platform Food4Life and Food Research Manager at LVA, Austrian Competence Centre of Food Safety
- **Pedro Queiroz**
 - Director General of FIPA (Portuguese Food Industry Federation) and member of the TRACK_FAST consortium
- **Sukky Jassi**
 - Head of Research and Policy at Improve Ltd., currently working with the Agro-food industry Social Dialogue Committee.