

Sue Evans



Sue Evans is Group Systems Manager at Hain Daniels. She has been with the company since graduating in 1997 when she joined the New Covent Garden Soup Company as a Quality Assurance (QA) Technician.

What does your current job involve? What are your responsibilities and how many people report to you?

My role involves keeping abreast of technical systems available in the market place, setting the systems strategic plan and ensuring it fits within the business digital roadmap. Once a system is procured I am responsible for the system implementation, maintenance and development.

The aim is for all systems is to have consistent use and application, and expertise and knowledge providing sustainability. The systems facilitate compliance and provide us with due diligence, control, clear processes, information at our fingertips, visibility, the ability to run reports and monitor KPIs and risk so we can take action to make improvements.

In addition to systems I provide support, knowledge and experience to the sites as required, and manage the strategy for supplier integrity, the business Crisis Manual and Technical Policies. I also represent the business within the CFA technical groups.

Thinking back to school days, did you know what you wanted to become?

I always wanted to pursue the sciences either in the field of working with animals or food.

What were/are your main interests, e.g. science in general, food, technology, microbiology, nutrition, something else?

A GCSE in food industries gave me a good broad experience of all the roles on offer and potential specialisms to follow. The course included factory visits and projects such as setting up a food business, market research and sales. This further sparked my interest in the subject and its career potential.

What qualifications do you have? GCSEs? A Levels? Degree(s)/other?

After my 'A' levels in Home Economics and Biology I took a BA in Consumer Studies (at Liverpool John Moores) which included a strong element of food topics including Food Science and New Product Development. Since joining Hain Daniels I have taken many courses in HACCP, food hygiene, auditing, legislation and managerial skills.

In rough outline, what was your job pathway – companies and job titles, plus anything of particular note, e.g. level of responsibility, exposure to any particular developments/issues?

I joined Hain Daniels straight from university as a QA Technician with

responsibilities including conducting audits and the testing and release of product.

Since then I have held various technical roles both on site and within the group ranging from managing specifications and artwork, supplier approval, research and development and as a Technical Manager. Changes in the business owners and the procurement of new businesses has always provided new challenges and opportunities with changing job roles and new colleagues and products, as well as new processes to learn.

What were your aspirations when starting your career and what are they now?

I feel my aspirations, for a varied and interesting career, are being fulfilled in my current role. There is still a lot to do to keep me interested and challenged on a day to day basis and with a changing business and industry it continues to provide new career and learning opportunities.

What single piece of advice would you offer someone curious about working in the sector?

The sector has so many job role opportunities, spend time researching and if possible get experience to establish which area you are most interested in.

Research job entry opportunities depending on the role you are interested in; whether it is at entry level with opportunities to train and progress within the business, as an apprentice, on a graduate scheme or after further education.

Once in a business there are always opportunities to move departments, roles and to progress.

What would you say to encourage them further? What is the best bit?

The food industry offers variety, challenges, career development opportunities, travel and the opportunity to work with a wide range of people internally and externally with suppliers, customers and scientific bodies. It is a fast-paced and constantly changing sector with legislation, innovation and technology to keep abreast of.

It develops and requires a whole host of personal skills including; team work, internal and external communication, leadership, problem solving, planning, project management and negotiation.

It proves pride in the products you produce and the achievement of the completion of a project, audit or resolving a problem.

Sue now uses her experience as a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) Ambassador - inspiring young people in schools and colleges to think about science and food. She enjoys explaining the science behind food and how products reach the shelves. Sue has taken lessons with primary and secondary children where they enjoyed learning about the senses, product development and where food comes from. She plans to do more in the future.