

## Kate Savio



**Kate Savio is Product Development Controller at Greencore. Greencore supplies a wide range of chilled, frozen and ambient foods to major retail and food service customers in the UK.**

### *What are your responsibilities and how many people report to you?*

I manage a brilliant team of two chefs, a New Product Development (NPD) Manager, two Product Developers, one Technologist and a Kitchen Assistant.

We manage the concept development of Italian ready meals, soups and sauces for Asda. We also develop for specific projects eg: Meatless Farms and Weight Watchers. I manage the launch of these products across four Greencore sites – Wisbech, Bristol, Consett and Kiveton.

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

I don't think I really had an idea. I really enjoyed Home Economics (Food Tech) so wanted a career in food but didn't realise the opportunities. My school had links with Northern Foods (now part of 2SFG) and from that I learnt I didn't just have to be a chef to succeed in a food-based career.

This is why I am really passionate about educating young people – we need more talent entering our industry.

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

My main interests were/are recipe development and food technology. I also now enjoy managing a team and mentoring.

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

I have nine GCSEs, BTEC Home Economics (York College of Art and Technology) and HND Food Science (Manchester Metropolitan University).

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

As part of my degree I undertook a 12-month placement in the lab at a dairy. I then moved into a junior development role at a bakery. I also undertook a secondment in operations with this business. This was important for me to understand the production element of a food manufacturer.

Over the years I have worked for many of the large manufacturers; Geest (now Bakkavor), 2SFG, Sara Lee, Karro and Greencore. I have worked for Greencore for the past four years but in total I have worked for them for 12 years of my career. Development is where my heart is but I have experience in Operations, Process Development, Technical, Quality and Commercial.

I believe that undertaking different roles is important so that you have a real understanding of manufacturing, this is invaluable when developing great innovation.

Typical progression within the Development department is Technologist to Developer to NPD manager to Controller, then on to Head of Food. I have followed this path within different businesses and product areas.

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

I have always been very ambitious and am proud of how I progressed and the products that I have developed over the years. As I get older my aspirations have changed and I get lots of satisfaction seeing new talent progressing. I hope I have inspired members of my teams to stretch themselves and enjoy their chosen careers.

### *What single piece of advice would you offer someone curious about working in the Sector?*

Buckle up and enjoy the ride. The food industry is fast moving and challenging, but nothing beats seeing a product you have developed on the shelf of a supermarket. Don't be scared to move roles within a business to gain lots of different experience. Keep up to date with latest trends. Instagram is a great platform to see new trends/chefs/retailers' launches.

### *What would you say to encourage them further? i.e. what are the best bits?*

In my opinion Development is the best department to work in the food industry. If you are passionate about food this is the area for you. No two days are the same and the opportunities to have a long, interesting career are available.