

Focus: **Local and regional**

Supplier Engagement helps Waitrose market local and regional

Waitrose believes in championing British produce, treading lightly on the environment, supporting responsible sourcing and treating people fairly. Building long-term relationships with farmers and suppliers helps Waitrose customers get the best possible food and drink to help them to live more healthily - this is The Waitrose Way.

Regional suppliers must offer quality ingredients which should be simple, recognisable and where possible, sourced from the local region. Visual appeal is important, as is offering a point of difference with innovative products.

Background

To help regional produce stand out to customers in-store and reinforce the care and attention that goes into producing these unique products, Waitrose decided to highlight these products on the shelf with a ticket that gives more details about the product.

“It was so easy creating our point of sale statement. I didn’t even have to provide in-store samples to increase sales by 400%.”

Theresa Waterworth, Pipers Honey

A seemingly simple task, the Waitrose team began by contacting regional suppliers on a one-to-one basis, asking them to submit a short piece of marketing text that could be used on the shelf edge display. However, it soon became clear that the process was going to be a time-consuming one. With limited resource to dedicate to the project - Waitrose were not making the progress they had hoped for.



Solution

S4RB took away the pain by removing the one-to-one, manual element. They did so by implementing a lightweight workflow management tool onto the existing Waitrose Engage instance of S4RB's Affinity™ Engage software. The system managed the whole process and was designed to be very intuitive and light touch for both the suppliers and Waitrose team.

It was key to get suppliers excited about the opportunity presented to them. The first step was to present suppliers with a short video, filmed by S4RB in-store, featuring Waitrose Regional Buyer, Tracey Marshall explaining the process and setting expectations for the deliverables.

In just a few clicks, suppliers select the product's region, enter their short product description and send it to the Waitrose buyer to review. Just as simple on the buyer side, comments are easily sent back to the supplier and approved text is sent on to the ticketing team with just one click.



“The new approach has far surpassed the previous procedure, with products displaying the latest tickets reportedly performing 25% better than those without.”

Tracey Marshall, Waitrose.

Impact

The initial trial of the automated approach far surpassed the previous effort with a 500% increase on the number that Waitrose had manually collected over six months. Marketing text was collected for 250 grocery products via 175 suppliers in just eight weeks.

All of these tickets are now live in-store and over the course of one month, products with the new tickets performed 25% better than those without.

An added benefit to the uplift in sales is that local and regional suppliers are now more engaged with Waitrose.

Engaged suppliers are more committed to the Waitrose brand, prioritising their requests, focussing on quality and acting as brand ambassadors with pride in their partnership.

Key facts

- ➔ 175 suppliers
- ➔ 250 grocery products
- ➔ 25% increase vs non-ticketed products
- ➔ 500% increase on previous efforts