



CASE STUDY TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT FOOD ENGINEERING



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WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

I'm an Engineering Projects Manager for Burton's Biscuit Company's Llantarnam manufacturing site in South Wales. Here we make iconic and well-known treats including Wagon Wheels and Jammie Dodgers, which are loved all over the world. Specifically, I am responsible for delivering the site capital projects while include efficiency projects and equipment required for new product development at the site. Burtons have been focusing on automation projects over the last year, which includes the installation of new robotic case packing machines to our packaging lines, and installing automated process monitoring systems to monitor biscuit quality and line performance.

WHAT TYPE OF ENGINEERING DO YOU GET INVOLVED IN?

I manage site engineering projects, which requires designing, installing and commissioning new equipment and also making modifications to existing production lines at the site. The types of engineering I get involved in are really varied as the role requires a broad knowledge in many different aspects of engineering, ranging from mechanical engineering to electrical and control engineering. As a project manager, I also get to manage other engineers in my department, and work with contractors too.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE?

Working with food means we have to be very careful about hygiene, safety and food quality, to ensure that we're making perfect biscuits, every time. To ensure this, we've just installed a new control room at our Llantarnam site, using

technology that's only been used in automotive and pharmaceutical manufacturing so far. The great thing about working with food is that the challenges mean that you get to work with ground-breaking technology like this.

WHAT DEGREE DID YOU TAKE AND WOULD IT HAVE BEEN BENEFICIAL TO YOU TO GET EXPOSURE TO THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY AS PART OF YOUR DEGREE?

I completed a BSC (Hons) degree in electrical and electronic engineering which did not have any food industry specific elements. It would have been really useful to gain an understanding of the requirements of the food and drink industry, instead of having to rely on my previous experience and learning from others on the job.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR WORK?

I enjoy the variety within the role and the workplace, as each project tends to be unique and challenging in its own way, and there are different skills required for each of the different phases within projects. Working in a food manufacturing environment is very rewarding, especially when something has been delivered successfully.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I get inspiration from turning ideas into reality. This can sometimes be very challenging especially when there are no obvious solutions present, but pushing on, finding the answer and then making the ideas happen can be very

rewarding. At Burton's there has been significant investment in automation and robotics, and being involved in installing new technology and finding solutions to long-standing issues is also very motivating.

HOW HAS YOUR ENGINEERING DEGREE HELPED MOVE YOU TOWARDS YOUR CAREER ASPIRATIONS?

Studying engineering has allowed me to become an expert in a British manufacturing success story – the food industry – and do a varied, challenging and rewarding job every day. Beyond engineering, my degree really helped me develop my time management skills, which is crucial in such a fast-paced environment.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE FOOD MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY AND BURTON'S BISCUIT COMPANY?

I wanted to work in food manufacturing because it offers such broad opportunities. In particular, the technology being implemented was really different to other engineering technologies, and this has given me the opportunity to gain and understand the different aspects of both food manufacturing and food engineering systems and equipment.

Burton's Biscuit Company has invested significantly in new technology and automation recently: £4.65m at the Llantarnam site alone. Technology is something that's always interested me, so I'm really happy to be involved.

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