

# Designing in Sustainability with Sainsbury's: a demonstration project

## A new generation of sustainable products by design

80% of the environmental impacts of today's products and services are determined at the early stages of product development and design<sup>1</sup>. We worked with Sainsbury's own-brand product development team – and selected suppliers - to develop a process and supporting toolkit to systematically embed sustainability into their product development process. This means that:

- Sustainability is considered from the outset of new product development
- Sustainability becomes considered in all new products developed – using our replicable toolkit to become part of 'normal' product development
- In time, sustainability can become an innovation platform that drives ideas, innovations and new product development

## Sainsbury's

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*I believe the secret to delivering sustainable new product development is to make sustainability not something new, separate or additional but part of every day working. To do this we have embedded the new tools into the current process and ways of working, with some exciting results so far*

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**Susi Richards, Head of Product Development, Sainsbury's**

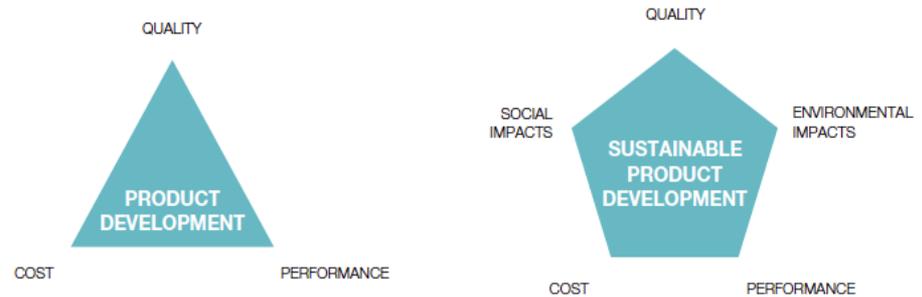
<sup>1</sup>Mark Sharfman, *The Academy of Management Review* Vol. 20, No. 4 (Oct., 1995)

## Integrating Sustainability into Product Development

New and improved products are created and launched in Sainsbury's using the SMART Product Development Process. During this early stage process a product developer can, often unknowingly, design-in or –out the main sustainability impacts of that product. At a corporate-level, Sainsbury's has ambitious 20x20 sustainability goals, many of which are directly linked to and delivered through product development, so it is crucial to connect these two worlds. To tackle this, our Designing In Sustainability process:

- Engaged Sainsbury's own-brand product developers to raise awareness and train the team on sustainable product development.
- Identified and supported three pilot projects with suppliers and category product developers applying a process to embed sustainability into product development.
- Catalysed a series of ideas and innovations to improve the sustainability of these pilot products - which suppliers are investigating further.
- Developed, tested and validated a replicable toolkit for product developers – featuring a 'hotspot' Profiler, sustainability benchmarking and for developing a category vision and roadmap.

Finally we embedded this toolkit into Sainsbury's SMART product development process so that it can be scaled up in the next wave of product development projects.



Normal vs. sustainable product development: our model

## McBride: case study

The pilot product with McBride looked at household cleaning trigger sprays. The Sustainability Hotspot Profiler Tool highlighted a number of 'hotspots' for the product, including:

- **WATER:** these products typically contains low concentrations of product content, meaning 90-99% of water is often shipped around. Large quantities of water can also be used when cleaning out cloths during product use.
- **WASTE:** products often contain a non-recyclable trigger head, which can adversely affect plastic bottle recycling.
- **MATERIALS:** cleaners frequently use palm oil and other ingredients with high environmental footprints or potential toxicity issues.

		Waste	Carbon/ Energy	Water	Materials	Social Resp.
Life cycle stages	Ingredients					
	Processing					
	Packaging					
	Distribution					
	Consumer					

The sustainability 'hotspots' of McBrides trigger sprays

Inspired by the pilot, McBride created a long-term vision and roadmap for household cleaning products, based on emerging trends and technologies such as self-cleaning surfaces, algal-based ingredients and enzymes replacing cleaning surfactants. This showed many future innovation opportunities from applying sustainability thinking to NPD.

## Tool: Vision & Roadmap



WHAT WOULD YOUR SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT LOOK LIKE?

Linking categories to corporate 20x20 targets

## Matthew Walker: case study

The pilot project with Matthew Walker highlighted several 'environmental hotspots' for their product category:

- **SOURCING OF INGREDIENTS:** where 5-7 high impact ingredients make up 70-80% of the total products footprint
- **FOOD WASTE:** a large percentage of products sold go unconsumed, ending up being wasted by consumers

### Innovating with Sustainability

Understanding a product's sustainability impacts can trigger product developers to ask the right questions. The above insights gleaned from the toolkit, presented Matthew Walker with real opportunities to improve and innovate their product, including:

- **Reformulation:** can the product be formulated to rebalance or substitute those high impacting ingredients without losing product quality or taste?
- **Sourcing sustainably:** can Matthew Walker tackle high impact ingredients through a comprehensive sustainable sourcing programme for these manageable ingredients?
- **Portion sizes:** can Matthew Walker reduce product wastage by providing consumers with different portioning or size options or improved storage instructions?

## Oscar Mayer: case study

Environmental benchmarking, another tool within our kit, highlighted opportunities around cooking times from Sainsbury's own-brand products, when directly compared with competitors.

Several opportunities emerged for both oven and microwave cooking that could be simply implemented on the range Oscar Mayer produces for Sainsbury's.

*"By implementing just one innovation identified in this project, to reduce microwave times by 1 min for all 1 million meals we make for Sainsbury's each day, we could power our factory for a whole week"*

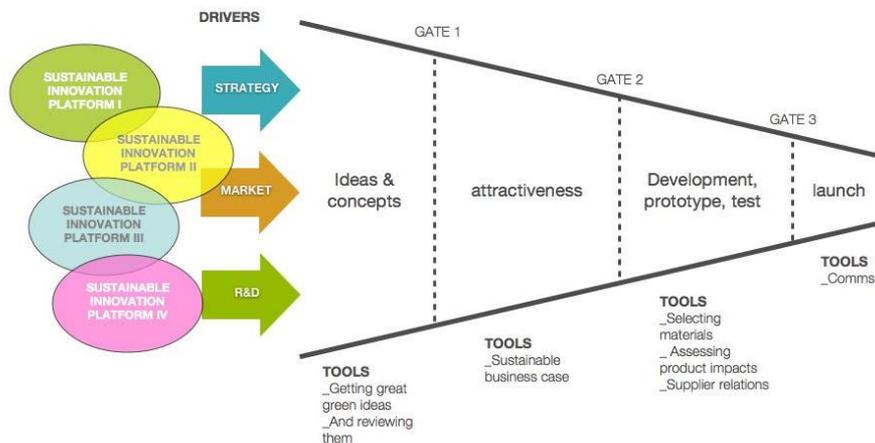
**Kieran Foody, Sustainability Manager,  
Oscar Mayer**

## Results

The Designing In Sustainability Programme has resulted in:

- Three suppliers implementing the innovations and improvements identified in their pilot projects.
- Sustainability embedded in Sainsbury's SMART Process.
- The next wave of pilot projects identified and project kick-off at the Sainsbury's Innovation Development Academy.

Sustainability is thus becoming embedded into 'normal' product development in Sainsbury's as part of business as usual. As a result, sustainability will become a platform to drive innovation and new product development.



Source: Seymourpowell

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*Working with our supplier partners we put considerable effort into improving the sustainability of our products. The 'Designing In Sustainability' programme addresses the critical role that product development plays in creating products that are fit for the future, as we seek to deliver our ambitious 20x20 sustainability plan.* “

**Stuart Lendrum, Head of Sustainable & Ethical Sourcing Sainsbury's**

**WRAP's vision is a world where resources are used sustainably. It works in partnership with governments, businesses, trade bodies, local authorities, communities and individuals looking for practical advice to improve resource efficiency that delivers both economic and environmental benefits.**

**Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through:**

- re-inventing how we design, produce and sell products,
- re-thinking how we use and consume products, and
- re-defining what is possible through recycling and re-use.

First established in 2000, WRAP is a registered charity. WRAP works with UK Governments and other funders to help deliver their policies on waste prevention and resource efficiency. WRAP is a registered Charity No. 1159512 and registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England & Wales No. 4125764. Registered office at Second Floor, 21 Horse Fair, Banbury, Oxon, OX16 0AH.

Find out more about our work [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)