

Team Fermentationexperts – InnovateFood Challenge 2017

InnovateFood Challenge is a case competition for students and graduates held for the first time in Aarhus. With over 2000 applications only 30 top-qualified and motivated students made it through to the final competition held 29th of August to 1st of September 2017.

The Fermentationexperts Challenge

Six companies participated, among others Chr. Hansen, Arla and Fermentationexperts. The Fermentationexperts Challenge **“How can we make a business plan for a start-up company focusing on improving intestinal health for humans?”** put the five students on Team Fermentationexperts to the test. The students were also given valuable insights and inputs from creative consultants from DesignIt, big data experts from IBM, as well as an in-depth introduction from Fermentationexperts themselves.

“In Fermentationexperts, we are always on the look for new opportunities and the most recent research/knowledge on topics relevant for our business. InnovateFood came in handy due to our recent focus on a new strategic business unit where input on various aspects were needed”, says Tina K. Lauritsen and Søren Kjærulff from Fermentationexperts AS, who also joined the team as the company representatives during InnovateFood Challenge.

Team Fermentationexperts

The team was composed of five students who were given five different roles: Business Developer, Marketing, Food Scientist, Sales and Innovation. The roles represented the students’ academic or professional competences, and each student was asked to do a personality test before arriving in Aarhus, in order to compose a strong and complimentary team.

Mads Kinch Clemmensen, head of the recruitment process and director of Foodjob Nordic explains; *“It has been overwhelming to see so much talent joined for this event. All students have been extremely motivated and have applied for this competition as an actual job position. We asked them to write a motivated cover letter, and tell us why food innovation is their passion and what they can contribute with in this type of innovation collaboration.”*

Lina Nilsson, from Denmark, who was the team’s Innovation role, was looking forward to testing her own knowledge on Team Fermentationexperts: *“There’s a gigantic complexity within food today. I applied for InnovateFood Challenge to see if my own knowledge as a student in nutrition and health could help concretize this complexity in a business case - but also to get closer to companies with new ideas.”*

The solution – “Fermbiotics”

The solution to The Fermentationexperts’ Challenge was a business plan on how this ‘miracle powder’ could be distributed as soon as possible on to the Danish market. This evolved into a concept called ‘Fermbiotics’ with a product based on seaweed and rapeseeds. The main idea was a B2B-company supplying other food companies with unique healthy ingredients. Thinking about possible consumers, the team identified a market where there is a demand already. People having gut problems are already looking for any possible help and as Fermentationexperts’ product already has proven very positive influence the team expected a high demand on this market as well.

“We found the concept very interesting. After having evaluated internally we can conclude that our participation has been very rewarding – especially working with the passionate and talented team of students working on the challenge was very enriching. We are ready to participate in similar innovative initiatives again”, says Tina K. Lauritsen and Søren Kjærulff from Fermentationexperts AS.

Also Lina and the rest of the team has high expectations on behalf of the product and the concept in the future: *“We have great expectations to fermented rapeseeds and seaweed, and we are very much looking forward to – hopefully soon – finding the ingredient in supermarkets and later on perhaps getting it as nutritional supplements from the doctor”*, tells Lina.