Team inVALUABLE – 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.

Six companies participated, among others Chr. Hansen, KMC and inVALUABLE. The inVALUABLE Challenge **"How can we generate new and sustainable sources of high-quality food with protein from insects to meet the future protein demand?"** put the five students on Team inVALUABLE 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 inVALUABLE themselves.

Team inVALUABLE
The team was composed of five students who were given five different roles: Marketing/sales, Business Developer, Food Scientist, Nutritionist and Researcher/journalist. 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."*

Kate Terry, from America, was the team's marketing/sales role. She was very pleased with the innovative and creative thinking the challenge brought: *"I was excited to join Team inVALUABLE because our challenge not only required creativity and business savvy - it required truly innovative thinking. We had to push the envelope to come up with mealworm-based foods that would not only be tasty to a few consumers, but would fit into a larger market strategy that envisions insects as an important, sustainable food group in Western diets."*

Kate was also very happy with her team composition and the company representatives: *"My teammates were amazing at bringing together food science, business development, creativity, and fun. The professionals at inVALUABLE are passionate and enthusiastic about what they do, so we had a great time learning from and working with them."*

The solution
After three days of hard work on Aarhus University the five students came up with a multi-level solution to inVALUABLE's challenge.

"We developed a suite of 'on-the-go' products that would suit our ideal consumer—the 'conscious' family with children—in the short term and, in the long term, would be familiar enough to reach a wider market of families, especially as children grow up eating insects.", tells Kate Terry.

The products mentioned were e.g. breakfast bug granola, as a topping for yogurt, and a bug-bar to eat on the go. The team even incorporated a business plan on how to bring this product to the market as a B2B supplier. They called the production company "In.Gredient", and it would be supplying regionally processed insect proteins and good karma to EU food manufacturers and distributers.

Also Lars-Henrik Lau Heckmann, Technology Manager, Danish Technological Institute and Scientific project lead of inVALUABLE is pleased with the conference, the students' work and the solution to their challenge: *"InnovateFood has been a most fruitful event and concept for strengthening relevant work packages in the inVALUABLE project. It facilitated a focused effort on identifying the most likely route for mealworm-based foods to a targeted consumer segment both short- and long-term; particularly through the intense work and valuable output provided by the student team that took on the challenge. It has been inspirational to participate and get a 'naive' perspective from the student team, the expert speakers and the audience that attended the inVALUABLE session."*