

Careers information



Research and Development

New products need to be invented and existing products often get adapted and improved. This could be because of changing tastes, or if a new material for packaging becomes available. This is the job of the research and development teams.

Jobs in research and development can include:

Food technologists and scientists

For a new drink to be successful, it has to look good, taste good and be safe to drink so that it tempts people into buying it and wanting to keep buying it. That's the job of the food technologists and scientists.

Food scientists know how different food stuffs change when cooked and what they are made of so they can produce nutritious, safe and appealing products. Food technologists develop food products such as drinks or ready meals using raw materials like fruit, meat or dairy products. They create or adapt recipes according to a brief so may work on, for example, providing a low calorie alternative to a popular recipe. Their roles overlap as they work together to produce an end product.

Food technologists work in laboratories or research departments, or could supervise production lines to ensure quality control.

Food technologists and scientists have to conduct experiments, invent new recipes and create samples of their new products. Some food technologists specialize in designing the machinery needed for the manufacture of a new product and devising the

processes so that the new product can be made as cheaply and efficiently as possible.

Food technologists and scientists are usually educated to degree level (Level 4). There are also job opportunities for technicians who work in the laboratories carrying out the experiments and assisting the food technologists and scientists at Level 2 (GCSE or equivalent) and above. Science and Maths qualifications would be required.

Packaging technologists

Packaging technologists design, develop and adapt packaging materials for the drinks industry. They work closely with the manufacturer as the branding of a product may influence the design of the packaging. They also will work closely with engineers about how the packaging will be assembled. The packaging has got to be suitable for its purpose and keep to strict legal requirements.

Packaging technologists usually work in design departments or offices, with some laboratory work or visits to production lines to watch the production processes.

Consumer scientists

Consumer scientists take the responsibility of carrying out research to see what the consumers (customers) want. They will need to conduct surveys, taste trials and then inform the manufacturers or supermarket chains of their findings. They also test the products to make sure that they meet quality standards and also all legal requirements. Consumer scientists are also involved in the marketing of products using market

Careers information



research to help to plan the packaging, advertising and distribution of the product.

Effective people working in research and development are:

- good at Science, particularly Biology and Chemistry
- good at organising themselves and logical in their approach
- able to work in a team
- able to pay attention to detail
- creative
- good communicators
- good problem solvers and have strict standards of hygiene.

Purchasing

Everything about a soft drink – its ingredients, packaging, labels – needs to be bought and if it's not bought at the best possible price, then the company will not make as much profit. This is the job of the purchasing department.

Buyers have to choose the products, find suppliers and negotiate to get the best deals. They have to ensure that the goods arrive on time and are of the quality expected and that there is a sufficient quantity for the manufacturing process to go smoothly without interruptions. Buyers need to be aware of the international markets of their goods.

Buyers work in offices but will visit suppliers, which may involve international travel and a knowledge of other languages.

Buyers usually are educated up to a Level 4 qualification (degree level) although there may be opportunities for assistant buyers and clerical support which will require a Level 2 or 3.

Good buyers are:

- confident and effective communicators
- good at organising themselves and planning their time
- confident and able to be tactful when negotiating
- able to work in a team
- creative and energetic with lots of stamina
- able to make decisions and cope with pressure.

Production

The production process involves many different job opportunities at all levels. Production involves putting the ingredients together to create the end products. This process includes planning, operating machinery, engineering and many other jobs to make the production efficient and cost effective.

Working in a factory on a production line would require training on the job, and you need to be physically fit and have practical skills. You do not need qualifications but the more qualified you are, the more responsible your jobs. For example, you may need a qualification to operate machinery as health and safety is very important at all stages of production. It is possible to gain qualifications up to Level 3 through an apprenticeship.

There are also opportunities in management in production. Production managers are responsible for making sure that all aspects of the production line are running smoothly so that all orders are met on time and costs are kept low.

Careers information



Production supervisors who are responsible for the day-to-day running are the link between the production workers and the production manager.

Many people move into production management by working in the manufacturing side of the industry and getting promotion, but to enter as a manager will require a degree level qualification (Level 4).

Another job in production is that of a production planner who is responsible for the planning of a production process, drawing up schedules and costing the process. As with all production team members, quality control and health and safety are very important considerations. Production planners may have to trouble shoot if there are staff shortages or machinery breakdowns.

Good production people are:

- interested in practical work
- able to work quickly and follow instructions
- aware of health and safety
- able to work as part of a team.

At management level they are:

- able to cope with pressure and make quick decisions
- able to prioritise
- able to understand all the processes used in production
- capable of managing staff.

Quality control and assurance

This area of work is all about setting up systems to check and double check quality throughout the entire process, so that the product is safe and of consistent quality and the employees are also working in the safest possible environment.

Quality control is about making sure that all ingredients and machinery used in the manufacturing process meet the legally required standards. This means rigorous and regular checking and rejecting all unsuitable material.

Quality assurance involves testing the finished product so that the consumer will have a product that is safe and consistent in taste, flavour and appearance.

Careers available in this field are quality assurance technician, quality control inspector, safety officer and health and safety advisor.

Quality assurance technicians usually have Level 3 qualifications, and then apply for a trainee technician post, but people may gain Level 1 and 2 qualifications whilst working in the food and drink industry which will recognise their skills in quality assurance.

Quality control inspectors are quality testers. They will use scientific methods to test samples of the products to ensure a consistent standard.

Health and safety advisors are responsible for making all production processes safe and legal. They inspect the production process regularly and also assess risks so that workers work as safely as possible.

Good quality control and assurance people are:

- clear and effective communicators
- logical and good at problem solving
- observant and pay close attention to detail
- good at English, Maths and Science.

Careers information



Marketing

Marketing involves launching products such as new soft drinks and developing and maintaining the brand image for that drink.

Careers available in this field are marketing manager and marketing executives.

Marketing managers would lead a team to conduct market research, to find out what the consumers like or need. The product is then developed and the marketing team will be responsible for setting the price. The sales, distribution and promotion of the product is also part of marketing work.

Marketing involves a lot of communication – giving presentations, working with other agencies and teams. Good organisation is important, as is keeping to strict deadlines. Creative thinkers are needed to ensure consumers know about the products and are tempted to buy them.

Marketing managers usually work in an office, and attend many meetings. There can be travel involved – to meet clients and other agencies that are working on a project, or to attend trade fairs, conferences and exhibitions.

Marketing executives develop new marketing strategies and manage the relationship between a new product and the marketplace.

To enter into a marketing management position needs a Level 4 qualification (degree level) but there are job opportunities in marketing departments for candidates with Level 2 and 3 qualifications. It may be possible to gain promotion within a company without a Level 4 qualification.

Good marketing people are:

- confident and effective communicators
- good at organising themselves and others
- able to work in a team
- creative and energetic
- able to cope with pressure and working to deadlines
- aware of pricing strategies and able to analyse data
- computer literate.