

## **Careers in Food Industry – Product Development and Management**

### ***Anne-Marie Mackintosh***

My role is the Nutrition Manager for PepsiCo Australia and New Zealand at a snacks and beverage company based in Sydney. I work as part of the Research and Development (R&D) team. I achieved my dietetic qualifications (B App Sc, Post Grad Dip) at Curtin University in Perth, WA. During my working life I have had a variety of roles ranging from clinical dietitian, nutrition consultant and work for Diabetes Australia and the Heart Foundation.

### **Interview**

#### **What does a food industry nutritionist do working in the area of product development and/or management?**

Part of my role at PepsiCo is to guide the company in achieving its human sustainability goals which underpin the corporation's 'performance with purpose' initiative. The human sustainability goals focus on encouraging people to live healthier by the company offering a range of enjoyable and healthier foods and beverages. I work with marketing, sales and R&D staff to provide them with nutrition information to develop, manufacture and market healthier foods for our consumers. In addition, I have an external focus in ensuring transparency to consumers of nutrient content, ensuring responsible marketing to children, and to schools. I also participate on committees such as the Dietitians Association of Australia Food Regulatory Advisory Committee (FRAC) which contributes to the development of food standards and other issues relating to food regulation.

#### **Where does a food industry nutritionist work?**

Dietitians and nutritionists who work in the food industry may work in a variety of roles within a food company:

- nutrition information advisor
- research scientist in laboratories conducting food science research
- food regulation information advisor
- health and wellness project officer
- nutrition communications manager, internal and external

#### **What experience and qualifications do you need to work in the food industry in the area of product development and/or management?**

A Bachelor of Science or Applied Science in food and nutrition is necessary. In addition, depending upon which area you are interested in, it is worthwhile seeking experience and/or studies in that specific field. For instance, if you are keen to pursue a career in nutrition communications then short courses in this area such as writing, publishing, editing are very helpful. If you have the time and commitment, a postgraduate certificate in public relations can also be useful.

#### **What are the highlights?**

- The opportunity to influence and change the food supply through innovating and reformulating food products so that healthier food and beverages options are available for Australians.
- The opportunity to meet and work with a range of people from diverse backgrounds within the company (marketing, sales, R&D and finance) and externally as a representative of the company.

#### **Advice for students who are interested in working in the product development and/or management areas of the food industry?**

Follow your interests and make the most of opportunities as they arise. Be flexible, try different roles and don't be afraid of making mistakes along the way. Ask for advice from a colleague/s if you have a problem, and wherever possible think of a solution to offer and discuss with that person.