



21-22 September 2016
Business Design Centre | London

lunch! 2016: First Keynotes announced

Rod McKie, CEO of Welcome Break, Caroline Cromar, group director of food at Pret A Manger, and Vincent McKevitt, MD of Tossed, are among the first big name speakers to be confirmed for this year's lunch! food-to-go trade show.

Returning to the Business Design Centre in London on 21-22 September 2016, the multi-award winning event will feature over 20 free business seminars – including exclusive Keynotes, interviews, research, and panel discussions – in two dedicated theatres.

“lunch! is an exciting date in the diary to see new ideas from innovative companies, it not only showcases the best but allows us to share knowledge across the industry. Don't miss it!” says Pret's Caroline Cromar.

A regular visitor to the show, Cromar will be appearing in an exclusive interview (hosted by CGA Peach's VP Peter Martin) sharing her specialist knowledge and insights from over ten years working at the heart of Pret's management team.

One of the leading high street food chains in the UK, Pret reported a 14% growth in sales in 2015 (whilst also giving away over one million free coffees, as part of its ongoing 'random acts of kindness' policy). For 2016, its 30th anniversary year, it's already announced (and implemented) a raft of new developments – giving Cromar plenty of great content for her lunch! Q&A. Recent highlights, including Pret's first campus shop, which opened at the University of Exeter in April, the successful trial (and extension) of its first pop-up vegetarian-only outlet in London's Soho last month, and the upcoming launch of its first motorway service shop (as part of a year-long trial partnership with Welcome Break) are likely topics of conversation.

Pret's service station debut, planned for the end of the summer, is also almost certain to get a mention by Welcome Break's CEO Rod McKie in his lunch! Keynote. This new partnership, much like Welcome Break's existing franchises with Starbucks, Subway and Waitrose, among others, at its 27 UK sites, continues the mutually-beneficial strategy of bringing the quality, choice and value of much-loved high street brands to motorway travellers. Or, to quote the working title of McKie's lunch! Keynote: 'Giving customers what they want when they want it via a brand portfolio'.

“I think it is more appropriate than ever that we have an opportunity to attend 'lunch!', as lunch itself is just becoming an amazing dynamic entity in its own right,” says Rod McKie. “People's eating and drinking habits are evolving so rapidly, that it is important to understand the needs and wants of our customers and the speed at which they are changing.”

Understanding and reacting to the 'needs and wants' of both his customers and employees has led Rod McKie to be known as one of the most successful operators in the industry today. He's widely credited as having transformed the Welcome Break business, since he took over the helm in 2001. His illustrious CV includes former MD of Coffee Republic, where he was responsible for taking the brand from 16 units to over 90 in just three years, and, prior to that, four years as Pret's operations director.

The rise of cashless payments

Flexible, convenient and affordable, food-to-go outlets provide their patrons with an effective way to eat what they want, when they want, without having to compromise on quality or taste. Now, with the rise of contactless and mobile payments, they're also able to pay how they want. According to recent research by The UK Cards Association, contactless card payments tripled during 2015^[1]; with food and drink 'the most common category for card payments' – representing a third of all card purchases.

One operator who has certainly taken advantage of this growing trend is Vincent McKevitt, founder and MD of Tossed. The healthy fast food chain recently made headlines for opening the first completely cashless (and till-less) restaurant in Europe. He'll be using his session at lunch! to discuss the streamlined concept behind the custom-built tablet software now in use at several of their London branches, and their plans for rolling out self-service kiosks across the rest of their 26 Tossed stores.

Bringing an independent spirit to the high street

Differentiation is also a key USP for high street restaurant and café operator Benugo. Its diverse portfolio also includes dining spaces and cafés in public spaces (at Regent's Park, V&A, The British Museum, English National Opera and National Museum of Scotland, for example) and in-house corporate cafés. Rory McEntee, the company's head of retail marketing, will be at the show outlining how the Benugo brand has successfully developed an independent spirit and uniqueness in its offering, how it retains individuality across the portfolio, and the challenge it faces as the business grows and strategy evolves.

As in previous years, Emma Read, Horizons' director of marketing & business development, and Cyril Lavenant, NPD Group's director of foodservice for the UK, will be back with essential food-to-go market updates and insights. Other popular returning speakers include marketing and branding experts Mark McCulloch (founder and CEO of WE ARE Spectacular) and Beth Taubner (founder of MercuryLab NY and London).

Further seminar announcements and the initial exhibitor list will be revealed later this month.

Free registration now open

lunch! 2016 will feature 350 exhibiting companies showcasing a wealth of new food and drink products, packaging, equipment and technologies. Over 6,200 attendees are expected.

“We found lunch! extremely valuable,” says Roger Whiteside, chief executive of Greggs.

“lunch! is a key event for our buying team. The quality of suppliers makes it the destination show for our industry,” says Helen Higgins, head of food at EAT.

“If you are looking for innovation in a crowded food market, lunch! is the place to visit,” says Andrew Holden, purchasing director at The Eden Project.

lunch! returns to Business Design Centre in Islington, London, on Wednesday and Thursday, 21-22 September 2016. For further information and to register for a free trade pass, please visit www.lunchshow.co.uk and quote priority code LUN10 (direct link: <https://registration.n200.com/survey/28ctrj7rl4tbl?actioncode=LUN10>).

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[1] Source: <http://www.theukcardsassociation.org.uk/news/CardPayments2016news.asp>

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Notes:

1. Source: <http://www.theukcardsassociation.org.uk/news/CardPayments2016news.asp>

Awards:

lunch! was recently shortlisted for Best UK Trade Show Exhibition over 2,000sqm by the Association of Event Organisers' Excellence Awards 2016 (the awards will take place on 17 June 2016). It won Best Trade Show at the Exhibition News Awards in February 2014 (it was also shortlisted for Best Trade Show and Best Trade Show Marketing Campaign in 2015). lunch! won Best Marketing Campaign of the Year in 2012 and was named Best UK Trade Show Exhibition under 2,000sqm for two years running in 2010 and 2011 at the Association of Event Organisers' Excellence Awards.

High res images are available on request:

Diversified Communications UK (Diversified UK) is a fast growing trade event organiser and publisher based in Brighton, Peterborough and Nailsworth. In addition to lunch!, Diversified UK's event portfolio includes Casual Dining; Casual Dining Restaurant & Pub Awards; Commercial Kitchen; Natural Food Show at Natural & Organic Products Europe; Nordic Organic Food Fair in Malmö, Sweden (co-located with Natural Products Scandinavia); Natural and Organic Awards; British Tourism & Travel Show; camexpo; Accountex; SITS – The Service Desk & IT Support Show; GEO Business; Capturing Reality; Ocean Business; MARELEC Marine Electromagnetics conference; Euro Bus Expo; Coach & Bus Live; The Route One Operator Excellence Awards; and National Coach Tourism Awards. For more information, visit: www.divcom.co.uk.

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