



It is vital for suppliers, purchasers and users of materials, products, or services, to understand and agree upon what they require from each other. The starting point is the consumer and his/her requirements and the whole supply chain should have that as its focus. Many companies operate without detailed product specifications, which can result in unnecessary waste. For supply chains to operate as efficiently as possible, each part in the chain should be perfectly clear about exactly what it is to produce.

The **David Sands** retail business, which has gone through two decades of expansion, has grown from its original store in Kinross, to 25 shops in Fife and Perthshire. One of its main business objectives is to stock local produce whenever possible. There is also a clear understanding that young companies which supply them need to grow sales at a steady pace rather than being put under pressure to massively increase production.

For example, **Laura's Chocolates**, a small business which supplies the company, trials new products in the stores, as they offer a safe test environment and the store managers and staff are very good at providing customer feedback. This means that the quality, consistency and supply of the products are protected, which benefits both the Sands' brand and the supplier.



ADDING VALUE Product Specification

The company also has detailed discussions with the supplier over potential sales levels and production capacity, both at the outset and as things progress.

Key points from this case study:

- **Setting standards and ensuring consistent quality supply can benefit all parties in the relationship**

West Lothian Food and Health Development, (WELFEHD), was set up in 2006, as a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is the supplier and distributor of fresh fruit and vegetables to community food co-ops in West Lothian, as well as community food networks in East Lothian, Mid Lothian, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The organisation is a social enterprise and has charitable status. Its objective is to create 'a healthier West Lothian where affordable fresh fruit and vegetables are more widely available and the benefits of eating a healthy, balanced diet are recognised.'

WELFEHD works with a number of local producers, particularly farmer David Dickson, who supplies a substantial amount of its root vegetables. As a result of that partnership, WELFEHD estimates that £17,000 has been kept in the West Lothian local economy.

The organisation makes clear the origins of the produce to its customers. It promotes the farmers on posters that are displayed at the co-ops and carries out surveys about the produce - the results of which are fed back to the suppliers. This connection with the consumer is integral to maintaining the quality of the produce. David Dickson, one of the main suppliers

to WELFHD, has first-hand experience of the importance of this direct response.

He received positive feedback about carrots grown by him. When he changed the way he was growing the crop to try to get a greater yield, the quality was compromised. However, as a result of direct customer feedback, he reverted to his original growing method and the quality improved.

Key points from this case study:

- **Feedback to the supplier ensures quality**
- **Feedback from the customer aligns production to customer demand**



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