

# ORLA BRADY

## Insights Champion, MSc DI (f)

Blog of my experiences during the four week induction for the new Masters of Design Innovation (Food), with Bord Bia and Maynooth University

**Summary:** Overall, I felt that the four week induction was a triumph in terms of content, organisation and planning. It was a perfect balance of activity, presentations, workshops, visits and downtime, allowing our new group the unique opportunity to learn and network while also providing enough time for us to get to know one another before we embark on our 24 month journey together.

### Highlights in pictures:



**Week 1:** Awarded Information Literacy Certificates in the Thinking House, following an informative session with the library team



**Week 2:** Visit to host company, Oliver Carty, who I will work with on innovation projects for two years



**Week 3:** A warm welcome to Maynooth University, breakfast in Pugin Hall with Department of Design Innovation



**Week 4:** Group photo of Team Endeavour as we set off on our first hackathon adventure

### Weekly Diary:

#### **Week 1: Understanding Bord Bia**

The week opened with a meet and greet, followed by talks and presentations from the Bord Bia Insights and Brand team, welcoming us to the course and providing detailed information about Bord Bia, Origin Green and context around the Masters. This was followed by visits to some Bord Bia client companies - Country Crest and Java Republic - allowing us to understand the theory of Origin Green in practice. On the third day, we visited Airfield Estate, providing an opportunity to understand sustainability from another point of view - the Overends Restaurant using ingredients directly from the 38-acre working farm, with seasonality, sustainability and food-waste reduction top of the agenda. Back to The Thinking House, day four involved a session on information literacy and an in-depth understanding of the resources and information available through the Bord Bia library. Week one was rounded off with a food tour of Dublin City, including pit stops (and tasty treats!) at Sprout & Co., Fallon & Byrne and Dollard & Co.

#### **Week 2: Psychometrics, branding and site visits**

As part of the application process for this masters, candidates were required to complete a series of psychometric tests designed to probe for specific characteristics and work preferences, useful for a career in innovation. Week two kicked off with feedback on these results - a useful tool for improving self-awareness. Some further presentations ensued on Tuesday - Consumer Lifestyle Trends and a Branding masterclass. Week two continued with a trip to Monaghan to visit Silver Hill Farm, where we were provided with a factory tour and presentation on the family-owned company's approach to sustainability, innovation and export. The week was rounded off with a visit to my own host company for the duration of the masters, Oliver Carty, in Athlone. A family-run business, founded in the 1950's by Oliver Carty, now owned and run by Oliver's son Ted. It is Ted's foresight, innovation and love of the business that has brought Oliver Carty to where it is today, one of Ireland largest pork and bacon producers. It is an honour to be paired with a company championing innovation as the vehicle to meet and exceed consumer expectations

#### **Week 3: Introduction to Maynooth**

Another warm welcome awaited us at the start of week three, where we convened in the majestic Pugin Hall at Maynooth University's south campus. Here, we were greeted by the academic staff and enjoyed a networking breakfast. Following an address from the Head of Design Innovation and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, we were taken on a tour of the campus and on to student registration. Tuesday of week three included some useful workshops on academic writing (particularly valuable for those of us out of the college game for a number of years!). Later that afternoon, an overview of Design Thinking, outline of the course content and timetable overview, provided by the Programme Director. Two days at Teagasc Ashtown Food Research Centre Food Science and Technology Conference concluded an action packed week three.

#### **Week 4: Dublin Design Tour & Hackathon**

The fourth and final week of our induction started off with a walking design tour of Dublin. Starting out in Red Dog design, on to Each & Other and finishing with Drop, this provided our first glimpse into the world of design. The day was complimented by a tour and lunch in Teeling Whiskey distillery. Just two more days remained in our induction, and the first chance to apply some of what we had learned over the previous three weeks! On Tuesday morning, our very own real-life episode of "The Apprentice" was briefed to the group - two action-packed days involving our first Design Innovation Hackathon. Divided into two groups, we were given a brief to develop a proposal for a new snack for students on campus. This was an excellent opportunity for us to get a rapid, complete and intense immersion in the tools, rules and practice of design led innovation, as well as develop skills in consumer insight, ethnography, brainstorming, data gathering and pitching. With the help of a graphic artist, a prototyping studio and guided professional brainstorming sessions, the two teams rapturously pitched final ideas, prototypes and designs to a panel of experts to conclude the exercise.

What a journey we have had over the space of four weeks. I look forward with excitement and enthusiasm to our 2-year voyage to come!



Day 1 welcome @ The Thinking House



Country Crest visit



Overends restaurant @ Airfield



Java Republic tour



Visit to Drop



Teeling Whiskey tour



Team Endeavour at work