

4th British-Polish Forum, 17 March, Expo XXI, Warsaw

For the fourth time, the British-Polish Food Forum brought together senior managers from sector – food producers and retailers, distributors and logistics experts, government representatives, banks financing the sector, advisory firms and marketing agencies.

There were three main sections in the Forum:

- introducing Lean management
- cooperation with retails and Total Quality Management
- creating and influencing brand value; packaging and communicating with the client.

Martin Oxley, CEO of the **British Polish Chamber of Commerce** and **Andrzej Kinast**, partner, **Trusted Adviser Group**, welcomed delegates on behalf of the organisers, and opened the event by setting the current situation of the food sector into the context of wider macroeconomic environment, dictated by historically high food prices in Poland and around the world (including the UK).

The first session of the conference took the form of an fully interactive workshop, led by **Mark Forkun**, managing director of **Gnosis Business Solutions**. He highlighted the importance of implementing Lean into the Polish food sector, optimising costs and processes, increasing employees' zaangażowania and increasing the value of the firm. Practical examples and workshop exercises emphasised his point. **Piotr Frelek** – SME adviser at **Getin Bank**, explained his bank's financial products aimed at SMEs in the food sector.

After lunch, Prof. **Andrzej Blike** – chairman of the supervisory board of patisserie **A.Blikle**, focused on the challenges of running a family firm and the importance of Total Quality Management in maintaining the brand values in his firm, which has been in existence for 141 lat. **Andrzej Faliński** – director of **POHiD**, (Polish retail and distribution organisation) presented an analysis of Poland's wholesale and retail markets, noting the current trend towards market consolidation in smaller-format retail outlets. FMCG wholesale consists of small wholesalers (nearly two-thirds of the market) and seven major players, of whom the largest are Eurocash (11.5%), Tradis (5.8%) and Makro Cash&Carry (5.8%). Small format shops continue to dominate the Polish retail scene, representing 60% of the market. Retailers see hope in the continued trend towards consolidation in wholesale, which should mean rising economies of scale, while the small-format shops continue to offer shoppers both quantity of choice and competitive pricing. Another trend is the rising number of delicatessens which offer Polish shoppers relatively inexpensive luxuries. Mr Faliński also sees export and expansion of Polish retail chains abroad as an opportunity. Turning to logistics, **Marcin Turski** – sales director at **Raben Group** showed how food producers could reduce distribution costs caused by seasonal fluctuations, thereby lowering the need for storage space. By using the latest IT systems to manage data, information flows between producer and client and back again can significantly improve stock flows and verify order volumes. Director of **Tesco Polska**, **Janusz Selwa** shared insights for all producers and suppliers who wished to cooperated with the retail chain. He presented the conditions that Tesco sets out for its suppliers.

Bartłomiej Juszczyk - CEO of ad agency **AdWeb** opened the final part of the event, by describing the vital role of packaging in persuading the consumer which brand to buy. With the aid of many case studies, he showed how to (and indeed how not to) package, communicate and sell a product. A classic error to avoid, he said, was designing visually unattractive packaging because the product is aimed at poorer customers. **Piotr Kondraciuk**, director of the promotion bureau of the **Agricultural Market Agency (ARR)**, talked about how European producers could protect themselves against competition from outside the EU by focusing on quality, tradition and regional provenance of their products. The EU's certification systems of regional and organic foods guaranteed consumers high quality produce. As well as protecting themselves against cheaper imports, high-quality certified foodstuffs would also have better chances on export markets. Yet the process of certifying products is not a quick or easy one, which could act as a barrier to more farmers nad producers applying for a regional or organic product certificate for their products. **Macieja Dolata** – president of branding and ad agency **Inspire**, gave the final presentation of the day, highlighting the importance of the differences between Polish and English market reflected in the advertising strategies. He presented a large number of sample prepared and conducted campaigns in both markets.