

ARE YOU MASTER OF YOUR DESTINY?

The IoPP are about to launch their new MSc programme for packaging professionals, in partnership with The Faraday Centre for Retail Excellence and Leeds Metropolitan University.

We talk to Dr Cathy Barnes, Director at the Faraday Centre, who talks to us about what difference a Masters degree can make for your career

Can you tell us a bit about your background and your involvement in the Faraday Centre?

I am a Mechanical Engineer by training and started my working life designing Nuclear Submarines! However for many years I have worked in the packaging world starting on cosmetic filling lines and finishing with printing crisp packets. Since I opted out of the real world and joined the realms of academia, I have been working with companies to help them design better products. This combined with my background made me the ideal candidate to lead the Faraday Centre for Retail Excellence in 2010.

I now have dual role, as Managing Director of the Faraday Centre and researching in new ideas as Professor of Retail Innovation at Leeds Metropolitan University

Can you summarise what the Faraday Centre specialises in?

The Faraday Centre for Retail Excellence is an institute within Leeds Metropolitan University combining the strengths of academic research with commercial consultancy. Faraday delivers knowledge, expertise and awareness of new technologies relevant to packaging, retailing and the Food & Drink sectors. Being part of a highly regarded University, yet having the freedom to work with academics from other universities, means that we can provide the latest research and access leading expertise from around the world.

Faraday's expertise lies in understanding and translating the academic knowledge of greatest value to our clients. We work with companies throughout the supply chain, from packaging suppliers to retailers.

Faraday is not just about supporting the innovation needs of companies; we undertake world leading research in packaging and retail that makes a real commercial difference. From understanding how to better design for touch, to identifying and adapting best design practice from the automobile sector for

consumer goods, Faraday is a pioneer in delivering research of real value to the retailing and consumer goods industry.

What has been your most interesting project with the Faraday Centre?

We work on all sorts of projects with leading companies. They tend to call us when they cannot find a packaging solution from their suppliers. Most of the work we do is confidential but we did work with Reckitt Benckiser developing the Airwick Aquamist packaging. We also pioneered the understanding of the tactile experience in packaging and developed some novel tools that can design the consumer experience when handling a pack. We have worked on many projects in this area with companies.

What do you see as the benefits in linking up with the IoPP?

Most of our work is linked to packaging. By linking up with a respected professional body, we add a sector credibility to our programme. However this partnership is more than just a link. The IoPP have helped design the programme to ensure it meets their member's needs and dovetails with their educational pathways. And last, but not least, respected IoPP ambassadors will be lecturing in the modules and inputting into the educational content.

Tell us more about the MSc the IoPP are launching with the Faraday Centre?

The MSc Innovation and Business Futures is an exciting opportunity for packaging and other professionals to gain a recognised qualification that could help them progress in their career. It is aimed at middle managers who have a good understanding of the packaging industry.

The programme is designed to be completed part time and fits around the students work and personal commitments. Through weekend delivery, work based blended learning and online content, the student will learn about the future business environment, how their role can contribute to success and consumer insight techniques, supported by academic and business mentors.

Who do you think this MSc will appeal to most?

The MSc has been designed to appeal to packaging and other technical research specialists in companies right across the retail supply chain who are looking to move up the career ladder. It will give them a sound understanding of the needs of business now and in the future from all perspectives; marketing to finance and everything in between.