



An introduction to consumer science (CONNECT4ACTION)

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Professor Arnout Fischer talks about a wiki developed in the EU-funded project Connect4Action.

About the Connect4Action project

New products are very important to the life of a food company, as they are tied to its competitiveness and longevity. Although thousands of new food products are launched every year, the majority of them fail. There are many factors that can contribute to this failure. In general, it is acknowledged that an efficient communication among various actors involved in the food innovation process is of crucial importance to the success of novel food products and technologies. Communication should be two-fold, taking place both within the company (internal communication, i.e. between different departments such as R&D and marketing) and to the outside (external communication, i.e. with the end consumer but also other stakeholders involved along the food chain, such as retailers, policy makers).

The Connect4Action project, which receives support from the European Union's 7th Framework Programme, aims to lower the failure rates of new food technologies in Europe, by increasing consumer acceptance of new products, through improved communication among key players in the food innovation process. Connect4Action brings together a multidisciplinary consortium comprising food technologists, consumer scientists, representatives of the food and drink industry, small and medium enterprises, and knowledge transfer experts who work between academia and the food industry.

In order to improve internal and external communication between stakeholders involved in the new product/technology development, Connect4Action has developed a set of tangible tools. These tools are accompanied by two types of trainings, targeted either at young academics (PhD students) or food industry professionals. The toolbox consists of eight tools which are available here. The complete training materials are available via the ISEKI (Integrating Food Science and Engineering Knowledge into the Food Chain) e-learning platform, for which interested participants can register for free, through the project website.

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Arnout Fischer is associate professor in the Marketing and Consumer Behaviour group in Wageningen University, The Netherlands. He has extensive experience in consumer behaviour in relation to new technologies applied to food. His main interests revolve around how consumers decide to accept or reject a food innovation in a realistic context; especially when consumers have little knowledge on the innovation. Contact details: Wageningen University, The Netherlands Tel: (+31) 317 483053 Fax: (+31) 317 484361 Arnout.Fischer@wur.nl