

Love Food Hate Waste 'Student MasterChef'



The issue

Manchester has one of the largest student populations in Europe with around 73,000 students studying at the two universities. Manchester City Council's Waste and Recycling Team decided to target students as part of the regional Love Food Hate Waste campaign which was running at the time.

The MasterChef competition was designed to give students the opportunity to make use of leftover ingredients in a creative way, to show off their culinary skills and help minimise the amount of food going to landfill. The competition also showed other students that a high standard of meals could be created from leftover ingredients and encouraged students to think more about how they can save money by throwing away less food.

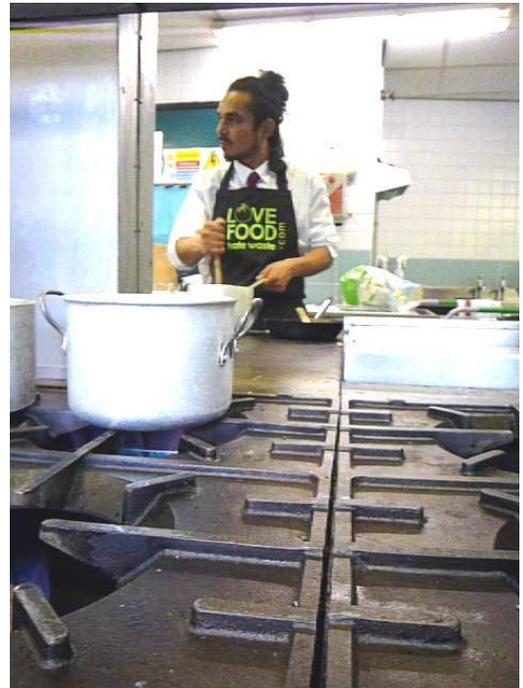
Key facts

- 2010 was the **second year** of Manchester Student MasterChef competition.
- Purpose was to inform interested students about Love Food Hate Waste including **the amount of food we all waste** and which goes to landfill and ways to save money by wasting less of this good food.
- It provided students with **helpful and practical tips** and solutions on how to reduce the amount of food they throw away.
- Proved to be a **cost effective** way of engaging with students about food waste issues at just over £1,200 to produce with significant support from sponsors.
- A **high profile activity** which captured the interest of students and the media alike, and provides an exciting way of disseminating Love Food Hate Waste messages.

The approach

The MasterChef competition was held over a three week period having learnt lessons from the previous year's debut:

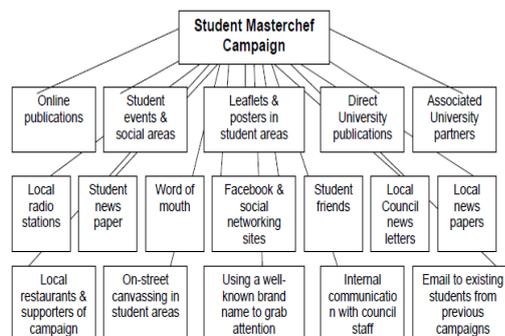
- 46 students came forward to take part and out of that 28 were chosen to work in pairs to compete in the first round.
- Students were given a presentation with information about the format of the competition and key Love Food Hate Waste messages to show why they were all there and how they could make a difference.
- Each pair cooked a dish in 45 minutes, using five leftover ingredients provided.
- A panel of judges (including local residents, businesses and key influencers) evaluated the dish taking into account taste, presentation, the use of the leftover ingredients and the amount of food waste generated.
- Four pairs of students then progressed to the semi-final stage of the competition and cooked a two course meal in two hours.
- Final scores were totalled and the two highest scoring pairs of students were invited back to compete to see who would become Manchester's student MasterChef winners of 2010.
- For the final part of the competition a training restaurant was set up to accommodate 40 guests who were served a three course meal made from leftover ingredients.
- At the end of the meal, the guests were asked to choose team A or team B to decide the winners and the prize was awarded.



Manchester City Council employed a range of channels to communicate with students:

- **Student Welcome Fairs** at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Manchester were used to launch the competition. Students were encouraged to get involved by visiting the competition Facebook pages www.recycleformanchester/facebook.com via a printed card which was handed out with the address and contact details.
- **Practical tools** to help waste less were given out to the students to attract them to the competition. These included Love Food Hate Waste bag clips, spaghetti portion measures, reusable bags and containers, rice measuring mugs and recipe/tip cards. A pledge card was completed by each student in exchange for the items.
- Promotional printed material included Love Food Hate Waste **branded leaflets and posters** targeted at student areas of the city.
- Information was placed in the **local media** including newspapers, council and university publications.

Communication methods



- **On-street canvassing** was carried out in student areas of the city.
- **E-mails** were sent direct to students using an existing list compiled from the previous year's competition.
- The Council's **website** was used to publicise the competition, along with other relevant local websites including the universities and radio station North Manchester FM.
- **Social networking** sites were used including Facebook and YouTube videos (produced by the Council's communications team) showing the students taking part in the cooking competition and updated regularly.

Jamie Shemie, Culinary Arts student and mentor for the competition:
"It was great to be part of such a well organised campaign. The students were all amazing and it was good to see them learn about reusing food and reducing food waste."

Manchester Student Masterchef Competition 2010


















MasterChef

Calling all students! Are you the next Jamie Oliver or Nigella Lawson? Want to win free meals at top quality restaurants in Manchester - the Bluu Bar, Sweet Mandarin, Earth Café, Samsi Japanese, Yo Sushi, Gourmet Burgers & many more!

How about free entry tickets & transport to Masterchef Live in London, the Frog and Bucket Comedy Club, Bridgewater Hall, Sainsbury shopping vouchers & Lakeland shopping vouchers.

www.facebook.com/recycleformanchester
or email j.liu@manchester.gov.uk

For more information on the competition.
Do not delay – limited spaces apply – Deadline to apply Fri 22nd October 2010

The results

- 46 requests were received from students wanting to take part in the competition. An increase of 48% from 2009.
- 11 press articles were written about the competition before it began. This was a significant increase from the five articles in 2009.
- The Student MasterChef campaign helped to increase the traffic on the www.recycleformanchester/facebook.com pages from 17 users who stated that they liked the Recycle for Manchester web pages to 90 users at the end of the campaign. The campaign was supported by a number of organisations who provided prizes including BBC Good Food Show (MasterChef Live tickets, Olympia, London), Cordon Vert Cookery School, and The Frog and Bucket Comedy Club.
- A significant increase in the number of competition judges who wanted to be involved from three in 2009 to 24 in 2010. The judges included representatives from local media, local food/restaurant businesses and members of the public, including North Manchester FM, Didsbury Women's Institute, Food Co-Operative Manchester, and Fuse FM.
- The cost of organising the competition was only £1,200, making it a cost efficient way of engaging with students on this subject.



Key lessons

- **Student mentors** provided support and advice to the students who took part in the competition. They were final year students studying for catering degrees. Competition between the mentors created an exciting atmosphere in the kitchen, particularly in the semi- and final stages when the mentors assisted the students.
- The competition was **supported** by businesses and other local organisations/voluntary groups which donated prizes, helped judge the competition and raised awareness.
- The support from **FareShare* and Smithfield Market** meant that the competition used surplus food from food establishments in Manchester. This enabled the competition to show how easy it is for people to create stunning dishes from leftover or unwanted food.
- Students taking part were monitored on how much **food waste** they created during the preparation of their dishes. Students were informed that they would lose marks the more food they wasted.
- **Facebook** worked well to communicate with students and was used in a variety of ways including to contact students who didn't turn up for the competition, informing the students of the results and providing general information about Love Food Hate Waste.
- The **positive relationship** between the two universities and the City Council was key to the success of the competition.
- The short **presentations** given to all students before the competition began, worked well in communicating the Love Food Hate Waste messages to those taking part so that everyone knew why they were there.
- A **reserve list** of participants was put in place in case of students pulling out at the last minute so that others were able to take part at short notice.
- **Student term dates, exams and other commitments** need to be taken into account when planning a competition to ensure there is enough time to organise and run the event with enough students available to take part.

More information

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*FareShare the community food network. For more information visit: www.fareshare.org.uk

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