



The brand effect

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING IRISH BUSINESS AND PRODUCERS IS ESSENTIAL AND WILL MAINTAIN AND GENERATE NEW JOBS.

July 2012 saw the beginning of a new era in marketing campaigns in Ireland with the launch of Supporting Quality, a campaign that brings the solidarity of trade unionism to the checkout.

As Supporting Quality campaign coordinator, Fabia Gavin explains, "The campaign asks SIPTU's 200,000 plus members and their families to support union organised workplaces by purchasing the products they produce."

The campaign works by asking manufacturing companies, which have SIPTU organised workforces, to participate. Once the company and worker representatives sign up, their products are promoted in union newspapers, on the SIPTU website and the Supporting Quality website.

Over 50 leading Irish brands produced by the country's main indigenous manufactures across all sectors have signed up, including Coke Cola, Tergral Tiles, Basta, Largo Foods and Newbridge Silverware.

"To date, the campaign has received a great response from the SIPTU membership and we believe it has provided an edge for participating companies products over those of their competitors with Ireland's over 800,000 trade union members. As the knowledge of the products participating in the campaign continues to grow, this marketing edge will only increase," Gavin continues.

It is a view shared by Kevin Donnelly, marketing director of Britvic Ireland, whose products such as Club, Miwadi and Ballygowan are promoted to SIPTU members.

"In Britvic Ireland we believe passionately in a local focus and in quality brands. The fact that our brands are manufactured in quality workplaces makes a real difference. Over 95% of the brands we sell in Ireland are made in Ireland by SIPTU organised workforces in Dublin and Limerick," Donnelly says.

According to the marketing director of Britvic Ireland, "The Supporting Quality campaign provides a link for our brands to trade unionists and their families throughout the country who comprise a sizeable proportion of the population. Buying quality brands, made in Ireland, makes sound economic sense."

A company that has recently signed up to participate in the campaign is international dairy food company Glanbia, whose brands such as Avonmore will now be promoted to the SIPTU membership.

Glanbia commercial director, Michael McArdle, believes Supporting Quality gives his products an important link to key consumer demographic.



Joe O'Flynn, general secretary, SIPTU officially launched the Supporting Quality campaign



"Trade union members and their families are a key sector within the Irish food purchasing market. Supporting Quality provides Glanbia with a direct connection with this sector through publications and news sources that they already trust. It goes further than other campaigns which highlight to consumers that products are produced in Ireland, in that it guarantees to the consumer that the workplaces they are produced in are quality workplaces. I believe such concerns will be of growing importance to Irish consumers and that Supporting Quality will be a key campaign for Glanbia into the future."

The campaign emerged from requests by trade union members to know which products they should purchase in the lead up to Christmas and has strong support among the SIPTU membership.

SIPTU Manufacturing Division, Gerry McCormack, says: "It's not only about trade unionists doing their part to help protect jobs in Ireland, the campaign makes a link between quality workplaces being ones that produce quality products."

He adds: "The idea of a marketing campaign promoting union produced products is new to Ireland but has a history which stretches back to the 19th century in the United States. That it has not been done here before is the only surprising thing."

In the United States 'buy union' campaigns date back to the 1870s. By 1909, the American Federation of Labor had created its Union Label Department; currently thousands of products in US stores carry 'buy union' buttons which are seen as a major competitive advantage for participating brands.

In the United States, buying products made by union workforces is also seen by many as a 'patriotic' act, and it is a message the Supporting Quality campaign is also keen to promote.

SIPTU general secretary, Joe O'Flynn, explains: "The economic impact of the right consumer choices on the indigenous manufacturing sector is very significant. It goes all the way from the factory floor to product packaging, transportation and warehousing through to the shop counter."

"Bigger companies sustain hundreds of smaller suppliers by buying raw materials, technologies and maintenance services. In turn, this contributes billions in income tax, corporation tax and VAT to the Irish exchequer every year. In order to tackle the unemployment crisis in Ireland, the focus has to be on creating new jobs and maintaining existing ones." ■

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