



## Tesco and Spoon Guru's class act

From vegan to gluten-free, food that meets special dietary requirements is not always easy to find online. Spoon Guru's partnership with Tesco has changed that

**D**espite increasing numbers in the UK now following some kind of exclusion diet, online shopping can be a frustrating experience that is anything but convenient.

Consumers may struggle to find foods that match their dietary needs – yet the products do exist.

The £800m 'free from' market is growing 40% year on year, with 43% of consumers now buying gluten- or dairy-free products.

Yet mainstream grocers sometimes miss a trick by failing to reflect this with comprehensive online ranges.

That is why Tesco's partnership with pioneering food search platform Spoon Guru won praise from the judges.

### Industry leader

The initiative taps directly into that growing market, while positioning Tesco as a leader in the area of specific dietary requirements such as vegan, gluten-free and nut-free.

"It is a really interesting move for a supermarket chain of that size," remarked one judge.

"No one else has really approached these issues. I like that it actually solves a customer problem, as well as being innovative."

Launched in April 2015, Spoon Guru has a simple mission: to ensure retailers are offering the right foods to customers, whatever their dietary requirements.

Combining artificial intelligence data processing and optimisation capabilities with nutritional expertise and consumer insight, it helps retailers to cope with changing customer behaviours.

This pioneering partnership with Tesco, launched last May and rolled out over the summer, created a free tailored service for shoppers by reclassifying the grocer's entire product range and introducing 180 proprietary dietary tags.

### Opening up the range

Tesco's vegan product range, for example, has been boosted from just 162 products to 16,000, while its gluten-free range has gone from 327 items to 24,000. Something as simple as a can of chopped tomatoes has gone from having "a few tags" to having hundreds.

**It is a really interesting move for a supermarket of that size. No one else has really approached these issues. I like that it actually solves a customer problem, as well as being innovative**  
Judge



### Customer Innovation

WINNER

### Tesco with Spoon Guru

The approach has also provided Tesco with a deeper understanding of its range by showing that 71% of its products are vegetarian, 53% are gluten-free and 31% are low-sugar.

So, not only can the grocer now respond to consumer search queries more effectively, it can use data to market products directly to shopper segments with matching dietary preferences.

The platform has directly benefited Tesco's ecommerce conversions and the technology has helped with KPIs including search volume, conversion from search to purchase and items per order. Long term, it is expected to drive loyalty and retention among customers with dietary requirements.

Spoon Guru worked with Tesco's Innovation and Wellness Programme teams to develop the partnership, but it also had engagement up to c-level because the grocer was keen to use the deal to differentiate its offer from rivals.

Spoon Guru's tech team and nutritionists oversaw

### The platform has directly benefited Tesco's ecommerce conversions

implementation, as well as offering support pre- and post-launch.

It continues to work with Tesco's marketing team, which is seeking to promote the new capabilities as a major selling point to customers.

The initiative also builds on Tesco's Little Helps to Healthier Living campaign, also launched last May, which includes lower prices on products such as fruit and veg, and promotes "little swaps" to foods lower in salt, fat and sugar than standard items.

### Next-generation tech

Spoon Guru is being recognised as a data technology solution provider, specialising in next-generation food search and discovery capabilities.

It already licenses its technology to a number of companies and is in advanced talks with major brands across the UK, US, Germany and Australia.

This innovation, which addressed a particular need so well, won the support of the judges as a great example of how retailers and partners can make the most of the opportunities that arise as consumer habits and expectations change. **RW**