

Jobs in Pods: Becky Frankiewicz, VP of Innovation: Innovation Marketing roles for the Quaker Division of PepsiCo.

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Welcome to Jobs in Pods – the only podcast where you can hear real employers -- and leading recruiters -- talk about their jobs and how to get them. I am your host Peter Clayton.

This jobcast will feature Innovation Marketing roles for the Quaker Division of PepsiCo. Joining us again is Becky Frankiewicz, Vice President of Innovation at Quaker, a company and a brand committed to a phenomenal growth trajectory over the next decade.

Peter Clayton: Becky, welcome back to Jobs in Pods.

Becky Frankiewicz: Hi Peter, thanks.

Peter: It seems to me one of the most exciting aspects of your job is you are really changing the whole process around innovation at Quaker. Can you give us some insights?

Becky: When last we spoke, we talked quite a bit about the journey that Quaker is on as a company and that definitely is apparent in how we're approaching innovation and everything we're doing, we're challenging conventional wisdom around the way CPG companies innovate, so both in the time it takes to get from an concept idea to launch and a process that we're going through, and so we're doing some really creative things to collapse the process from insight, to concept to package design to ship date to the extent of normally it would take a CPG company 12 to 18 months to launch a product, and we created a process where we could get to market in about 4½ months.

Peter: That's really fantastic, and I would imagine this focus on innovation and the time to market is a real cultural shift for Quaker, is it not?

Becky: Absolutely, and I'd say the cultural shift for the industry really. Again, 12 to 18 months is pretty standard for the industry and so we're in the process of reinventing Quaker as a brand and becoming faster, more nimble, more consumer-grounded, we're also changing the way that we take those insights and get them to market so we can be leaders and express some leadership. So it is a cultural change for Quaker and I believe it's going to be a cultural change for the industry.

Peter: When we spoke earlier, you had mentioned a couple of products that really fit into what we're talking about, you know, the ability to get to market faster. Can you give us some ideas of some of the products that this really represents?

Becky: In the end of May/early June of this year, we launched three new products and I'll talk about all three of those.

The first is a cocoa version, made with real cocoa version of Chewy of our Chewy Bar which is a favorite particular among kids snacking. We launched the bar with reduced sugar, the first and currently the only cocoa bar in the category. Now we've had some competitors follow us now and we can talk about that that we feel great that we were leading around the insight of kids really wanting real ingredients. We understand that it's not just mom that's looking for healthy; kids are actually reading labels now and they want something that taste great and so we launched Cocoa Chewy.

In the oatmeal category, which is our namesake in terms of Quaker, we say two white spaces in terms of unmet consumer needs. One was around the boomer consumer really wanting a product that was loaded with texture as well as fruit and nuts. So we launched a four-grain cereal that's called Hearty Medley – it's literally loaded of fruits and nuts – and then we launched a Kids Creation around what we believe as a breakthrough insight for kids in the morning wanting interactivity and wanting control, and what Kids' Creation is, it's similar to Jelly Belly so if I eat two different flavors, I make a third flavor that's new. Kids have the opportunity to mix and match their oatmeal so it gives them a bit of control and it makes it fun. So if I want apple blueberry today and tomorrow I want maple brown sugar blueberry, I can do that too.

Peter: That's cool! Let's talk a little bit more about this idea of putting Quaker in a leadership role within your industry.

Becky: We're pretty excited. Again, this goes along with leadership going along with completely redoing the way that we come about innovation from a process and a time perspective. Establishing leadership while you're completely reinventing yourself is something that candidly we're pretty proud of in, and we're not all the way there yet. It's a journey, but we're really excited about our start. So what we're finding is if we can get to some really unique, consumer-grounded insights, unarticulated and unmet needs for consumers and we can speed those through in terms of getting products deliver into the market, we are finding ourselves leading in breakfast and in bars, and the examples that I just gave you – first to the market cocoa bar, Kids' Creation, the kids' products we talked about, we're seeing other competitors now take that insight and bring it to life in their products but we were there first and so we're pretty proud of our leadership around a consumer insight.

Peter: Well, I know you're working on many new products Quaker will be introducing next year. You were telling me that you planned on changing the morning. Can you tell us what that means?

Becky: I can't tell you a lot about it, but I can give you a little bit of a peak behind the curtain. If you think about S-curves in our industry for cereal and particularly for oatmeal, we started with standard oats and that was the foundation, taking literally oats from field and bringing them in a convenient way to morning and then we went into an instant oatmeal. Standard took a little longer to make and so we introduced instant flavors. So we believe that in the second half of next year we will have a whole new perspective on morning and we'll products to the market that, again, are consumer grounded in terms of the insight and unmet need, but that will be the next trajectory changing piece of innovation from Quaker.

Peter: I know you want to discuss a couple of exciting positions you have open for marketing professionals based in Chicago so tell us about those.

Becky: I'm going to focus today on our innovation openings. We have openings in three areas, both on our core, our base innovation

team, so working on products like you heard me speak of Cocoa Chewy and Hearty Medley and hot – creating the next generation of delighters for consumers.

We also have opening in a position that we call channel innovation and it's a relatively new group for us. It's been around for about eight months now, and they're dedicated at the intersection of what is the customer's problem to solve, retailer A, and what can Quaker bring to the table that really will be ownable and differentiated for that retailer. And so we have an opening there as well.

Peter: Can you explain to us, Becky, how innovation really impacts these positions that you just described?

Becky: For these particular positions, innovation is the foundation and you heard me talk in our first session how innovation is a key pillar to the transformation of Quaker and the people we're looking for really will see their work reflected in market next year and with the speed in which we're turning around our processes, it's very fulfilling to see your ideas, your consumer conversations come to life in a package on a shelf, in a very short period of time.

Peter: We touched on this in the last jobcast we did but can you share some advice for someone interviewing at Quaker? As a hiring manager Becky, what really impresses you?

Becky: I'll speak again specifically to innovation in this regard. From an innovation perspective, we want people who are going to approach the problems in a different way, out-of-the-box thinkers. We want studiers of consumers, and I don't mean people that can take an insight and then translate it into a product only, that is critical, but I want people who can identify the insight. Traditionally you would hear talk about insights personnel doing that work, but I think we need to make sure our innovation marketers can sit along side their insight partners and really pull those insights out, and then turn them into action ability. So I'm looking for people who want to step one step further back in the process, then perhaps traditionally, we would in CPG.

The last thing I'd say is we're looking for trend spotters, people who can look at patterns and behavior and determine, "Okay, I see that

coming, how can I pull that in and then become further solidify Quaker as a leader in the products that we're bringing to market.

Peter: These are really fast track and interesting marketing positions that you have and as we spoke about in the last podcast we did, you actually have budgets behind these.

Becky: Absolutely. We have budgets and like I said, I think the biggest difference that we are now introducing into the CPG environment is that you can be an innovator that has an idea, that sees it in the market in less than 12 months, which is, it's just not common, if nonexistent.

Peter: Absolutely. One last question Becky, is corporate responsibility and sustainability important at Quaker?

Becky: Absolutely, Peter. Corporate responsibilities first: The whole mission of Quaker now is around accessible wellness and making sure – and we talked a bit before about how the types of people we are looking for really do take health and wellness as part of who they are, not just part of what they do when they're in our offices during the day. So corporate responsibility, both to yourself, as well as to the community we operate in.

There are some other exciting news but maybe next podcast I can give you more details on where we are taking a bold step, particularly in the city of Chicago, around corporate responsibility that we're pretty excited about.

From a sustainability perspective, again I would say a company that makes great food would only do it in a way that's good for our environment and for the earth, and we are already quite sustainable in our practices and we have plans to continue tightening our guardrails around sustainability.

Peter: That's fantastic. Becky, thanks so much for taking time to speak with us again here on Jobs in Pods.

Becky: Thanks so much Peter.

That will do it for this edition of Jobs in Pods. I'd like to thank PepsiCo for sponsoring this series of marketing careers with Quaker.

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