

THE PANTRY POST



THE LUKE OUT - Page 2

Our Managing Director reflects on a year of major turbulence across our industry, how we'll continue to tackle that in the new year, and a fabulous awards season for The Pantry!

TOP OF THE OPS - Page 8

We review a chaotic (but rewarding) Christmas period across our Schools, as well as shouting out some of our Service Superstars who've really made us proud!

WINNER, WINNER, PANTRY DINNER! - Page 12

Our Pantry Prize Scheme has already got in full swing - take a peak at what some of our Primary Pupils have picked up so far

THE LUKE OUT | A WORD FROM OUR OWNER



Hi Team Pantry,

As we are now firmly into 2024, I thought our first ever newsletter would be the ideal place to share our achievements from not only 2023, but to also touch on how far we have come as a company.

The ambition for 2023 was growth and awareness, which we not only reached but absolutely smashed. This was primarily to raise The Pantry's profile through partnering with new schools and celebrating the company we have become.

This saw Team Pantry add over 60 new schools, which now sees us closing in on 150 schools in total, feeding around 35,000 pupils per day...that's over 6.5 million meals within schools per year!

We have also been showered with awards, including The Public Sector Contract Caterer of the Year, The LACA Contract Caterer of the Year and The Growing Business award for

Business of the Year.

Just to outline how prestigious these awards are:

- The Public Sector award includes every caterer that feeds anyone across Education, Care, Defence, Justice, National Health Service (NHS) and Government sectors.
- The LACA award is across all Education Caterers and there will never be a more difficult time to win this award than following the years we have had, including COVID, record food inflation and staff shortages across the whole of the catering sector.



- The Growing Business Award is a national award which is open to companies across any and all sectors of business.
- We have also featured in industry magazines and The Times Newspaper, which we should all be very proud of, and I was even lucky enough to start catering for my old School - Isleworth & Syon School!

We all know how tough 2023 has been and the important roles we have all had within a company that is changing the standard within our industry. Achieving everything that we have, while in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, dealing with under-funding and the ongoing food issues is truly phenomenal. Changing an industry isn't supposed to be easy, so we should all be very proud!

To give some more perspective, The Pantry has grown 20,425% in the last 10 years and our sales per day now are more than we took over the whole of 2013. We currently employ more than 700 team members, across different parts of the country, which makes us one of only 3,900 companies to employ over 500 people.

Thank you all for being a part of The Pantry's journey, especially over 2023... lets continue changing the norm and doing what we do best... pushing boundaries!

2023... Year of The Pantry

Luke

*Luke Consiglio,
Managing Director,
The Pantry*



Meet the entrepreneurs
reshaping the way
business is done to
address the needs of a
rapidly changing world

CELEBRATING THE
PICK OF THE CROP

Meet the award winners of this year's LDC Top 50 Most Ambitious Business Leaders – pioneers in their fields who, in prioritising both their people and the planet, are redefining what it takes to be successful

[illegible]

Having developed their own technology in the late 1980s, years they've experienced fast growth, it's a small wonder that they've wanted to do more for the community. "We're a family business that's been able to add value back to customers," says Ward. "Your door is open to your business, and you can see how you can add value to the community. The way you earn is relevant, language and intent."

We also have three Rising Star Awards, representing the awards for the top 100 companies in the country for the coming year. First up was Mr. Hummer, who was the first to be named a Rising Star. Interimnational. Their idea might have been ahead of its time but now the technology has been adopted by many other companies. "We've got a lot of sales outside the U.S.," says Hummer. "We've got a new category of meaning, just not in the U.S. but in other parts of the world, like Asia, says Hummer. "We're growing that, and we're growing it."

Valley to have a successful global product technology."

Our Rising Star in Sustainability is Lacy. Lacy is a company that's been a C-Group accredited fashion business in Asia. She's making strides in the U.S. market, and she's also doing a great job of tracking down, proving that fashion can be sustainable and stylish. And that's what we're looking for.

The man behind this private label cosmetics brand has driven enormous success in the UK, but he has his sights set on generating half his company's revenue from the US in five years

The **Alumni Award** goes to Ben Williams, managing director of private label contractor manufacturer Ocean. Since our last meeting in 2010 – when he featured in The LOR 100 – he has driven remarkable overseas growth and established his business as a leader in the industry.

Williams joined the company 12 years ago. It was turning over \$2.5 million. It's now at £34 million and has achieved 8 Corp status along the way. "We were also an ethical company, following B Corp



THE MOST AMBITIOUS
BUSINESS LEADER



MARK COPLEY
CEO
COPLEY SCIENTIFIC

After obtaining his pilot's license,

[illegible]

THE PEOPLE FIRST
AWARD



TONY CLEARY
GROUP CEO
LANCHESTER GROUP

When Tony Cleary MBE started

KUNTAL AND MARK FISHER
OWNERS OF
FISHER
FARM

Mark and Kuntal Fisher are well known in the horse world. In 1995, they were inducted into the American Quarter Horse Association's Hall of Fame for their contributions to the breed. In 1996, they were named "Horseman of the Year" by the American Quarter Horse Association. The husband-and-wife team founded Kuntal and Mark Fisher's AQHA FIBER in 1995. The company consistently FIBERs all quality gelded phalanx-earred and barren stallions and mares, and has a reputation for producing quality stallions. They employ a staff of 10 people and have a large number of horses and have raised nearly 100,000 horses to date. In 1997, FIBER received a Diamond Award from the Quarter Horse Association for its outstanding contribution to good horses. "We have a reputation for producing quality stallions that are bigger than stallions and more powerful than stallions than we sell," says Mark.

TRAILBLAZER:
FINTECH



NICOLAS GILLAN
CEO
SOUTH COAST
INSULATION SERV

**ADAM WARD AND
JOHN DEANAM**
of **ACTIVE REWARDS**

Having worked together on Oracle WebMethods, the e-commerce giant's cloud-based software (and its parent, Oracle), the two have joined forces to launch Active Rewards, a new mobile app designed to help reward companies build loyalty with their customers. The app is available for free on the App Store and Google Play.

Ward, 36, is a former Oracle executive who worked for the company for 10 years. He left the company in 2011 when it was struggling with a loss of loyalty from its customers. He then founded Active Rewards, which he says is a "new kind of loyalty program" that is designed to help companies build loyalty with their customers. He says the app is designed to help companies build loyalty with their customers by providing them with a "new kind of loyalty program" that is designed to help companies build loyalty with their customers.

Deanam, 36, is a former Oracle executive who worked for the company for 10 years. He left the company in 2011 when it was struggling with a loss of loyalty from its customers. He then founded Active Rewards, which he says is a "new kind of loyalty program" that is designed to help companies build loyalty with their customers. He says the app is designed to help companies build loyalty with their customers by providing them with a "new kind of loyalty program" that is designed to help companies build loyalty with their customers.

TRAILBLAZER:
WOMEN IN TECH



**MO HUSSAIN
AND ALAN ROCK**
CO-CEOS
MOORE

[illegible]

RISING STAR: SUSTAINABILITY



REZA AND OMID NAJAFI
FOUNDERS
STAFFSCANNER

Reza Najafian (below right) and

LUKE MACNAMARA
30
ASPEN

Inspired by a post of beautiful sunlight he found on his blog, Macnamara decided to make a soup in Aspen to donate to a local food bank. He bought a few pounds of organic carrots and bulbs, then searched online for brand-name Agave at a London store. "I was in the store when I signed up for 400 tickets," including 100 for the 100,000 Friends of Bond Street. It became a Corp event, and he was there when the store sold out for \$700 million. "I was like, 'This is the best it's ever been!'" he says. "I want it to be my greatest strength as an entrepreneur. I would like to start a charity to help people who are struggling to better support people with disabilities." Macnamara says





There aren't many pantries that have a trophy cabinet - but we might be one of them! We've enjoyed tremendous success on the awards circuit over the past few months - in fact, the last year - none of which would have been possible without the exceptional contributions from every team member across our business. So, whilst a few of us got glammed up to collect these trophies, they really are a win for us all!

There were no April Fools with our first award of 2023, when we were named Public Sector Catering's Contract Caterer

of the Year - up against some far larger opposition in a fiercely competitive category across the whole country, this was the kind of industry recognition we could only dream of a few short years ago.



Moving into the Summer, the Local Authority Catering Association also named us their Caterer of the Year - an even broader category, and the only thing wider than the category was Luke's smile when he'd heard we'd won!

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Autumn arrived and it was time for the spotlight to settle onto Luke himself, as he'd been selected by The Times and LDC as one of their 50 'Most Ambitious Business Leaders'. Chosen to reflect the most forward-thinking business owners across the millions of SMEs in the UK, it was enviable company to be a part of, and one of the most exciting moments of Luke's career to date.

Being named the Most Ambitious Business Leader was something else entirely, and saw Luke's face splashed across a number of industry papers, as well as himself and The Pantry being profiled in The Times Supplement itself!





And just as the first baubles were being draped over the nation's Christmas trees, we brought along a bumper team of Pantry People to the Growing Business Awards 2023. Each member of our office team nominated a kitchen staff member to accompany them to the awards, as a way for us to recognise some of the people who have really shone over the past year, and pop on their glad rags for what proved to be a very glitzy night at the Marriott Hotel in Grosvenor Square.

Having won the Family Business of the Year award at the previous years' edition, we were hopeful but realistic about being able to double-up – it's an old cliché but we were just happy to be nominated again, being nominated for Entrepreneur of the Year, Employer of the Year, and Growing Business of the Year.

So, it was to our great surprise, and greater pleasure, to hear our name read out as the Growing Business of the Year – with the judges recognising not only the

exceptional growth we'd enjoyed over the past year with over 50 client wins, but our commitment to staff and customer care, and sustainable approach to business development.

It bears repeating that these awards are a reflection of the work that every Team Pantry member has put into the company this past year, and we're so proud to see the values you all carry across into your work being recognised across such a varied field, both inside and outside of our industry.

Here's to a stellar 2024 – it's got fantastic footsteps to follow in!



THE ENGAGEMENT PLANNER | THE CLASS IS IN SESSION!



Our Added Value Engagement events are where we really flex our muscles, and go far beyond the standard service we provide each day. With our dedicated Craft and Engagement Team supported by our Nutrition and Marketing Departments, we've been able to bolster our Engagement Brochure with even more sessions – and we continue to offer them to our Schools completely free of charge!

This section is the perfect showcase for all the excellent engagement we've recently held, as well as giving you a flavour of what we can deliver to your School in the future – so if you see

something you'd like delivered to your own pupils, just give our Marketing Team a nudge!

ALL ABOUT *BALANCE*

Achieving a Healthy, Balanced Diet isn't just about the food we eat, it's about the knowledge we have to make the right choices at your mealtimes – and thanks to this wonderfully interactive session hosted by our Senior Nutritionist, the Year 2 children at Field End Infant School in Ruislip are totally clued-up!

The children first sat and soaked up our trainer's healthy eating lesson, as she taught them all about the Eatwell Guide, which nutrients our bodies need, and in which foods they can find them.

They were then raring to get stuck into the interactive part, as they applied their newly-found knowledge to help identify a range of different foods, and build their very own healthy, balanced diet!



MAKING A MEAL OF IT

Just a School Bus Stop away from our Head Office in Uxbridge, our Craft Trainer stopped by at St Mary's Primary School to deliver a Knife & Fork Session for the Reception children – a fantastic way for them to develop the skills they need to be able to eat just like the big kids!

Under our trainer's watchful eye, and with a set of safety cutlery to practice with, the children learnt the correct way to handle their knife and fork, as well as practice cutting and holding techniques with a variety of different foods, and how to create bite-size portions of food that they can happily eat at mealtimes!

FEELING SWEET

We round out with a roadshow, as the Engagement Team took their Sugar Smart seminar on a tour of our newly-acquired clients at the Evolution Academy.

Pupils from Year 3 all the way through to Year 6 at Wensum Junior School, Bignold Primary School, Costessey Primary School, Eaton Primary School and Elm Tree Primary School were taught about the secret sugar lurking in some of their favourite foods and drinks, as well as how to manage their intake, and some great-tasting alternatives they can try.

The pupils were given a quiz sheet so they could guess at how many cubes of sugar some of the most popular treats around contained, and it's fair to say there were a few raised eyebrows when they found out the answers!



Looking to book in an event of your own?

Our Engagement Brochure is packed with over 20 unique added-value events for you to select from.

If you'd like a copy sent to you, simply contact the marketing team and we'll send you one across. And if you'd like to book in a session, contact us on the same address with a few details, including your preferred session, the Year Group you'd like it delivered to, and some available dates, and we'll get you booked in!

GET IN TOUCH!

marketing@thepantrycatering.co.uk

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TOP OF THE OPS | SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS



Christmastime is always the most hectic, but (nearly always!) the most enjoyable time of the year in our kitchens. And what better way to banish those back-to-School blues than reflecting on all the fantastic effort that went into making the Christmas Lunches across our Schools that little more festive!

We've collected and collated some of our favourite snaps from the season for you to enjoy, and whether your pictures are featured or not, we just want to say a huge well done to every one of our kitchens - with over 50,000 meals served, you all contributed to our own little Christmas miracle!



YOU MAKE ME WANNA SHOUT!

We believe that good work should never go unrecognised, so in each edition of The Pantry Post, we'll be celebrating the staff who've gone above and beyond in putting The Pantry in the spotlight! From inspired individuals to terrific teams, we won't be shy in shouting you out – so let's see who's been top of the tree these past few months...

Our first shout out goes to Saira, our Chef Manager at the London Screen Academy, in Islington. Since Saira took over the management of the School in the autumn, she's really gone the extra mile to make every service sing, from her attention to detail at mealtimes, to special days and themed menu that have proved a huge hit with the pupils.

And we're not the only ones to be impressed. Our clients, Laura and Charlie, were glowing in their praise of Saira, as they remarked that the way she has *'embraced the students and the staff and the team is honestly just so incredible!'*



GOLDEN GLEBE

Our next commendation goes to our Chef Manager Roberto at Glebelands School, in Cranleigh. The lengths Robbie goes for his School's Theme Days are extraordinary, and his efforts this Christmas were nothing short of spectacular – the picture barely does them justice!

He's also cultivated a flower and herb garden on-site too, which he tends to over the weekends, and it's this level of dedication that makes him a Pantry person to be really proud of.

TREATED LIKE ROYALTY

Our final shout out this month is certainly no after-thought, as we celebrate the right royal effort Diane has put in at The Royal School in Windsor.

Working by herself in a small kitchen, she runs an exemplary service – from budgeting brilliantly to ensuring every child has a personable service, she's long been a firm favourite at the School, and she's quickly become one at The Pantry, too.

Not only that, but her kitchen was recently awarded a 5* rating by the EHO – Diane, you really are cleaning up across the board!

PUTTING MORE ON YOUR PLATE | THE SUPER SALAD SUMMARY



Managing our largest ever cohort of Pantry pupils means we're keenly aware how important a filling, nourishing and delicious meal is for every child that passes through our dining halls - so we've revolutionised our free Salad Bars to ensure our diners really are putting more on their plates than ever before. And more of the *right* stuff, too.

Across every participating Primary School, we're serving up a different seasonal Super Salad each month, making the most of a marvellous medley of fruits and veggies that are guaranteed to get the cutlery clattering!

We really do want our diners to eat the seasons at our Salad Bar, and something that will really put the Spring into their step as we move into March is our Roasted Leek Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette - light, luscious and luxurious leeks are lifted with a beautifully tart dressing.

With summer just around the corner, April's Radish & Watermelon Salad is a wonderfully refreshing salad that takes two very different ingredients and pairs them up in the most perfect way! The juicy sweetness of the watermelon meets the perky pepperiness of the radish to create a truly moreish meal!

It's gotta be May with our Sweet Pea, Radish & Spring Onion spectacular! Be prepared to be wowed with this exquisite combination. A trio of soft and subtle ingredients are paired with robust rocket and a tangy maple dressing that really does serve up the sunshine!





WINNER, WINNER PANTRY DINNER | EYES ON THE PANTRY PRIZE



Seeing our pupils enjoy a Pantry meal every day is reward enough for us, but we thought we'd like to give something a little more back to our most dedicated diners by introducing our monthly Pantry Prize Competition.

Each month, every Primary School pupil that orders a meal for every available lunchtime is entered automatically into a prize draw for that month's Pantry Prize – so let's meet some of our lucky winners!

In October, a tablet was on the table as part of our prize draw – an iPad, to be precise, and our lucky Winner was Julia at St John's XIII Primary School in Hammersmith. Julia was an especially deserving inaugural winner, as she'd placed orders for the entire term in advance – and our MD Luke was delighted to pop into the School and personally hand over her prize!



In the run-up to Christmas, we wanted to take care of every aspect for the festive feast with our Holiday Hamper crammed with food, drink and other seasonal treats. And we couldn't have found a happier recipient in Samiyah from Bowes Primary School in Enfield. Luke dropped off their hamper personally – and we hope it really made the big day that little bit more special for the whole family.

Jumping to January and our latest prize was designed to keep our lucky winner sweet – with a Pancake Making Kit. We think our winner at Newnham Junior School in Ruislip had a flipping good time with her kit – plenty of people were already on-hand to help her get it unpacked in time for Shrove Tuesday!

We've got prizes lined up for the rest of the School Year – including a Book Hamper, a Bike, a Nintendo Switch Bundle, and many more – and we can't wait to see how many pupils secure their entry to the next prize draws by locking in their lunches every day!





THE COMMERCIAL BREAK | AMAZON & BEYOND



Delivering excellent events is where our commercial sector shines, and we were privileged to be able to light up a dazzling array of Amazon's distribution and sortation centres in the lead up to Christmas – serving up tens of thousands of meals in November and December alone!

First up, we gave their new sortation centre in Leeds a Pantry-powered launch with two hot food events, with a delectable range of Indian-inspired treats complementing a carnival of columns, balloon arches and fun-fair stalls!

We left more than a light on for Diwali, too – with over 400 staff member receiving a bespoke gift pack containing a Samosa, Penda, Bombay Mix and Masala Tea Sachet.



The Day of the Dead was anything but dormant in Kent and Leeds – with themed balloons, cupcakes, sweets, and a face-painting booth ensuring that the whole day went off with a BOO!



Another new opening in Aylesford saw us break out the Breakfast Baps, which went down an absolute treat as hundreds of hungry new starters tucked into hundreds of egg, bacon and sausage rolls.



And rounding out our Amazon adventures with even more positivity, or *positivitea*, to be more precise, were our tailored care packages to celebrate **Mental Health Week**, with each staff member receiving a tailored box with a specially-branded mug, sachet of tea, and a biscuit, to encourage them to take a break and put their mental wellbeing first.



OPENING THE DOOR

The Door at W4 is an exclusive wellness oasis nestled in the heart of Chiswick, and we were charged with delivering something notably nourishing at a pair of December events for their members. Our Breakfast & Lunch buffet consisted of a carefully-curated spread of Ottolenghi-style salads, grilled Meat & Fish Skewers, and hand-made wraps amongst many other treats designed to promote wellness of the mind and body, as part of their Mental Health week campaign; and we pepped up their Staff Christmas Party with a smoky and succulent Paella, freshly-served to staff celebrating the start of the festive season at the Club des Sports in nearby Acton.



A FESTIVE FEAST

Christmas is an especially important time to bring families together, and we were honoured to be able to cater for 100 displaced Ukrainian children as part of a Christmas Function held in conjunction with Hillingdon Council.



Have you got a hankering for hospitality, or simply need something to liven up your lunchtime?

Then what are you waiting for - reach out to us through the details below and we'll see how we can cater for you!

GET IN TOUCH!

sales@thepantrycatering.co.uk

0203 950 0264



OUT AND ABOUT | WHERE ELSE WE'VE POPPED UP!



We're always looking to make our presence felt wherever possible – both across our industry and outside of it! We've been proud to take part in a number of exciting projects over the past few months that have really helped enhance our profile – so let's take a little look at what else we've been up to.

In October, we were excited to make our presence felt as the reigning 'Contract Caterer of the Year' at the 2023 Public Sector Catering Expo, where a number of fascinating industry stalwarts were on-hand to give their perspective on the most pressing issues within the industry, and how best to turn these challenges into opportunities. Keynote Speaker Gregg

Wallace caught up with Luke and was especially intrigued about The Pantry Project and how he could help support our healthy eating message across our Customer Base – watch this space!



In November, Luke was invited to deliver his own keynote speech at LACA's yearly conference – and he was honoured to be able to share The Pantry's success story, and how we're navigating a particularly tricky time in the industry whilst still providing an exceptionally-high quality of service on a daily basis.

And prior to Christmas, the whole Head Office team got to dive into something a little different, as we were invited to judge a series of brilliant pictures, poems, and

other creative masterpieces from some of London's brightest young minds. As part of the Mayor of London's drive to make School Meals accessible for all, children from all over the City were invited to submit an artistic presentation, explaining how much School Meals meant to them. We were blown away by how high the standard was, and as you can see, plenty of the office got stuck in!



HOME IS WHERE HR IS | EXPANDING THE FAMILY!



Over the past few months, we've had a very busy, but very productive time with over 100 new staff joining us from new business across the end of 2023 and the start of 2024 – and we'd like to extend a warm Pantry welcome to you all!

Ensuring such a large volume of people are properly welcomed, inducted, and trained as they enter a new company is no small task, and we've been indebted to the work of everyone in the department has put in to ensure each and every new starter has started off their Pantry career on the right foot.

It's not just our kitchen staff that's been expanding either – our HR Team has, too! Monika and Himani have recently joined the HR family in the past couple of months, each bringing their own special talents to the table as we strengthen our

department to meet the needs of our ever-growing business.

Himani has moved across from the Finance department as Payroll Manager, helping us bring a more efficient approach to processing our Payroll, as well as introducing the team to the delights of desk exercise!



Monika, meanwhile, who has joined us as HR Admin assistant.



She also brings experience from a catering background, meaning she has hit the ground running, and her organisational skills and bubbly personality has already made quite the impact in the office!

Our HR Team really are the bedrock for making sure everything in our Head Office and beyond runs smoothly, and Monika and Himani will play a big part in that!