

# FPA Rising Star Award shortlist showcases the industry's emerging talent

Submitted by: Foodservice Packaging Association (FPA)

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The Foodservice Packaging Association (FPA) is delighted to announce the shortlist for the 2024 FPA Rising Star Award.

Each year the FPA recognises and celebrates talented young people who are new to the foodservice packaging industry, but who are already making their mark within their companies and contributing to the success of each business.

In addition to shining a spotlight on outstanding young professionals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication, creativity and innovation in their roles, the Rising Star Award also seeks to encourage and inspire future talent within the industry.

2024 has seen an unprecedented number of entries, resulting in a shortlist of nine:

Faith Henderson – Bidfood:

On joining the company within a newly reformed team Faith took ownership of disposables across the Bidfood network of 26 depots – growing the sales team and evolving the team structure. Since taking on hygiene and equipment sales, Faith's tireless efforts and outstanding customer service have resulted in a personal sales contribution of £10.7 million and a 10% growth forecast at the end of this financial year.

Abigail Jones – i2r Packaging:

Abigail started at i2r as an apprentice and since then has spearheaded the creation of a multi-stage training path for new employees and helped improve system efficiency by automating a manual packing station. She also created a preventative maintenance programme to schedule presses and machines for regular servicing – reducing the risk of failure. Her hard work and dedication saw her shortlisted for SME Apprentice of the year by the Lloyds Banking Group.

Erika Martin – NCCO:

Erika joined NCCO as an internal sales executive, but having developed excellent relationships with the company's customers was quickly promoted to sales executive for northern and eastern Europe. Within this role she constantly impresses her colleagues with her focussed, organised and determined work ethic, coupled with an inquiring approach and an appetite to challenge the norm to improve results.

Nick Mathers – KP:

Nick's role as asset care manager sees him overseeing all machinery and managing upgrades and transitions – from sourcing solutions through to installation. His drive and commitment to a project designed to convert an annual production of 700 million EPS trays to a version that can be widely recycled at kerbside was pivotal – helping to save a site employing over 200 people from potential closure.

Harley Penn – 4 Aces:

Harley's work ethic across multiple apartments during his apprenticeship gave him invaluable insights into the company's operations in addition to the inherent understanding he gained from a 30-year family heritage within the food packaging industry. As sales representative Harley's professionalism ensures the seamless integration of products across the food packaging, vending, water cooling and coffee sectors.

George Rebello – GoPak:

Known for his 'IT genius, humility, and exceptional communication skills', since joining GoPak as business transformation coordinator George's contributions are described as having 'fundamentally reshaped the company's landscape'. He has emerged as a role model – spearheading vital technology modernisation projects, optimising back-end processes, and enhancing customer digital interfaces – regularly handling up to eight significant projects at any one time.

Adrienne Wheeler – GoPak:

Having initially joined the company as a part-time graphic designer, Adrienne's creativity and flair quickly led to a full-time marketing role. Since then she has enriched all Go-Pak's marketing collateral, single-handedly managing the development of exhibition stands, refreshing all photography, and enhancing marketing campaigns, resulting in significantly increased customer engagement both online and offline.

Bethan Williams – Vegware:

Despite having only two years of experience in foodservice packaging, Beth's impact has been impressive, having been promoted from regional sales manager to national account manager, before being appointed head of national accounts. Within this role she has been instrumental in helping customers switch to compliant packaging options in advance of the single-use plastics ban, and helping the company achieve a 60% increase in web sales for its ban-compliant products.

Josh Wood – Cromwell Polythene:

Josh has emerged as a trailblazer within the company and is nominated for his holistic approach to the business, spanning brand development, sales strategy and a strong commitment to sustainability and corporate responsibility. His innovative approach enables him to create compelling brands and products and position them strategically in response to consumer dynamics and industry trends.

Commenting on this year's Rising Star Award nominations, FPA chair Mark Byrne says:

"It's fantastic to see such wide and divergent examples of young industry talent – from sales and marketing prowess to innovative thinking that makes a meaningful impact on processes, production, and profits.

"The shortlisted candidates have not only demonstrated excellence in their daily roles, but have also exhibited a strong commitment to the evolution and growth of the foodservice packaging industry. We are fortunate to have such inspiring young people within the workforce and we hope their achievements will encourage others to follow in their footsteps".

The 2024 FPA Rising Star Award will be presented during the 2024 FPA Award celebration and dinner at the

Grand Hotel, Brighton on Thursday 07 March 2024. For enquiries re tickets please email to Lisa McGowan, FPA administrator at [lisa@foodservicepackaging.org.uk](mailto:lisa@foodservicepackaging.org.uk)

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Notes to editors

Further information re the nominations and Images of the shortlisted 2024 FPA Rising Star Award entrants are available on request from Lisa McGowan at [lisa@foodservicepackaging.org.uk](mailto:lisa@foodservicepackaging.org.uk)  
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About the Foodservice Packaging Association (FPA) <https://foodservicepackaging.org.uk>

The Foodservice Packaging Association (FPA) is a leading trade body, representing organisations associated with the foodservice packaging industry. Its membership includes both large global companies and smaller businesses – offering a broad range of foodservice products and services – together with organisations responsible for the waste collection, processing and recycling of foodservice packaging.

The FPA upholds the interests of its members when meeting with UK government, the devolved administrations, NGOs and other trade associations. Its executives sit on a number of steering groups, including: the DRS industry working group; the HMRC industry working group for the plastics tax; and the steering group for overall Defra reforms.

The FPA's mission is to showcase innovation and provide a unified voice to advance and promote the foodservice packaging industry through advocacy and education. The annual FPA Exhibition and Awards celebrate members' achievements and innovations; FPA Environment Seminars bring together high-level speakers from governments, industry and academia – allowing members to engage directly with policy makers and thought leaders; and the FPA's weekly Digest disseminates complex issues, translating them into plain English to keep members informed of recent and upcoming legislation; environmental and sustainable issues; and the views and activities of relevant NGOs and other sector bodies.

The FPA is committed to promoting sustainable practices and responsible stewardship of the environment. All FPA members undertake to comply with the FPA Code of Practice, confirming that their organisations operate to the highest standards.