

# Case Study

**SCOTLAND  
FOOD & DRINK  
PARTNERSHIP**

## Maclean's Highland Bakery: resilience comes from treating staff well

**"During Covid-19, everyone here has done something they would have not contemplated about a year ago. Because our staff were ready and able to adapt, we'll come out of it stronger."**

*Lewis Maclean, MD*



**Throughout Macleans, we develop our people, look after them and offer work-life balance. Our experience during the Covid-19 pandemic showed the value of building skills and loyalty.**

Maclean's Highland Bakery is a fourth-generation family bakers producing award-winning traditional morning goods, confectionery and savoury products, and luxury biscuits. We have shops in Forres, Grantown and Lossiemouth, a wholesale business, and a range of luxury biscuits and oatcakes sold across the UK and internationally.

The early stages of the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 were dark days for businesses like ours. But right from the start, our staff showed they were key to our recovery. For example, three of our shops stayed open because that's what the staff wanted; it wasn't a top-down order.

### How we invest in our people

In baking, like elsewhere in food and drink, it can be hard to find qualified staff. Therefore, we take a different approach:

- **We look for people with a good attitude and develop them.** We encourage our staff to continually develop their skills this might be a Modern Apprenticeship or other relevant training to build their skills.
- **We train people at all levels.** Our Modern Apprentices do SVQ levels 2 and 3 in Baking and Retail and staff at all levels from shop floor to Directors are given support to develop their skills
- **We show them how other businesses manage things.** We occasionally send supervisors to see how things are done at bakers in the Central Belt – we're not in competition, so are happy to help each other.

We benefit from excellent support and advice from across the Scotland Food & Drink Partnership.

### Future success depends on the people we attract

Businesses need to attract and retain good people, and that means training them - in technical skills like baking, management and digital skills.

With increasing investment in machinery, we'll need good engineers and technical supervisors as well as good people managers.

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Our experience during lockdown highlighted how resourceful and dependable our staff are.

atmosphere, and being a good employer will be more important than ever to our future success.

At Macleans, we believe our culture of training, work-life balance, creating a good working

## Three other vital ingredients for resilience

**Agility:** When events happen, you have to react quickly. With Covid-19, we responded to supermarket shortages by selling flour and dried yeast in our shops. As well as creating new revenues, it brought in new customers.

**Strategic focus:** Lockdown underlined the truth of the '80-20 rule' - namely that 80% of your results come from 20% of your activity. With staff furloughed, we cut out activity which was low-margin and labour-intensive.

**Diversification:** Covid-19 highlighted the value of our previous strategic diversification into the three main strands of retail, wholesale and biscuits. When there are unexpected downturns or shocks, it adds resilience and works in your favour.

[www.macleansbakery.com](http://www.macleansbakery.com)

