

The output of the Irish Food and Drink industry, underpinned by a world class agrifood sector, is characterised by high quality, sustainability, and rich heritage. For Irish Food and Drink businesses – and indeed for the industry as a whole – Marketing should be a core competency to enable the true to potential of Irish Food and Drink to be realised.

Much of the focus in the development of marketing capability lies in the development of marketing skills, and rightly so – the right skills performed to a high level are critical to success. A second, and perhaps more important area of focus that is often less understood is Marketing Leadership, or in very simple terms framing what marketing should do and how to make it happen. This area has been extensively researched and developed by Thomas Barta – a globally renowned authority on marketing leadership – in his book *The 12 Powers of a Marketing Leader*. The principles of this book have been built into **The Marketing Leadership Masterclass** which Thomas runs with Syl Saller CBE, the former Diageo Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer and Marketing Society President, who is regarded as one of the foremost marketing leaders globally of recent decades.

The programme is incredibly accessible and applicable, combining the expertise of Thomas, Syl, coaching support and a host of top marketing leaders who give their perspective through guest talks. It encourages participants to connect and in the dynamic world that is marketing, opportunities to build networks like these are incredibly valuable. At Kepak, our senior marketers have been going through this programme for the last few years and the results are in my view step changing in terms building their skill to make a high-level impact on the business.

With a large SME sector in Irish Food and Drink, it's critically important to have marketers with absolute clarity of focus on what their businesses need and the ability and influence to make it happen. This programme provides this in spades, and I would highly recommend it for senior marketers in organisations of any size and even for senior execs/business owners looking to better grasp on what marketing should look like.

Adrian Lawlor

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