The Collective Review

THE EXPERT COLLECTIVE | PROUDLY ESTABLISHED IN 2003 | J&K

Edition No. 6

A ROUND-UP OF THE YEAR

2025

A LOOK AT WHAT 'S INSIDE:

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2025 Highlights

Happy Birthday Jane!

1,535,918

cases delivered this year

Happy Birthday Charlotte!

Welcome to our new starters!

Our business is growing more than ever so we have been recruiting hard. We even have some third-generation J&K, with Joe & Harry joining the team!

Kerry Mooney

Account Manager

Kerry has over 13 years of retail buying experience, mainly in FMCG and is loving being part of the J&K family.

Outside of work, she likes to spend time with her four-year-old son outdoors in the garden, biking or playing sports. When she does get some 'me-time', she likes to hit the gym or go for a run.

Joe Derbyshire

Compliance Coordinator

Joe has joined J&K after completing his degree in music technology at the University of Salford. He is a big fan of sports and watches Liverpool play whenever he can.

He has also started playing golf the past few years and loves to watch the F1. Outside of work, he loves to spend time with his family and go out with his friends.

Harry Derbyshire

Supply Chain & Technical Admin

Harry has joined J&K after completing his degree in ecology and conservation at Lancaster University. His main hobby outside of work is playing golf with his dad, grandad and brother.

If he isn't on the golf course, you can still find him outdoors as he enjoys gardening and loves to go on a woodland walk, enjoying the fresh air and studying the weather.

Rebecca Smith

Technical Manager

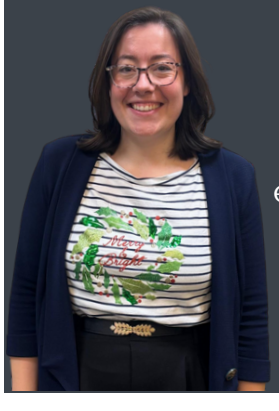
Rebecca has over 18 years of experience within the food industry so her depth of knowledge is insane! Prior to J&K, she worked for Morrisons working on meat, fish, bakery and even pet food!

After work hours, she is an avid reader and enjoys unwinding with a good book. She also spends a lot of her free time with her two much-loved sausage dogs, who keep her busy!

Alice Holden

Product Developer

Alice comes from a background in product development scaling from continental meat and cheese, to alcohol and is very excited to be making a move into confectionery.



During her free time, she loves to be in the garden, growing things she can eat and she would love to instil this passion of food and gardening to her little boy in the years to come.

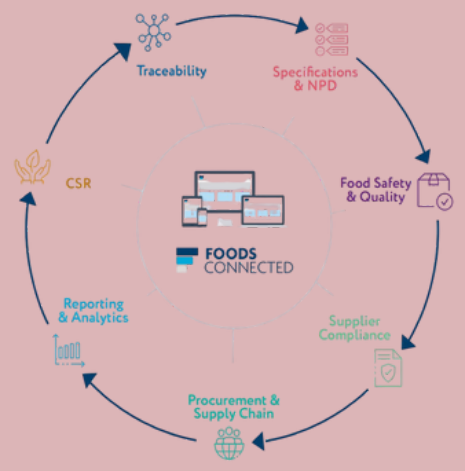
Pippa Ainscough

Product Development Coordinator

Pippa is our newest recruit here at J&K. She brings a unique blend of experience from customer facing roles in travel, real estate and logistics.

She has a passion for design, food and creativity and is excited to get hands on with development. Outside of work, she loves to give back to the community through charity work and baking!

FOODS CONNECTED: 5 KEY WINS



Across 2025 we gradually implemented our new compliance tool, Foods Connected, across our supply base. Thanks to you all for engaging in this project and using the system. We've already seen brilliant results across the business, with data at our fingertips, and much more consistency as a result. In 2026 it will continue to grow so that we rely less on email traffic and push one consistent message. Here are 5 key areas we've seen the most progress in:

1/. Less email traffic:

With Foods Connected we can route a lot of information through to you, which previously would have jammed up your inboxes. This includes customer complaint notifications, artworks requiring approval, taste panel feedback, audit reports. The system can flex to meet our needs, so expect this to grow.

2/. Quality data, visualised

The system gives us much deeper insight on all things quality. Right now, we can drill into complaints in any way we wish. By customer, by volume, by complaint type, by season. In the future, we'll also be able to do this for a wider category of quality metrics, such as taste panel results and internal non-conformances.

3/. One source of truth

We were a business reliant on Excel spreadsheets. Now we have key product information stored securely in one place. What does this mean for you? Fewer questions, less 'double-checking', and more consistency. Please ensure people in your business have access to Foods Connected and are using the system regularly!

4/. Critical path workflows, in one place

The final part to be implemented, and arguably the most important, was for us to begin building our concepts using the Foods Connected system. Critical paths are set with owners and deadlines automatically implemented. That means we're all more accountable, and more likely to stay on track. All of the data is securely stored in the cloud meaning we are building a library of all projects, with all important information in one place. Artwork files, specifications, sign-off tasks, first production reports, for each product, in one place.

5/. Audits and gap analysis work

Gone are the days of writing up visit notes and chasing you on email. We'll be building all of our reports on the system and asking you to close them out via Foods Connected. We can audit from our phones, upload pictures and create deadlines to support you in preparing for customer audits.

Please support us in 2026 by continuing to use the system. If you have any suggestions on how it could be improved, I'd be pleased to hear from you!
Thanks, James
Technical Director

New York, New York

Forward thinking within the food industry is crucial to staying current and on trend with development. Every year, some of our J&K team travel to a different country to scope out anything new, interesting and innovative to support our growth as a business and help keep us ahead of the curve.
America is one of those places where you can clearly see trends beginning to take shape, gaining momentum and eventually becoming more mainstream. This year, the Development team travelled to New York to explore what's interesting & new.

Where we stayed

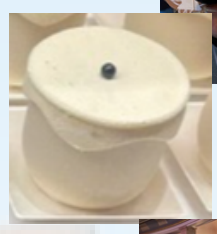
We stayed at the Civilian Hotel in Hell's Kitchen, which was a great base for the trip. Its central location made it easy to get around the city and fit a lot into each day, with many of our stops within walking distance or a short subway journey away.

Day 1: We started day one at Ellen's Stardust Diner, home of the world-famous singing waiters. It was a fun and energetic way to kick off the trip and fuel up for a busy first day. From there, we headed to Columbus Circle where we visited Magnolia Bakery to try their famous banana pudding which didn't disappoint!
Next, we visited Whole Foods Market and Williams Sonoma, spending time looking at new products, flavour combinations and how ranges are presented in-store. These two stores were so contrasting with one leading the way with cleaner eating trends and elevated snacking and the other focussing on premium packaging and indulgence.
From there, we wandered through a sunny Central Park before continuing to Butterfield Market where we saw a great mix of trends across categories with premium ingredients, unique packaging formats, and a nice balance of indulgence and cleaner label products.
We ended the afternoon in Bergdorf Goodman where we saw the real Father Christmas! He confirmed we were all on the nice list which was reassuring! We stopped for an authentic New York street slice at Joe's pizza while spending some of our evening around Times Square before we went on for dinner at Miss Nellie's which was decked out with beautiful Christmas decorations and where we shared an incredible 'Campfire Smores'.

Day 2: Day two focused heavily on unique bakeries and speciality confectionery. We started at It's Sugar and Liberty Bagels, both leaning into bold colours, fun branding and strong visual appeal. These stores highlighted how novelty and experience play a big role in attracting customers.
We then visited Dominique Ansel Bakery in Soho, the creator of the cronut, which offered plenty of inspiration in terms of creativity, technique and flavour. There we tried 'Christmas Morning Cereal', a gourmet blend of smoked cinnamon meringues, caramelised milk chocolate puffed rice and candied hazelnuts. This was a product highlight for most of the team! From there, we headed to Trader Joe's, where we explored private label products and noted how trends are translated into accessible, everyday ranges.

The rest of the day was spent visiting a variety of independent bakeries and confectioners, including The Meadow, Stick With Me, Supermoon Bakehouse and Red Gate Bakery. Across these visits, there was a clear focus on craftsmanship, and innovative flavours and limited edition products, with a stop in between at Eileen's Special Cheesecake to tick off Georgia's bucket list.

We finished the day with a stop at Papa D'Amour, a bakery created by Dominique Ansel celebrating Asian bread culture, where we sampled a Black Sesame Jam Jar packed with texture and subtle flavours. Then off to the bright lights of Broadway to watch Beetlejuice, a personal dream for Alice!



Day 3: Day three took us across the Brooklyn Bridge to watch the sunrise and into areas known for their food heritage and independent businesses. We started the day at Cha Cha to try a strawberry matcha oat latte, then onto Clinton Street Baking Co. for some blueberry pancakes before visiting Jacques Torres and Russ & Daughters, both offering a strong sense of tradition while still feeling relevant to today's consumer. It was amazing to watch their bagel-making process!

We continued onto Kettl, a small café specialising in Japanese tea where we picked up some Hojicha tea bags before moving onto Radio Bakery. Here we tried some amazing bakery products including a Brown Butter Cornbread and a French Onion Danish which was a great twist to a traditional pastry.

We spent the afternoon at a Brooklyn Graffiti Tour which let us get creative and collaborate as a team to create our own J&K mural! We then finished the day doing some more team bonding at Tipsy Scoop where we got to sample different ice creams and made our very own boozy ice cream with fudge pieces, peppermint crumble and rum!

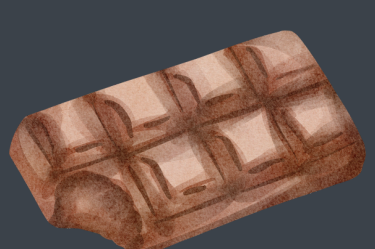
Day 4: Our final day was more relaxed as we wrapped up our visit, as we visited Starbucks Reserve which allowed us to sample some rare high-quality coffees including a whiskey barrel aged cold brew which had an incredible depth of flavour and character with notes of caramel and toasted malt. We finished our comp shop at Chelsea Market, taking in the mix of artisan food producers and independent vendors.

Final Thoughts

The New York comp shop trip was a valuable and inspiring experience for the Development team. From indulgent bakery trends to innovative confectionery concepts, the trip provided plenty of ideas and insight that will help support future development.

TOP 5 TRENDS FROM NYC

Mushrooms: Mushrooms are emerging as a key functional ingredient, driven by interest in adaptogenic benefits. Varieties such as Lion's Mane are positioned for cognitive support, while Turkey Tail targets immune health. The trend is accelerating through diverse, on-the-go formats including drinks, snacks, gummies, chocolate, and powders, making functional mushrooms more accessible in everyday routines.



Bark Is Better with Bite: Bark is getting a makeover, driven by consumers craving bite, contrast, and visual abundance. Once a seasonal novelty, bark has evolved into a year-round format that delivers indulgence through layered textures, experimenting with nuts, cereals and seeds, even catering to dietary needs including keto, vegan and gluten-free.

Cuppa Tea: Tea continues to evolve beyond the cup. Matcha's popularity is driving flavour crossovers into formats such as granola and gummies, often paired with sweeter profiles like strawberry. Precision processing techniques, including micro-oxidisation, are being used to intensify and refine tea flavours. Tea is also gaining traction as an intriguing ingredient in confectionery and bakery, with varieties such as Hojicha, a Japanese green tea with a mellow, nutty profile, emerging as one to watch.

Format Twist: Bakery is embracing bold format innovation, with sweet and savoury increasingly blending together. This trend goes far beyond cruffins and cronuts, with playful mash-ups such as everything bagel cookies, French onion soup inspired pastries, matcha sable cookies, and scallion pancake Danish pastries. By reworking familiar formats with unexpected flavours, the category is driving novelty, indulgence, and discovery, highlighting endless potential for reinvention across food groups.

Clean & Transparent: Clean and transparent labelling continues to gain momentum, driven by growing demand for simple, recognisable ingredients. Brands are increasingly showcasing store-cupboard ingredients in a shopping-list style on the front of pack to clearly communicate what's inside and build consumer trust. This approach is often reinforced with clear, value-led claims such as vegan, gluten-free, and organic, supporting informed and conscious purchasing decisions.

2025 IN A SNAPSHOT

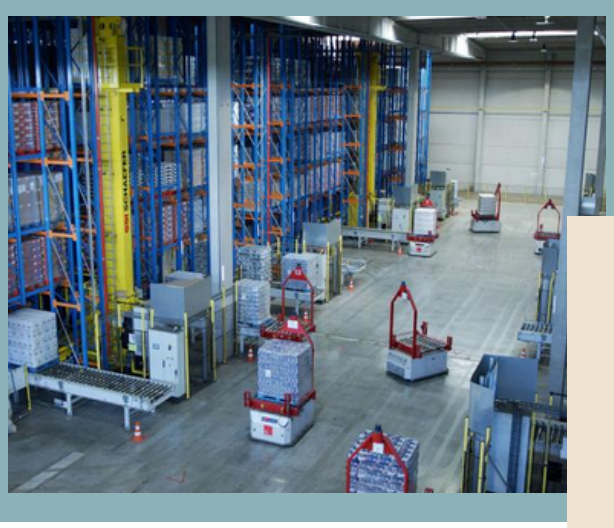
Reflecting on the past year

WREATH MAKING

CONFERENCE

CHRISTMAS DINNER

SUPPLY CHAIN ECS



FESTIVAL OF POLYMER INNOVATION

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

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