

4.1 Developing recipes

PRODUCT
DISTRIBUTION
PROMOTION
PEOPLE
FINANCE
RISK
GROWTH

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Challenge question—imagine this

You have seen a gap in the market for a specific food product—brandied fruit—and you remember a wonderful recipe that your grandmother used to make. You go home, buy some dried fruit at the supermarket, give the recipe a go, make a couple of subtle changes as you go to get the flavours better, and then try it out on the family. They love it so you buy some more dried fruit, make the brandied fruit, (with a couple more changes,) and give it to your friends. They love it too, some make suggestions which you slot away in your brain, and they all encourage you to make more, and sell it at the local farmers' market.

Motivated and invigorated, you book a stall at the next market and start getting things together to make your first official batch for sale. After many late nights of cooking (you had problems with the increased quantities and remembering all the changes you made to the recipe), bottling (you had problems getting enough jars and sterilizing them all) and packing the jars so that they won't break on the way to the stall, you finally get there (having blown the next 4 weeks of the family food budget).

Setting up the stall, you realize that you haven't got anything on the jars saying what is in them, so you quickly write on some sticky labels, brandied fruits. You also realize that you haven't thought about how much to charge, so you make some rough calculations, and decide to sell each jar for \$10.25. You quickly fill the trestle table with all the jars, settle into your deck chair and wait for the jars to 'walk out the door'.

The market has been going for 2 hours and you have only sold 10 jars, and they are to some friends and family that came to support you. People at the market don't stop at your stall very much and if they do, they seem a bit suspicious of what is in the jars. To top it off, the market coordinator comes over and asks about your labelling, the nutritional panels, whether you have notified your council, and your insurance.

List all the problems that you can see here under the following headings:

- > Developing your recipe
- > Sourcing ingredients
- > Product quality and safety
- > Packaging and labelling your product
- > Packaging and labelling your product
- > Pricing your product

Developing your recipes

In the food industry, your recipes are the basic idea, from which you will build a saleable product. It is important to test the recipe, tasting and recording as you go, until you are happy that you have a product you can test in the market. That is just the first step!

Options

1. You can develop the recipes yourself using a laboratory to help with testing stability and nutritional panel testing
2. You can do the initial development of the recipe yourself, then contract a food technician to assist with the increase in batch size, maintaining the consistency of the recipe, and increasing the safety and stability levels and use a laboratory for testing
3. You can brief a new product development consultant and get them to develop the recipe to a commercial level
4. You can contract a research and development service to assist research the market, develop the product and take it to commercialization.

You need to balance your time, expertise and resources against the cost of contracting. However, to develop a consistent, safe, quality product you will be using, at the very least, the services of a laboratory and their technical staff.

Once you have researched your market, and have a basic understanding of its needs and requirements, you can begin to develop your recipe.



Recipe development

Step	Action
1	Write down basic recipe
2	Trial basic recipe writing down notes about method, timing (use a watch), hints and smell/taste/look and mouth feel of the finished product. Record actual weights (grams or mLs) of product rather than tablespoon or teaspoon measurements to make up-scaling easier.
3	Once you are happy with the basic recipe, keep a samples aside to: test shelf life and to have a sample to refer to for smell/taste/look and mouth feel.
4	Increase batch size of recipe (this is called 'scaling up'): how much you increase it by will depend upon the capacity of the facility you are using—try x10.
5	Trial the basic recipe increased proportionally. Take notes on any change in quantities, method, times, hints and smell/taste/look and mouth feel. Compare to the original product. Is it the same, better or worse? Make adjustments to recipe and try again.
6	Using the process above, write down a description of exactly how you want the product to smell/taste/look and the mouth feel. This is useful whether you will be developing the product further or using it to brief others.

If at this stage you are happy with the product and do not need assistance from a food technician, continue the steps in this table. If you are going to go with Options 2, 3, or 4 (above), see the information under this table.

7.	Once you are happy with the recipe and the product and can produce large enough quantities in the facility you are using, you need to get the product tested for shelf life, microbial contamination and nutritional content. Some products (such as meat, seafood, poultry and dairy) have very specific testing that must be carried out, as they are high risk products. Contact a recognised laboratory (details below) and follow the process they outline.
8.	Once the testing is finalized and the results show that you have an edible product, you can begin to run taste tests.

Service providers

If you decide to take Options 2, 3 or 4. then you should find the most suitable food technician, new product development consultant or research and development service. Contact Food SA or go to www.safoodcentre.com/buyershub/pagessolutionproviders/

South Australian laboratories include

- > Institute of Medical & Veterinary Science (IMVS)
ph: 8222 3363
- > Adelaide Microbiology Service (AMS) ph: 8268 8199

What if your facilities do not have the capacity to scale up? You have to go in search of facilities where you can scale up. Following are some suggestions:

1. The under-utilised kitchen facilities of another food group member—ask around
2. Town hall kitchen facilities
3. A local restaurant where you can use their facilities when they are not open for business
4. Community kitchen (e.g. Willunga)
5. Regency TAFE, Days Road, Regency Park ph: 8348 4444
6. Elderly Citizens Homes of SA Inc (ECH), 358 Findon Road, Kidman Park ph: 8353 7433
7. Fasta Pasta, 38 Barnett Ave, Glynde ph: 8336 5157

Intellectual property

Remember, your recipes and methods are a valuable part of your intellectual property and are part of the intrinsic value of the business. Make sure you protect them!

» 9.5 Intellectual property

Websites

Food Science Australia www.foodscience.afisc.csiro.au
www.biotechnology.gov.au/

Case studies

Bonlac Foods www.affa.gov.au/content/output.cfm?ObjectID=D2C48F86-BA1A-11A1-A2200060B0A01576
Anchor Foods www.foodbiz.net.au/v1i3_interviews1.asp