2026
Manchester
22nd October
Event Review

GAMA INNOVATION CONFERENCE & AWARDS



Bringing together
the world's consumer goods
leaders, innovators, buyers
and investors

www.gamainnovation.com

THE EVENT

BRIDGEWATER HALL, MANCHESTER - THURSDAY 22nd OCTOBER 2026



FABIO CORDELLA
Founder & CEO,
Fabio Cordella Group

I wish you all the best for the Gama Speed Pitch 2026 and look forward to seeing you next year in Manchester.



CESAR PEREIRA
Founder & CEO,
Gama

Entering the second decade, the founding mission of GICA remains as vital as ever: to be your accelerator and your connector. Whether you are a brand, an innovative founder, a retailer or an investor, we want today to unlock new markets, inspire fresh ideas and forge partnerships that will reshape our industry.

GAMA INNOVATION AWARDS

Awarded in the disciplines of Product, Packaging, Positioning, Branding & Design, SME, Health & Wellness, Best of Britain, Best of Middle East, Hospitality, Travel, Sustainability and Technology, Gama Innovation Awards go to the top new launches unearthed each month by Gama's network of in-country researchers and analysts.

Winners are chosen through an international panel of expert judges based on a shortlist of innovative products.

GAMA SPEED PITCH

Building on the success of its inaugural launch, the Gama Speed Pitch returned bigger and better as part of GICA's flagship Meet The Investor initiative. Throughout the private morning session at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, founders of high-potential start-ups and scale-ups took to the stage to deliver sharp, compelling 3-minute pitches to an expanded panel of international private investors. The Speed Pitch feature forms a core element of a broader six-month programme designed to connect ambitious brands with growth capital.



GAMA INNOVATION CONFERENCE

The Gama Innovation Conference returned this October for its eleventh edition, bringing together the great and the good from the world of fast moving consumer goods for a unique and inspiring afternoon of presentations and discussions.
An exciting line-up of industry thought leaders from across the globe revealed the strategies and innovations that have shaped the success of their business.



GAMA INNOVATION BOX

Designed to support growth-oriented FMCG businesses to explore new distribution opportunities and secure new retail listings, the Gama Innovation Box initiative enables brands to get their latest products directly in the hands of 10 major buyers from retailers, hotels, airlines and distributors, both in the UK and overseas. The Gama Innovation Box feature forms part of Meet The Buyer, a six-month programme which gives innovative brands a unique opportunity to connect directly with a diverse range of international commercial partners.



SPEAKERS



MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

The Lord Mayor

City of Manchester

Manchester: a city built on innovation



Emmanuela Alesiani

Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Redefining modern wellness: consumer expectations of functional innovation



HIP POP

Emma Thackray

Co-Founder & Managing Director

Breaking through the noise: critical success factors in launching a modern drink brand



Gama

Inspire | Connect | Innovate

Tom Warden

Insights Director

Key innovation trends 2027



Host

Alicia Verrando

Marketing & Public Relations



Department for Business & Trade

Ian Wright CBE

Former Co-Chair, Food and Drink Export Council

The future of the UK food and drink industry



PATISINNO

Elif Aslı Yıldız Tunaoğlu

Founder & Managing Partner

From challenger to scale: lessons in building a high-growth confectionery brand



KHAYELITSHA COOKIES

creating opportunity one bite at a time

Adri Williams

Managing Director

Scaling with purpose: turning social impact into commercial growth



KULAY

Tricia McNeilly

Founder

From foresight to FMCG: executing on emerging consumer trends

Video watch

THE EVENT



On Thursday 22nd October, hundreds of leading representatives from the global fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) community gathered at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester for the eleventh edition of the Gama Innovation Conference & Awards (GICA), continuing a second decade of driving industry innovation, insight, and international collaboration.

This year's edition drew a wide-ranging audience spanning major multinational manufacturers and international retailers – including Thai Union, Union Coop, Spar, Nestle, Coca-Cola, Coop Italia, KraftHeinz and Unilever – alongside high-growth scale-ups, disruptive start-ups and distinguished industry guests. Delegates joined both in person and online from South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia, Ireland, the USA and Bulgaria, demonstrating GICA's ongoing global reach and influence.

Throughout the day, attendees once again had the chance to connect and draw inspiration in the Innovation Zone, where dozens of pioneering companies showcased ground-breaking product concepts from across the globe. Highlights spanned a diverse range of categories, including confectionery, snacks, crackers, biscuits, sun care, functional drinks, CSDs, sweeteners, dairy alternatives and novel oral nicotine, ensuring representation from across a broad swathe of the FMCG industry.

INSIGHT & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

The afternoon session opened with the Gama Innovation Conference, bringing together an exceptional lineup of industry thought leaders for a series of engaging and insightful presentations on the forces reshaping the future of FMCG. Throughout the afternoon, speakers tackled key themes including the evolution of functional health and wellness, the power of purpose-driven entrepreneurship, the fusion of taste science with nutrition and the strategic importance of agile R&D in navigating complex retail environments. Attendees walked away with valuable perspectives on bridging science and consumer appeal, scaling sustainably, and unlocking commercial growth, leaving them energised and equipped with clear, actionable strategies to implement within their own businesses.

- Kicking off the conference, Ian Wright, Former Co-Chair of the UK Food & Drink Export Council, praised the courage and determination required to bring new products to market, emphasising the vital role of dedicated industry platforms in connecting innovative start-ups with investors to drive positive impacts for businesses, consumers and communities alike.
- Next, Emma Thackray, Co-Founder & Managing Director of Hip Pop, detailed her brand's journey from kitchen-table brewing to national retail success, sharing key strategies for modern beverage innovation including prioritizing taste-led repeat purchases, focusing on consumer outcomes over strict categorisation, and staying anchored to core brand purpose.
- Following Emma, Adri Williams, Managing Director of Khayelitsha Cookies, shared her inspiring journey of building a purpose-driven enterprise in South Africa, demonstrating how embedding social impact into the core business model – by creating artisanal baking jobs for unemployed women – can serve as a powerful competitive advantage and drive sustainable growth.
- Next, Emmanuela Alesiani, Founder & CEO of Coccola, explored how taste science and multi-sensory design are revolutionising food reformulation, arguing that the future of wellness lies in combining scientific rigour with pleasure rather than forcing consumers to compromise on flavour when reducing sugar.
- Following Emmanuela, Elif Aslı Yıldız Tunaoğlu, Founder & Managing Partner of Patisinno, illustrated how combining engineering with creative R&D allows brands to pioneer new product categories, highlighting her company's rapid international expansion through functional, clean-label snacking innovations and a strong commitment to female empowerment in manufacturing.
- The next speaker was Tom Warden, Insights Director at Gama, who looked ahead to the key trends set to define FMCG innovation in 2027, including a new clinical edge to health-forward formulation, the growing importance of visual spectacle, novelty and exotic ingredient fusion in the social media age, and a smarter approach to indulgence through low-sugar, high-volume and fruit-forward formulation.
- Wrapping up the conference, Tricia McNeilly, Founder of Kulay, reflected on her entrepreneurial journey across pioneering health food ventures, sharing key hard-won business lessons in managing cash flow and retail scaling while emphasising the critical need to test, listen to consumer feedback and validate product viability before expanding.

CELEBRATING INNOVATION

The second half of the afternoon was, as usual, dedicated to celebrating key breakthroughs in the consumer goods space, with the unveiling of the winners in each category of the Gama Innovation Awards 2026.

Recognising outstanding innovation in the FMCG space, the Gama Innovation Awards represented the very best innovations discovered in the past year by Gama's global network of in-country researchers and analysts.

Awarded in the disciplines of Product, Packaging, Positioning, Branding & Design, SME, Best of Britain, Best of Middle East, Health & Wellness, Travel, Hospitality, Sustainability and Technology, the Gama Innovation Awards go to the top new launches unearthed each month by Gama's network of in-country researchers and analysts.

As ever, judging the 2026 Gama Innovation Awards was a stellar international panel including thought leaders from companies such as Kraft Heinz, Coty, IFFCO and Bel Group, as well as Shark Tank Brasil's Cris Arcangeli, underlining the reputation of the Gama Innovation Awards as a major showcase of global innovation.

Silvia Ruiz, Innovation Director at Gama, said: "The 2026 edition of the Gama Innovation Awards placed centre stage the extraordinary talent and original thinking reshaping our industry. By celebrating the people and brands turning ambitious ideas into impactful realities, we continue to highlight the key developments and solutions that will define the next generation of consumer goods".

What the team here have done with these awards, this conference, the Gama Speed Pitch and the Gama Innovation Box is fantastic because you are making a massive contribution to the work of these businesses, putting them in front of people who have money to invest, and can transform not just the businesses which create them, but the communities around them.

Ian Wright CBE
Former Co-Chair, Food & Drink Export Council



INSPIRING PRODUCTS



EXPERT SPEAKERS



A CELEBRATION OF INNOVATION



NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES



INNOVATION ZONE

FOODHAK · Rokkola · Confectionary Holding · Khayelitsha Cookies · Ginger Up · Date Water · Bubble Panda · High Brands

Lipstrip · Purely Scottish · Hip Pop · Sunny Charm · Uncle Joe's Mint Balls · Patisinno · Porto-Muiños · JG

Süvy · Vintage Brewery · Wildbee Honey · The Turmeric Co. · Hemisphere · Gama Inspire | Connect | Innovate

JUDGES



Cris Arcangeli
Chief Executive Officer, Investor, Serial Entrepreneur, Shark Tank Brazil



Hai Liu
Vice General Manager



Tammy Butterworth
Senior Director Global R&D Operational Excellence



Andrea Budelli
Chief R&D Officer



Vikki Babb
International Marketing Director



Mitesh Jamnadas
Hub Director



John Winnard MBE
Managing Director



Angels Solans
Vice President of Growth



Asif Hasan
General Manager Consumer Insights



Paula Amaral
Head of Sustainability, Innovation & Strategy



Pablo de la Fuente
Strategy, Portfolio & Planning Director



Milana Boskovic
Chief Marketing and R&D Officer



Mithun Appaiah
Chief Executive Officer



Mikko Lindqvist
Chief Sales Officer



Laura De Groot-Trivulzio
Chief Marketing Officer



Nicola Coronado
Global Creative Agencies & Partnerships Director



Alex Baron
Commercial Director



Silvia Ruiz
Innovation Director

AWARDS
Finalists

PRODUCT
Finalists

Our **Product** award recognises any innovation which relates directly to the physical product: this could be a novel flavour, ingredient or technology, or an experiential benefit.



EL BEATO **Torrezno & Caramel Dubai Style Turron**	Pairing the Dubai chocolate trend with savoury pork scratchings (torrezno) offers a bold, experimental take on the sweet-and-salty flavour profile.
IZIDORO **30g Protein Sausages**	Blending egg white into meat products is a novel approach to boosting protein while simultaneously optimizing texture.
MAIZLY **Soy Protein Based Infant Formula**	This launch reflects an expanding role for soy-based alternatives within the highly regulated infant nutrition space.
MY DOCTOR'S RECIPE SMILE HEROES **Fortified Ice Cream**	This children's ice cream leverages advanced micro-coating tech to deliver essential nutrients without compromising on taste or texture.
MYPROVO **Protein Dessert**	Positioning egg whites as a direct substitute for dairy creaminess allows this fat-free dessert to capture the high-protein macro trend without traditional texture compromises.
NOOTZ **Organic Coconut Smoothie**	Blending coconut milk with coconut water creates an unusual, clean-label base that highlights premium, single-origin fruit varieties.
OATLY! **Oat Drink With Turmeric**	Oatly's professional-grade 'golden' base signals that Ayurvedic-inspired functional ingredients are firmly moving into the mainstream cafe space.
OH MY GOODNESS! **Chocolate & Spinach Cookies**	Incorporating spinach into chocolate cookies reflects the ongoing trend of 'stealth health' snacks masking vegetables behind indulgent flavours.
PATISEATH+ **Hazelnut Butter Spread**	Functional fats like shea butter and coconut oil elevate this nut butter from a simple spread to a health-focused powerhouse.
SHESHA **Energy Drink With Raw Sugarcane**	Using hand-harvested sugarcane positions this energy drink at the premium, naturally-sweetened end of the functional beverage market.

PACKAGING
Finalists

Our **Packaging** category focuses on key developments over the past year in materials, sustainability, preservation and convenience.

BINO TRUST **Shower Gel**	Moulding this shower gel bottle into a bold capital letter "B" relies on unique structural geometry to secure immediate shelf standout.
EAT NATURAL **Soft Fruit Bars**	Utilizing an edible rice paper coating on soft fruit bars offers a clever, mess-free solution that hints at a future of reduced inner-packaging wrappers.
FOLI **Oil, Dressing & Vinegar Set**	These bottles use novel design to cosmetically 'lock together' for enhanced shelf impact.
FOXES BOW **Irish Whiskey Pouch**	This pocket-friendly, resealable whiskey pouch successfully reimagines the traditional hip flask for glass-free, on-the-go consumption occasions.
LIOTTI **Ready To Drink Mojito**	Mimicking a chocolate bar, this flat, windowed box format brings an ultra-portable, easy-to-dose single-serve novelty to spirits packaging.
MONCHIQUE **Natural Mineral Water**	This visually striking aluminium bottle elevates the sustainable water category with a premium design and closure meant to encourage continuous reuse.
ONE TRICK PONY **Smooth Peanut Butter**	An ingenious inverted jar design utilizes gravity to naturally manage oil separation in peanut butter, entirely removing the need for additives or stirring.
PENAGALLO **Crunchy Aubergine Crisps**	A separate honey sachet solves the common issue of soggy vegetable chips, offering consumers a customizable, fresh drizzling experience.
POCO VINO **Single-Serve Wine**	These stackable, horizontal single-serve glass mini-bottles maximize retail shelf efficiency while offering a visually disruptive merchandising system.
PURELY SCOTTISH **Natural Mineral Water**	This fully paper-based mineral water bottle, including the closure, marks a highly ambitious milestone for plastic-free beverage packaging.



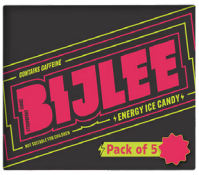
POSITIONING
Finalists

Our **Positioning** award recognises product launches that have reached out to consumers in new ways, such as through innovation in the brand / consumer dynamic.





















ARUN ICECREAMS **Ice Cream Donut**	Positioning ice cream as a physical 'donut' mimic allows the brand to cross-pollinate into bakery dessert occasions.
BIJLEE **Energy Ice Candy**	By utilizing natural coffee extracts, this caffeinated ice candy targets consumers looking for clean-label energy in non-traditional, portable formats.
DON'TWORRY **Quinoa Bites**	Quantifying indulgence at a strict 6-calorie-per-piece level actively gamifies portion control directly via front-of-pack messaging.
EL LOBO **Rice Shortbread For Dogs**	Borrowing premium culinary cues to introduce Spanish-style treats to dogs elevates the humanisation of the pet care category.
KING'S HAWAIIAN **Sweet Ube Coconut Rolls**	Leaning into ube's vibrant purple hue creates a highly visual, Instagram-ready appeal that targets consumers hunting for exotic, global flavors.
KKOBAK KKOBAP **Chicken Breast & Egg Salad**	Marketing combined chicken and egg components in a refrigerated pouch successfully captures the gym-focused 'high-protein fitness nutrition' crowd.
MORENO **Cider Vinegar With Kombucha**	Framing an ACV and kombucha blend specifically as a culinary seasoning ingeniously brings a functional beverage 'health halo' into the condiment aisle.
OREO **Sandwich Biscuits**	The 'Ask Oreo' initiative transforms a simple snack into an interactive game by mimicking the nostalgia of a Magic 8 Ball on-biscuit.
TILLMAN'S **Cheesecake Toaster Pastries**	A breaded, frozen dessert engineered specifically for pop-up toasters creates a playful, novel hybrid of a savoury panini and sweet pastry.
VITZ VITAMINBOOST **Enriched Candies**	Using a medicine-style blister pack cleverly leans into the 'food as medicine' aesthetic to market functional health benefits.

BRANDING & DESIGN
Finalists

Our **Branding & Design** category recognises the products that stand out from the crowd through an innovative concept or creative visual identity.

ACR **Ice 'n' Fries Soft Drink**	This soft drink relies on graphic design to capture a viral internet meme, turning a social media aesthetic into a physical on-shelf product.
CAPRI SUN **Soft Chews**	Capri Sun successfully leans into its highly recognizable brand equity by stretching its iconic silver pouch into the gummy sweets aisle.
FIT FOODS **Lasagne Mac! & Cheese**	The branding of this novel 'Lasagne Mac' hybrid establishes an entirely new, dual-concept comfort food segment on the packaging.
GINGER UP+ **Original Immune Booster Drink**	Using clever typography, the split upside-down text serves as a playful device to physically prompt consumers to shake the can.
HIP POP **Soft Drink**	Vibrant colourways and aggressive branding typography heavily emphasize this soft drink's market positioning as a disruptive, culture-led upstart.
LYO **Freeze-Dried Dumplings**	A cosmic design aesthetic and pouch format work in tandem to anchor the narrative of a freeze-dried dumpling built for space.
MAN CEREAL **Creatine Breakfast Cereal**	An ultra-minimalist, stark white-and-black box design relies on hyper-simplicity to subvert traditional, busy sports-nutrition branding.
STORY BREW **Craft Beer**	The 'Brazil Soul' packaging uses thematic visual identity to map distinct beer varieties to different genres of national music and regional colours.
SUMOL ECLIPSE **Soft Drink**	Leaning heavily into current events, the limited-edition can design taps into a solar eclipse as a thematic, high-impact visual branding exercise.
TOKOOSTER **Fried Chicken Shaped Chocolate**	This whimsical, chocolate 'chicken drumstick' format leans into playful design to instantly disrupt traditional confectionery.









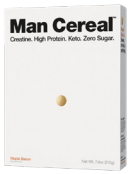












SME
Finalists

Our **SME** award pays homage to the small and medium sized firms that look to rewrite the rules.



BON APPESWEET **Date-Sweetened Chocolate**	SMEs continue to drive dates into mainstream western categories, here positioning date sweetener as a novel natural sugar alternative in chocolate.
FRANUI **Chocolate-Coated Raspberries**	This launch rides the frozen-fruit-as-confectionery wave, leaning into clean-label credentials with an agile cashew butter and no-added-sugar formulation.
LUCIEN **Liege Meatball Flavour Crisps**	A distinctively localised meatball flavour profile showcases how smaller brands can offer a highly novel regional take on traditional meat-flavoured crisps.
MAISON MATCHA **Matcha Capsules**	Adapting traditional matcha ceremony rituals into a compostable, single-serve pod format delivers maximum convenience without ecological compromise.
MONATEA **Cold-Brew Sparkling Rooibos Tea**	This cold-brewed sparkling rooibos line leverages hyper-local South African botanicals to pioneer a unique regional niche in functional beverages.
MORISH **Crispy Seaweed Snacks**	This crispy seaweed snack pushes gourmet boundaries by combining premium avocado and olive oil bases with a novel shiitake mushroom flavor profile.
PIXX **Nicotine-Infused Toothpicks**	Highlighting an ongoing trend toward ultra-discreet functional delivery, this nicotine innovation playfully masquerades as a humble toothpick.
PORTO-MUINOS **Furikake Seasoning**	Utilizing raw black and white sesame seeds adds a compelling, less-processed health dimension to the emerging furikake seasoning segment.
RAW C **Pistachio & White Chocolate Coconut Water**	This world-first coconut water mashup cleverly captures viral social media momentum by introducing a fluid twist to the Dubai chocolate craze.
SUNFLY **Sunflower Seed Butter Filled Dates**	Elevating dates with a premium sunflower seed butter filling highlights a growing opportunity for allergen-friendly, value-added healthful confectionery.

Functional continues to be a watchword in FMCG innovation. Our **Health & Wellness** category recognises products setting new standards in health, nutrition and wellbeing.

HEALTH & WELLNESS
Finalists

ALCOFRIEND **Instant Coffee Powder**	Integrating liver-supportive ingredients into a premium coffee format suggests that liver care could become the next major wellness frontier following gut health.
AMARA GREEN PROBITES **Vegetable Bites**	Infusing meat substitutes with prebiotics and vitamin B12 provides a distinctively gut-friendly, functional spin to the plant-based protein category.
CHILL SPRITZ ZERO **Ashwagandha Sparkling Drink**	This zero-alcohol, zero-sugar fizzy drink leverages a potent dose of the Ayurvedic adaptogen ashwagandha to position refreshment as an active mental pick-me-up.
GUT FOOD FERMENT FIZZ **Fermented Lemonade**	Positioning fermented lemonade as a gentle, fruit-derived alternative to probiotic pills signals a shift toward whole-food solutions for gut health.
HIGHSLIM **Dietary Supplement**	This dietary supplement targets metabolic health by integrating clinically proven Morosil to support glucose regulation and reduce fat storage.
KIMOCHI **N101 Microbiome Boost Mouthwash**	Reframing oral care around the oral microbiome highlights a fresh, scientific mouth-body connection crucial for optimizing daily nitric oxide production.
LITTLE BRAINIAC NEURO+ **Fruit & Vegetable Smoothie**	This overt cognitive focus expands the functional beverage market into early childhood nutrition via an explicit, brain-developing formulation modelled on breast milk.
QAMPO UNBORING SNACKS **Savoury Veggie Snack With Samphire**	Utilizing coastal samphire as a premium seasoning introduces a naturally low-sodium, mineral-rich botanical alternative to standard table salt.
SCI-MX JUICY **High Protein Sparkling Drink**	Combining real fruit juice with hydrolyzed collagen peptides disrupts sports nutrition by offering a refreshing, sparkling alternative to heavy, dairy-based protein shakes.
VITAL UP+ **Bone Health Food Supplement**	Formulating sugar-free candies with calcium, vitamin D and magnesium successfully transitions an indulgent confectionery format into a bone-health supplement for the whole family.



BEST OF BRITAIN
Finalists

Our **Best of Britain** award will be a showcase for the best and brightest innovations from UK companies in the FMCG space over the past year.



GIRAF **Macadamia Milk**	Avoiding added seed oils positions this South African-grown dairy alternative at the premium, ultra-clean end of the plant-based milk market.
HUNGRY MONKEY **Freeze Dried Raspberries In Matcha Yoghurt**	Coating freeze-dried raspberries in a matcha yogurt fortified with precision prebiotic fibre expertly layers multiple high-growth trends into a single confectionery snack.
JUNDAY **Sparkling Bamboo Water**	Commercializing sparkling botanical water with bamboo extract brings a highly novel, sustainable ingredient into the functional beverage space.
KELLOGG'S CRUNCHY NUT **Hot Honey Flavour Crunchies**	Using hot honey as a cereal flavor allows a legacy brand to instantly modernise its portfolio and capture current sweet-and-spicy culinary trends.
KLOUDY **Ceremonial Matcha**	This everyday functional drink cleverly bundles ceremonial matcha, adaptogens and gut-loving fibre to act as a 'shortcut' to holistic, jitter-free energy.
LESS IS MORE CANDY **Watermelon & Basil Bites**	Pairing watermelon with basil offers a sophisticated, culinary-led flavor profile that disrupts the typically sweet, artificial confectionery category.
NURO **Pink Citrush Functional Drink**	Combining Lion's Mane nootropics, Rhodiola adaptogens, and slow-release caffeine creates a highly optimized formula designed to prevent the typical energy drink crash.
PRKL **Sparkling Prickly Pear Cactus Water**	Promoting a "cactus revolution" leverages the science-backed advantages of prickly pear to establish cactus water as a premium, low-calorie soft drink rival.
DATE WATER **Hydration Drink**	This "date water" launch signals that the plant water category is evolving past simple hydration and moving toward functional, whole-food fibre nutrition.
WHITEBOX **Raspberry Clover Club Cocktail**	Canning a historically difficult-to-replicate Clover Club cocktail relies on consumer interaction – a 15-second vigorous shake – to activate its signature frothy foam head.

BEST OF MIDDLE EAST
Finalists

Our **Best of Middle East** award celebrates the latest breakthroughs in the region's fast-growing FMCG sector.

ADY ELIXIR **Lemonade With Active Botanicals**	Reframing healthy aging as a manageable 'mindset', this botanically infused lemonade targets the emerging adult premium market focused on extending 'healthspan'.
AYA **Butterfly Pea Tea**	This single-origin butterfly pea powder uses colour-changing properties combined with hand-picked craftsmanship to establish a quality benchmark for premium botanical ingredients.
BARAKAT **Date Hummus**	Infusing traditional hummus with date flavour represents a highly novel, sweet-and-savoury regional twist on a foundational Middle Eastern staple.
EUROCAKE SMASH **Banoffee Croissant**	This shelf-stable sourdough banoffee croissant cleverly bridges the gap between artisanal baking techniques and mainstream, indulgent dessert flavour trends.
FEROSTI MOCHI POPS **Bubblegum Mochi**	This bright pink and blue bubblegum mochi leans heavily into hyper-vibrant colourways and a fun triangular pack design to capture youth-oriented novelty.
NATURE'S OWN FACTORY **Chocolate Bar With Cotton Candy & Crunchy Crispies**	Anchoring a complex taste profile with childhood cotton candy and crunchy crispies speaks to a booming consumer appetite for nostalgic, multi-sensory textures.
NOON MINUTES **Super 98 Petrol Ice Cream**	Launching a provocative 'petrol' flavour ice cream acts as a daring, curiosity-driven marketing stunt engineered to generate instant viral talkability.
WILD BEE HONEY **Morel Mushroom Preserved In Honey**	Preserving prized, foraged Morel mushrooms in raw wild bee honey creates an ultra-premium, savoury-sweet alchemy that targets the gourmet luxury tier.
WOODEN BAKERY **Crushed Kaak**	Providing pre-crushed kaak biscuit crumbs offers an ingenious regional format adaptation, giving home bakers a convenient way to fuse heritage flavors into Western desserts.
YUMOCHI **Pistachio Kunafa Chocolate Mochi**	This pistachio kunafa chocolate mochi captures the ultimate in fusion foods by blending a viral regional dessert trend with a Japanese format.



HOSPITALITY
Finalists

Our **Hospitality** award is a showcase of the latest innovations with applications in hotels, bars, cafes, restaurants, and entertainment venues.



BARHI **Date Based Mead**	Integrating fresh Barhee date pulp into a dry, carbonated 6% ABV mead offers bars a highly unique, craft-focused alternative to mainstream ciders and beers.
FARM FRESH **Matcha Chicken Nuggets**	Featuring a vibrant green interior, these matcha-infused chicken nuggets are engineered to deliver a visually striking, social-media-ready novelty to casual dining menus.
GOLDEN BAR AQUA **Spring Water**	Infused with gold and silver content, this upper-premium mineral water is a natural fit for luxury hotels and high-end fine dining table service.
HIGH & DRY **Functional Lager**	This functional beer, fortified with Lion's Mane and Cordyceps, expands the back-bar selection into the growing wellness-led, sober-curious nightlife scene.
HOTTA **Ginger Cider Vinegar Tonic**	Utilizing 11-12-month-old mature Thai ginger gives this premium tonic shot a complex, ultra-potent flavour profile ideal for premium hotel minibars or morning wellness menus.
MALLOW'S **Collagen Tonic**	Infused with bovine collagen, this premium tonic water allows cocktail bars to elevate standard spirit pours with an attractive, wellness-led menu narrative.
ORTEGA CHEEZ-IT **Flavoured Taco Shells**	A Cheez-It flavoured taco shell brings an instantly recognizable, high-profile snack brand partnership straight into casual dining and fast-casual food service.
SALAHUDDIN PREMIUM DATES **Camel Milk & Date Sugar Chocolate**	Blending camel milk and date sugar offers a distinctively regional luxury profile well-suited for high-end hospitality turndown services and premium cafes.
WOOLWORTHS FOOD **Beef Droewors Taco Shells**	Crafting taco shells almost entirely from minced beef offers an ingenious, ultra-low-carb menu solution for keto-focused and fitness-centric foodservice outlets.
YUMBLE **Matcha Shake & Squeeze Pancake Mix**	Bringing a matcha pancake mix into a shake-and-squeeze format streamlines back-of-house prep for busy brunch kitchens looking to capitalize on trendy flavors.

TRAVEL
Finalists

Leisure and tourism opens up a world of distinctive innovation. Our **Travel** award focuses on novel FMCG introductions with applications in this sector.

AMBAR TRIPLE ZERO **Probiotic Beer**	An alcohol-free, sugar-free probiotics beer offers wellness-minded travellers a refreshing, functional beverage that supports gut health without the dehydrating effects of alcohol during long journeys.
EATLEAN PROTEIN **Truffle Cheese Bites**	Combining a premium truffle flavour profile with athlete-tested, protein-dense tech delivers an upscale, high-performance savoury snack tailored for active tourists and health-conscious travellers on the go.
HAJ ARAFA **Chickpea Soup Instant Powder**	Translating traditional hummus al-sham soup into a shelf-stable, 'instantised' powder format offers tourism hubs and roadside stops a highly portable, comforting and culturally authentic meal option.
HEMISPHERE **Day & Night Skincare Solution**	This medicinal-style skincare blister pack provides hyper-hygienic, single-serve portions of eye cream and toner, making it a space-saving addition to any travel toiletry kit.
HOLY **Syrup Pods**	A compact syrup pod concentrate system minimizes fluid volume and weight in luggage. The 'custom flavour intensity dial' of the associated reusable flask is a distinctive feature.
LIPSTRIP **Nicotine Strips**	With a comfortable, proprietary woven fabric design, these nicotine strips are designed to offer both comfort and discretion.
MEIJI STEP **Follow Up Formula**	By incorporating gut-friendly bacteria to support the intestinal environment – in Meiji's famous portioned cube format – this advanced formulation represents a significant leap forward.
MYBEARS **Energy Gummies**	Offering a gelatin-free, pectin-based candy format that packs a functional blend of caffeine, ginseng, and ginkgo biloba, these energy gummies provide an ultra-convenient, luggage-friendly supplement.
PALSE **Mushroom Snack**	This premium radish, shiitake, and beetroot vegetable blend provides a light, clean, and nutritious snacking alternative.
YOGOODY SHAKE **Instant Dairy Drink Powder**	Dry yoghurt powder designed to be mixed with water offers an innovative, ultra-lightweight way for travellers to pack a high-dose probiotic immunity boost in their luggage without needing refrigeration.



Sustainability
Finalists

Our **Sustainability** award recognises companies that have demonstrated an innovative approach to curbing their environmental or climate footprint.







CALBEE NORIYAN **Seaweed Alternative Snack**	Upcycling manufacturing by-products into a novel seaweed-alternative snack showcases how brands can capture value from waste streams while tapping into the booming market for sustainable, plant-based snacking.
COCCOLA **Coconut Powder Sweetener**	Pairing responsibly sourced coconut protein with eco-conscious packaging aligns this functional beverage directly with the values of environmentally proactive consumers.
CONTINENTE **100% Portuguese Rice**	This 100% Portuguese rice ensures localized hyper-traceability from seed to shelf, drastically reducing food miles and supporting regional agricultural resilience.
DE BEUKELAER CEREOLA **Oaties Biscuits**	As climate change pressures global cocoa yields, utilizing sustainable analogues like Chovita on biscuits offers a crucial, climate-adapted solution for confectionery.
FISHOLOGY FOODS **Chorizo Of The Sea**	Applying traditional charcuterie techniques to marine proteins offers a lower-carbon 'chorizo of the sea' meat alternative that appeals strongly to eco-conscious pescatarians.
GRASHKA KOJIBAR **Organic Patty With Koji Barley**	Utilizing fermented koji barley as a primary base delivers a resource-efficient, high-protein meat substitute that bypasses resource-heavy soy or livestock farming.
ONE **Spring Water**	An interlocking mineral water bottle design optimizes transport space to slash shipping-related carbon emissions by up to 35% while minimizing secondary packaging waste.
CHOCOLAT STELLA APRICOA **Chocolate With M*lk From Apricot Kernels**	Upcycling apricot kernels and seeds into a chocolate block represents an ingenious circular-economy triumph that directly reduces agricultural food waste.
SUNLIGHT PLATINUM **Dishwashing Liquid**	Replacing petrochemical elements with a fermented, sugar-based surfactant showcases how food-grade, biodegradable inputs can eliminate toxic chemicals from household cleaning.
THE CHEEKY PANDA **Sanitary Pads**	By engineering a 100% bamboo core, this innovation eliminates both plastic and wood-pulp reliance from sanitary pads, establishing a new zero-plastic standard for personal care.

Technology
Finalists

Technology promises to revolutionise all aspects of the FMCG industry. This award showcases the latest hi-tech breakthroughs in product manufacture, marketing and supply chain.

COVAP BLP1 **Milk With Postbiotics**	Integrating stable, heat-resilient postbiotics (BPL1 strain) allows this milk drink to deliver a high-dose gut health functional benefit without the survival and viability constraints of live probiotics.
DAESANG CHEONGJEONGWON **Boneless Crispy Chicken**	Deploying "Air Cell" microstructure engineering solves a major moisture-retention hurdle, allowing frozen poultry to retain an authentic, restaurant-quality crispiness when reheated in home air-fryers.
FROOBIES **Fruit Snack**	Utilizing centrifugal force via SpinTech to physically weave protein and fibre at a structural level elegantly eliminates the need for chemical binders or artificial texturizers in fruit snacks.
GLO HILO **Heated Tobacco Device**	Combining a five-second TurboStart ignition with dual infrared heating marks a major leap in Heat-not-Burn engineering, effectively eliminating heat-up lag to mimic the instant gratification of smoking.
IGLOO DOUBLE UP **Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich**	Re-engineering the standard automated extrusion line to achieve a novel, multi-layer double-stacked layout marks a distinct mechanical breakthrough in the novelty ice cream format category.
KOFFELO **Nitro Cold Brew Coffee Shot**	This pressurized nitro cartridge format scales micro-dosing gas technology down to a 20ml capsule, delivering a velvety, cafe-quality cold brew texture instantly without heavy countertop equipment.
NOEL DELIZIAS ASADOS **Roast Ham**	Scaling an artisanal slow-roasting thermal process for high-volume industrial slicing allows this clean-label meat to maintain home-cooked moisture and fibre integrity without chemical binding agents.
PICKLE PROJECT **Sweet Dill Pickle Chips**	Leveraging acoustic energy through ultrasonic cavitation to temporarily rupture vegetable cell walls represents an advanced processing technique that drastically accelerates brine flavour absorption.
SÜVY **Sweetener**	This fruit-fermented formulation achieves a highly sought-after 1:1 functional sugar replacement matrix through biological synthesis, matching traditional sucrose baking kinetics.
THE TURMERIC CO. **Raw Turmeric & Pro Collagen Shots**	Incorporating biomimetic technology introduces a highly advanced, scientifically engineered plant-derived amino acid sequence that accurately replicates the structure of Type I human collagen.



AWARDS Winners

2026

Product

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

"This award means a great deal to us because it has always been far more than just a cookie [...] behind that lies a much bigger story: a story of dignity, hope and possibility. Thank you very much".

Tommy Williams
Khayelitsha Cookies

Chocolate & Spinach Cookies



Video watch

Presented by Ian Wright CBE, Former Co-Chair, Food & Drink Export Council

2026

Packaging

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

"This is massive for us. It's a great honour, but for a small company like ours, it's going to have very valuable commercial benefits, so we're extremely grateful – thank you".

Ray Donovan
Purely Scottish

Natural Mineral Water



Video watch

Presented by Tom Warden, Gama

2026

Positioning

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

"I would like to say how honoured and grateful we are as a team to receive this award. Dedication to what you're passionate about is what brings you success. Thank you so much".

Juan Antonio Sirvent
Confectionery Holding

Rice Shortbread for Dogs



Video watch

Presented by Ambassador Füsun Aramaz, Consul General of Türkiye

2026

Branding & Design

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

"We are really honoured for this award. The message is that when life wants you to turn upside down, take the challenge and open doors for new success. Thank you again".

Tjaša Ogrizek
Ginger Up+

Immune Booster Drink



Video watch

Presented by Gabriele Magagnin, Consul of Italy

2026

SME

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

"This award means a lot to us. It's a recognition of our team work and all of the people who work behind every new product that we develop".

Adela Martinez
Porto-Muinos

Furikake Seasoning



Video watch

Presented by Sérgio Vieira Morais, Consul General of Portugal

2026

Health & Wellness

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

"As a small Portuguese brand, being recognised on the international stage like this means a lot to me. We are just getting started and I could be more excited about what's ahead. Thank you so much".

Margarida Santos
High Brands

Dietary Supplement



Video watch

Presented by Daniele Tirelli, Former President, Retail Institute of Italy

2026

Best of Britain

GAMA INNOVATION AWARD WINNER

The Best of Britain title was awarded to Junday for turning sustainable bamboo extract into a novel sparkling functional drink.

Sparkling Bamboo Water



Video watch

Presented by Gavin Page, Manchester Printers

2026

Best of Middle East

GAMA INNOVATION AWARD WINNER

"This award is [recognition for] hard work, 35 years of effort and the dedication of our partners and R&D team – thank you everyone".

Nasir Ali
Wild Bee Honey

Morel Mushroom Preserved in Honey



Video watch

Presented by Lord Mayor, City of Manchester

2026

Hospitality

GAMA INNOVATION AWARD WINNER

"It's been a wonderful journey and to get this today means really something special – thank you so much".

Vikas Thakker
Vintage Brewery

Date Based Mead



Video watch

Presented by Juan Miguel Ávila, Honorary Consul of Spain

2026

Travel

GAMA INNOVATION AWARD WINNER

Meiji's combination of gut-friendly bacteria and a portable cube format earned it the top spot in the Travel category.

Growing Up Formula



Video watch

Presented by Tom Warden, Gama

2026

Sustainability

GAMA INNOVATION AWARD WINNER

"This prize means that, together with my team, we did a great job for sustainability and for the entire planet – thank you".

Emmanuela Alesiani
Coccola

Coconut Powder Sweetener



Video watch

Presented by Heather Waters, GM Business Growth Hub

2026

Technology

GAMA INNOVATION AWARD WINNER

"This award comes at a very good point for Süvy, as we accelerate our expansion and prepare for further development across a number of countries – thank you".

Catherine Deltreil
Süvy

Sweetener



Video watch

Presented by Sergio Costa, Gama

2026

Compass

GAMA INNOVATION

AWARD WINNER

Video watch

"What matters in those last moments of your life are the impact and the legacy you leave behind. That created a passion in me to really speak to people and say, you've got one life to live: make it count, do what you're passionate about, change the world one good deed at a time".

Adri Williams



Presented by Cesar Pereira, Gama

GET TOGETHER

Following the main proceedings, international delegates and honoured guests, including the Consul of Italy and Honorary Consul of Spain, gathered for an exclusive evening reception at 20 Stories, Manchester's premier rooftop destination, to toast the day's achievements and foster new global connections. Addressing the guests, Ian Wright CBE paid tribute to 11 years of GICA through changing economic landscapes. Celebrating the vibrant spirit of the delegates, Wright raised a toast to the industry's future, noting: "As you have seen over the last 12 hours, the future of the food and drink industry is extraordinarily varied... All of you have proved through your resilience and through your continued commitment that you have a great future".



SPECIAL THANKS

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2027

GAMA INNOVATION
CONFERENCE & AWARDS

SAVE THE DATE

GICA 2027
20th October
Manchester

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