



FIAL
FOOD INNOVATION AUSTRALIA LIMITED



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

**Industry
Growth
Centres**



Changing the lifetime habits of a company yielded serious results for this hand-crafted specialty foods company

Looking closer to home rather than farther afield was a key lesson that Fresh Fodder learned after attending a FIAL Fast n Furious Innovation short course which completely changed their thinking.



"Before I did the course, the way I worked was, let's just make better stuff, if we want to sell more, we need more products. That's how I built us into the corner we were in. The course challenged me to think differently."

"[It] has really challenged me ... it takes you out of your comfort zone and makes you think about stuff that looks all too hard. How to take the business from four million to forty million and that's the challenge."

"I was waiting for the next big thing ... a golden solution or something ... But it did challenge me on the day ... just thinking about things like minimum viable products."

"The course offered is so challenging to most business owners, including us. We'd certainly sign up again."

BEFORE:

"Let's just throw stuff at the wall and hopefully something will stick". The formula for growing the business was to launch lots of new products, do everything themselves and hope some of it will work.

AFTER:

Revenue increases of 30% for the core product and 17% for the range in 12 months. This was thanks to focused innovation leveraging the core strengths of the business and brand, expanding distribution channels and the shelf visibility of the core range.

FIAL'S SUPPORT:

Fast n Furious Innovation short course participation including briefing, workshop and mentoring facilitated by XPotential™

KEY TIP

"Look not only at the products you can sell, but also the ways you can be of service to customers and make their lives easier. If you are looking to grow a business, be successful, be sustainable, you need to be at courses like this to challenge you, show you a different path and move forward. Different ways, different skills, different systems."

About FIAL's Fast n Furious Innovation short course

This short course is designed to work on innovation challenges within the participants' businesses. It is a unique, hands-on 3-step program utilising Design Led Innovation & Lean Canvas principals. The course boasts best practice innovation capabilities and rapid consumer insight techniques. Participants are supported with an hour long briefing call (conducted by the facilitator) where a 'live' innovation challenge is identified. This sets them up for their one day workshop that aims to develop an initial 'Minimum Viable Product' concept, followed by an hour long mentoring call 4 - 6 weeks after the workshop. The post workshop mentoring is key as it irons out any further challenges and keeps the process on track.

Fast and Furious Innovation

From creative chaos to growth

Fresh, hand-crafted and with a creative touch, the Fresh Fodder formula worked well and won many converts – to a point. But growing the business beyond that was proving a challenge – until the Fast n Furious Innovation short course kicked in.

Fresh Fodder, owned by Max and Fiona Schofield, produces hand-crafted dips, salads and meals from its home base in Orange, NSW. Sold in independent retailers through their own distribution network in NSW and Victoria and third party distributors elsewhere, Fresh Fodder has a turnover of \$4 million per annum and 22 employees.

Renowned for producing Australia's best tasting Taramosalata, The Gangster Dip ([see the full story](#)), Fresh Fodder has extended its range of fresh natural products into salads and ready meals. Max and Fiona participated in the Central NSW FIAL Fast n Furious Innovation short course, hoping to discover the next 'big thing' in dips. They left

the course with the realisation that profitable growth potential lay in innovating their core range, rather than launching lots of new products, and bringing their unique brand story to life in-store was critical to drive consumer and customer loyalty.

The Fast n Furious Innovation Journey

At the start of the short course we ask participants to develop an Innovation Challenge Statement. Max and Fiona probably had the same goals as many of us, aiming to: "[have] no financial strains, less work and more time for us, measured by better sleep patterns by Christmas 2017 we must stay focused and stick to the plan."



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The Fast n Furious Innovation Challenge

Through the Fast n Furious briefing session and initial sections of the workshop, Fiona and Max realised they had huge opportunities for growth innovating within their core range, by channel extension and business model. Alongside changes in roles and business structure, this refocus would be far more profitable and sustainable over time and help them achieve their broader lifestyle goals.

“You know we’re constantly looking for opportunities to learn from other people in the industry and so things like Fast n Furious tap into

my creative side and Max’s need to keep looking ahead for what the next thing is. But interestingly, what we both took out of it was more about reconciling our business to some degree and taking some of the chaos out of it that, in all fairness, we were contributing to on a fairly high level,” says Fiona.

Target Market and Consumer Problem Definition – a major focus in the workshop

During the briefing session and workshop Max and Fiona used the Design Led Thinking approach to identify that the core problem with their dips wasn’t the product, but

packaging visibility and differentiation on shelf as well as distribution to enable availability where target consumers shopped. This problem was exacerbated by the glut of competitive products on shelf, many of them ‘me-too’.

From the phone interviews conducted during the workshop they found people either couldn’t find their brand or it wasn’t available in certain stores, so loyal customers had to make a compromise in a hurry.

“We’re trying not to create [completely] new products if possible but do more with the ones we have,” says Max / Fiona.

Minimum Viable Product Launch

The unique mentoring session held six weeks after the workshop focused on how to address the key shopper problem - lack of shelf visibility and standout – to drive greater differentiation and presence.

“We have upgraded our labels, we have reversed the map, it was basically white with a bit of colour and now coloured with a bit of white,” says Max / Fiona.

Coupled with the different colours for each of the dips in their range, starting with blue for ‘The Gangster Dip’, this quick and simple solution provided far greater impact on shelf.

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Next Steps

Since the Fast n Furious short course, Max and Fiona have brought a team of people on board to help run the business so they can devote more time where they can add value; growing the business and building on their innovation capabilities. This includes expansion into new channels, leveraging their distribution capability by distributing third party products, outsourcing production of non-core products and expanding product formats within their core range.

“Costco was able to identify that it was the best product in that category. We’re now the source of their second-best seller of dips with that one line in their nine stores. I think we’ve improved our story telling making it more concise and consistent, which I think in the long run, makes it much easier for the consumers to buy into it,” says Max / Fiona.

“I suppose our biggest challenge moving forward is about retention. We spend a lot of resources trying to get our products on the shelf and they still get knocked off the shelf. We’re looking at different ways with technology and so forth so we can make it easier to be independent.”