



Adelphi and LittlePod



Adelphi Manufacturing customer LittlePod are the only manufacturer of real vanilla paste in the UK, and proudly fill and distribute their products from their premises in the heart of the beautiful East Devon countryside. Alongside their trademark paste, they also offer chocolate and coffee extracts, and have co-created ranges of vanilla shortbread and vanilla beer.

The driving force at the core of the business is their mission; to raise awareness of the worrying shortages of real vanilla, which at the time of LittlePod's conception in 2010, was facing extinction, perhaps within a generation. Owner Janet Sawyer had a vision for a company which would help communities which rely on vanilla cultivation, to conserve the fragile ecosystems in which real vanilla is grown. To do this, Janet envisioned a product which would raise awareness of the diverse applications of real vanilla, and of its benefits when compared to real vanilla's synthetic counterpart, artificial Vanillin, which counts for 97% of Vanillin used in the West. A 1% incursion into the Vanillin market would double the need for real vanilla worldwide.

The Products

- **Vanilla Paste**
- **Vanilla Extract**
- **Chocolate & Coffee Extract**
- **Vanilla Pods**



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One of LittlePod's first acts was to help establish a vanilla farmer named Made in the Bali community where his father had farmed vanilla before him. As a result, Indonesia, once the number one suppliers of vanilla, is now considering reviving its vanilla industry. "Encouraging farmers to keep cultivating their vanilla vines is essential", said Janet, "because the soils devastated by palm oil farming need to be replenished and it is proven that the vanilla vine planted among tutor trees can do this". Vanilla vines act as drainpipes due to the shape and hang of their leaves, catching and funnelling precipitation down into the roots in the soil, making them an excellent choice of plant to restore landscapes ravaged by previous 'slash-and-burn' crop rotation policies.

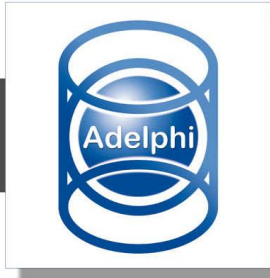
LittlePod's real vanilla paste also minimises wastage for users by ensuring that as many vanilla pods as possible are utilised. "Chefs were only wanting to use the long, straight vanilla pods, and were rejecting all others", explains Janet. "Our paste gives a value to ALL pods, which maximises profit for vanilla farmers, and chefs now love the functionality of our tubes". Chef Jamie Rafferty describes LittlePod's vanilla paste as "quality, convenience and affordability, all in a tube!"

LittlePod have come a long way from their humble beginnings as a one-woman operation, when Janet had the idea at her kitchen table of putting vanilla paste in a tube; they now employ eight members of staff at their home site, all with a passion for the products and their mission. LittlePod products are now stocked throughout the UK and abroad, as far afield as Hong Kong, Nepal, Qatar and Australia, and their distribution footprint extends to cover sixteen countries. Their most recent accolade is the 2018 Queen's Award for Enterprise, in the Sustainable Development category, which looks set to see their exponential growth continue.

Adelphi Manufacturing are proud to have been able to facilitate this journey; in 2012, when Janet was ready to investigate the first steps towards automation, she discovered the Manufacturing Advice Service, who put her in touch with the Food Innovation Service, who in turn recommended Adelphi as a UK-based manufacturer and supplier of process and packaging machinery.

Adelphi Manufacturing's Sales Director Dean Willis was immediately captivated by the LittlePod story. Janet enthuses that "his honest advice and support was invaluable - Dean monitored our company growth, and recommended machines accordingly, making sure we didn't overstretch our resources".

In 2012, Adelphi were pleased to manufacture the Response base unit to suit LittlePod's needs; a semi-automatic volumetric benchtop unit, the Response efficiently fills a wide range of product viscosities, including LittlePod's extracts and pastes, with equal ease. The Response is quick to assemble and clean, meaning that changing between products and containers is as easy as possible and production downtime is kept to a minimum; LittlePod can swiftly switch from filling paste into 100ml aluminium tubes, to extracts in 100ml glass bottles, as required.



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The Verdict

“Would LittlePod recommend Adelphi to a contact?”

We already have!”

“Adelphi Manufacturing’s values match LittlePod’s perfectly”, said Janet when asked about the success of the relationship between the two companies – “they really care”. Adelphi’s environmentally friendly premises (currently shortlisted for the PPMA 2018 Environmental Initiative of the Year Award), reflect the commitment to sustainability issues and environmental protection at the heart of LittlePod’s mission.

Thanks to LittlePod, real vanilla will now be available for the next generation. Janet modestly comments that “LittlePod may only be a small part of this, but we are nevertheless contributing by achieving our aims and raising awareness. It’s been an incredible journey, from an idea in my head to a Queen’s Award, and Adelphi Manufacturing helped this vision become a reality!”

Currently, LittlePod are in discussions with Adelphi Manufacturing about their next step into a more fully automated line. Janet has been quick to stress the importance of LittlePod’s “organic growth”, assisted by Adelphi, which has seen automation applied to her unique business without compromising the values at its heart.

Are you producing for the food industry and looking to take your first steps into automation? If so, please don’t hesitate to contact Adelphi on +44 (0)1444 472300 or email sales@adelphi.uk.com to see how we can help grow your business. Littlepod also source their environmentally friendly aluminium tubes from our sister company Adelphi Healthcare Packaging, who can be contacted using the same telephone number, or by emailing sales@adelphi-hp.com.



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Sales Director Dean Willis at the Littlepod site

Response



The machine that made it all possible