PIONEER AWARDS 2026

WINNERS AND RUNNERS UP

OWNED BY YOU.
RIGHT BY YOU.

SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR: PILGRIM'S



Pilgrim's is a standout candidate for Co-op Supplier of the Year 2026, delivering insight-led innovation that strengthens customer relevance, choice and value.
Their leadership in shaping the Served proposition has introduced high-quality, globally inspired meal solutions, using shopper data to drive both differentiation and commercial success.

They operate as a true strategic partner, combining strong collaboration with agility and reliability. Pilgrim's works seamlessly across Co-op teams to deliver at pace, launching complex ranges within tight timelines - while also enhancing internal capability through technical expertise, training and continuous improvement.

Importantly, Pilgrim's aligns closely with Co-op values, demonstrating consistent quality, responsible practices and long-term commitment to sustainable growth. Their ability to deliver innovation, operational excellence and partnership at scale makes them a clear embodiment of the Co-op Difference and a compelling overall winner.

BUSINESS USE

CATEGORIES

1. PIONEER IN CO-OP OWN BRAND PRODUCTS
2. PIONEER IN BRANDED PRODUCTS
3. PIONEER IN QUICK COMMERCE
4. PIONEER IN WHOLESALE
5. PIONEER IN TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE
6. PIONEER IN ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY
7. PIONEER IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
8. SMALL SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR
9. CUSTOMER-FIRST PIONEER
10. GNFR SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN CO-OP OWN BRAND

PIONEER IN CO-OP OWN BRAND



PILGRIM'S

Pilgrim's has demonstrated strong leadership as a pioneer within Co-op's own brand ready-to-cook and has been a key partner in shaping the Served proposition.

They bring together high-quality, insight-led innovation with deep manufacturing expertise, delivering a diverse and compelling range across multiple cuisines. Their capability is clearly demonstrated through the successful development of Pan-Asian, premium Indian and broader global ranges, spanning six cuisines.

By utilising tailored ingredients and authentic cooking methods, Pilgrim's consistently delivers products that combine genuine flavour profiles with scalable production and reliable quality.
They leverage strong consumer and in-store insights to identify emerging demand for global and premium meal solutions, translating these into differentiated, market-relevant products.

Their data-driven approach, including performance tracking and customer analysis, has supported Co-op in optimising execution and deepening understanding of shopper behaviour.
Pilgrim's has also shown exceptional agility, successfully delivering rapid product development and launches within a compressed nine-month timeline, without compromising on quality or delivery standards. Their collaborative approach has enabled efficient execution while maintaining a clear focus on continuous improvement.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN CO-OP OWN BRAND



SAMWORTH BROTHERS

— RUNNERS UP

Samworth Brothers have demonstrated exceptional capability across innovation, insight, quality, agility and sustainability.

They have led manufacturing innovation with first-to-market focaccia sandwiches and a trend-led Southern Fried Chicken Pickle Sub Roll, successfully translating out-of-home and street food trends into scalable, retail-ready products.

These launches are underpinned by strong consumer and market insight, identifying demand for premium breads and bold flavours. Their consistent delivery of high-quality products, alongside their technical capability to extend shelf life without compromising integrity, reinforces their excellence in quality.

They have also shown outstanding agility and responsiveness by adjusting production schedules to deliver an additional day of shelf life across the full sandwich portfolio, improving availability and reducing waste. This action supports more sustainable practices by minimising food waste and ensuring efficient use of resources, demonstrating their commitment to both commercial and environmental outcomes.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN BRANDED PRODUCTS

PIONEER IN BRANDED PRODUCTS



MARS

Mars is a leading supplier within the confectionery category and continues to collaborate closely with Co-op across all channels to deliver mutual value.

Both organisations view each other as key strategic partners, sharing a clear and aligned long-term vision. Mars supports Co-op through market-leading innovation, alongside exclusive seasonal formats that provide differentiation and create strong points of difference within the range.

They also invest in Co-op Media Network (CMN), delivering shopper-focused activations that drive footfall and in-store engagement. In addition, Mars demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, recently launching the first electric lane servicing the Coventry and Castlewood distribution centres, helping to reduce environmental impact.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN BRANDED PRODUCTS



PROCTER AND GAMBLE

— RUNNERS UP

Procter and Gamble is recognised as a market leader in innovation, consumer engagement and product differentiation, but in 2026 the key impact lies in transforming its relationship with Co-op into a more strategic partnership to drive sales performance.

Both organisations have moved away from a complex, reactive “Old World” to a simplified, collaborative “New World” through the Partner for Growth initiative. This transformation focuses on three areas: a mindset shift towards simplification, healthy challenge and trust-based collaboration; a new accountability framework (“Our Drumbeat”) with regular data sharing, reviews and leadership engagement; and a clear, actionable plan (“Our Plan”) with defined owners and steps to deliver tangible change.

Overall, Procter and Gamble has demonstrated adaptability and commitment in resetting ways of working, creating a more effective and strategic partnership with Co-op.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN QUICK COMMERCE

PIONEER IN QUICK COMMERCE



COCA COLA

CCEP (Coca-Cola) has maintained a standout presence within the Quick Commerce space, consistently demonstrating a clear commitment to digital excellence and consumer relevance. The business has actively invested in impactful digital activations, ensuring consistent and recognisable branding across multiple platforms, while also securing strong search visibility and delivering timely, relevant seasonal campaigns that resonate with shoppers at key moments.

CCEP has played a pivotal role in accelerating the Quick Commerce agenda through a combination of innovation, strong cross-functional collaboration, and a deep understanding of evolving shopper needs. By leveraging data-driven insights and maintaining close partnerships with key retailers and platforms, CCEP has been able to adapt quickly to changing behaviours and expectations within an increasingly fast-paced channel.

This strategic, forward-thinking approach has not only strengthened brand presence but also enhanced the overall shopper experience, driving engagement, conversion, and loyalty.
As a result, CCEP stands out as a true pioneer within the Quick Commerce space, setting a benchmark for excellence and continued growth within the channel.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN QUICK COMMERCE



ARLA FOODS

— RUNNERS UP

Arla Foods is a strategic partner that actively receives, analyses and collaborates on data sharing to develop robust, long-term category plans. The team demonstrates a strong ability to adapt to key seasonal trends, such as summer versus winter, while consistently applying a customer-centric approach to all recommendations.

Arla Foods adopts a clear omnichannel mindset, ensuring that in-store activations and promotional activity are effectively translated into the Quick Commerce environment across multiple channels. This joined-up approach drives consistency, strengthens execution, and enhances the overall shopper experience.

Their commitment to insight-led decision-making, combined with a collaborative and forward-thinking approach, sets Arla Foods apart as a key partner in delivering sustainable category growth and creating meaningful impact across both physical and digital channels.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN WHOLESALE

PIONEER IN WHOLESALE



RED BULL

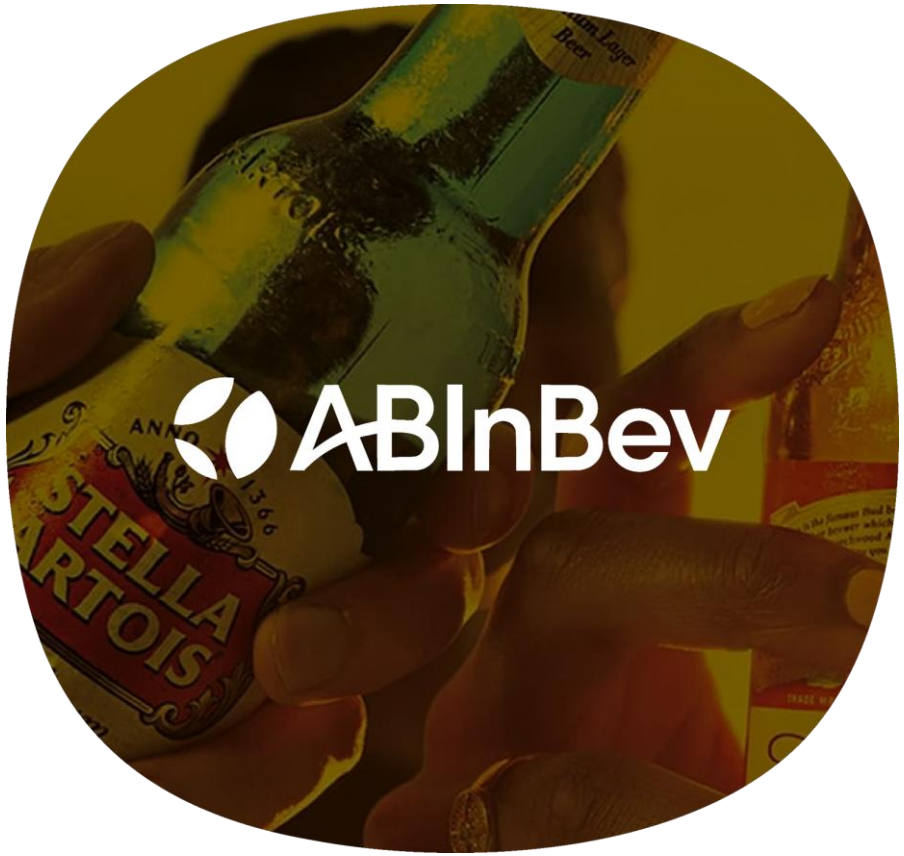
Red Bull has demonstrated outstanding leadership across Co-op Wholesale, successfully bringing together the strengths of both channels to deliver a cohesive and effective approach. They have significantly strengthened their category reviews and advisory support, while proactively embracing new wholesale initiatives such as transfer orders and developing expertise in our OCS ordering platform.

Their continued investment in enhancing competitiveness across wholesale packs and promotions, alongside the delivery of impactful exclusivities in both range and activation across the group, has set them apart from their peers.

Red Bull's strong commercial focus and high level of engagement in shaping and delivering a best-in-class Co-op Wholesale plan have been exceptional, clearly demonstrating what excellence looks like within the channel.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN WHOLESALE



AB INBEV

— RUNNERS UP

AB InBev has played a pivotal role in supporting the turnaround of a key category, delivering impactful category plans underpinned by strong insight, a clear strategic direction, and increased commercial investment. Their approach demonstrates a deep understanding of shopper behaviour and category dynamics, enabling them to deliver meaningful and sustained growth.

They have gone beyond simply leading major campaigns such as the World Cup, instead driving ongoing wholesale growth through enhanced promotional strategies and the development of compelling exclusive ranges. This has helped to create standout moments in-store and deliver increased value for both the retailer and the shopper.

AB InBev consistently pushes beyond standard activity, effectively leveraging the scale and strengths of both organisations to unlock new opportunities and drive innovation within the channel. Their forward-thinking mindset, combined with a clear commitment to doing more within wholesale, sets a benchmark for what best-in-class partnership, execution and commercial impact truly look like.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

PIONEER IN TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE



PILGRIM'S EUROPE

Pilgrim's Europe demonstrates strong leadership, a robust quality culture and a clear commitment as a strategic partner to Co-op. They support the development of future talent through initiatives such as the Technical Leadership Pathway, helping to build capability within Co-op, and contribute to the wider industry by supporting events like IFST.

Their subject matter experts play a key role in advising on policy, delivering training and driving improvements in areas including microbiology, meat science and innovation.
They have also delivered technical excellence at pace, particularly in support of the Served Project, and have successfully onboarded new sites to expand Co-op's offering, including healthier ready meals and poultry products.

Overall, Pilgrim's Europe adds value through partnership, expertise and a strong focus on continuous improvement.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE



MINOR, WEIR & WILLIS

— RUNNERS UP

Minor, Weir & Willis is a long-standing strategic partner to Co-op, consistently demonstrating strong leadership, technical excellence and a forward-thinking approach within the fresh produce supply chain. They enhance food safety and quality through proactive measures, particularly in high-risk crops, including the development of extreme weather protocols that strengthen resilience and risk management.

Their focus on innovation supports long-term supply stability, with investment in new sourcing regions and improvements in areas such as ripening efficiency and packaging, helping to enhance quality while reducing cost and time impacts in line with Co-op's POD ambitions. They also show industry leadership through their role in the Fresh Produce Forum, driving collaboration, identifying emerging risks and shaping future strategy.

Supported by a knowledgeable team and a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, Minor, Weir & Willis plays a key role in strengthening supply resilience, improving quality and supporting sustainable long-term growth.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY

PIONEER IN ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY



GREENCORE

Healthy and sustainable diets are a key part of Co-op's sustainability strategy, with members consistently calling for improved access to healthy, sustainable and delicious products. In February 2024, Co-op and Greencore aligned on a shared ambition, co-creating a long-term, collaborative programme to advance this agenda.

Greencore has fully embraced a healthy and sustainable diets approach, working closely with cross-functional teams to reformulate products and drive meaningful improvements across the Food to Go and Ready Meal ranges.

Notable successes include reducing egg and meat content in products such as sausages, quiche and pasta without compromising on taste or quality, as well as adding an extra 1g of fibre to all malted bread sandwiches - equating to an additional 44 tonnes of fibre per year. Their ongoing commitment to innovation and continuous improvement continues to enhance both the health and sustainability of the range.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY



ICAM

— RUNNERS UP

In 2024, Co-op launched an ambitious and innovative cocoa sustainability programme in partnership with ICAM, the Fairtrade Foundation and CLAC (the Latin American and Caribbean Fairtrade Producer Network).

This two-year initiative, funded through a commercial agreement linked directly to ICAM chocolate sales within Co-op, demonstrates a progressive model of reinvesting value back into producers. The programme operates in Peru, supporting at least 1,100 small-scale cocoa farmers across two producer organisations. It builds on the proven success of the banana Productivity Improvement Programme (PIP), adapting and scaling this approach for cocoa.

Through targeted technical support, the programme is enabling farmers to improve productivity, strengthen pest and disease management, and enhance the agroecological resilience of their farms. Crucially, it is also supporting compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), helping to future-proof livelihoods and maintain access to key markets.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

PIONEER IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



STILL SISTERS

Still Sisters is a standout example of a purpose-led small business driving meaningful progress in diversity, equity and inclusion. As a female-founded gin distillery, they have created safe and inclusive environments, particularly within the night-time economy.

They demonstrate strong transparency and industry leadership by sharing best practice, including a case study on women's safety for Co-op's Gender Pay Gap toolkit.
Their comprehensive training programmes equip staff with the skills and confidence to support vulnerable individuals and promote safety beyond the workplace.

Deeply community-focused, Still Sisters has led local initiatives such as Safe Haven accreditation, partnerships with police and charities, and campaigns like "Free The Night", alongside practical in-venue safety measures.

Their authentic, data-led leadership has embedded a culture of care, resulting in increased team confidence and strong customer trust. Overall, Still Sisters shows how businesses of any size can deliver real, lasting impact in inclusion and community safety.

BUSINESS USE

PIONEER IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



MULLER MILK & INGREDIENTS

— RUNNERS UP

Müller Milk & Ingredients has shown a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through its partnership with Co-op, with a clear focus on education, social mobility and community engagement.

They have demonstrated transparency and collaboration by contributing to Co-op's Gender Pay Gap toolkit and participating in the supplier deep-dive survey, supporting wider industry progress. Internally, Müller Milk & Ingredients has strengthened inclusive practices through colleague networks such as its Carers & Parents Network and partnerships with organisations like Carers UK, while extending initiatives like Women in Müller to include female farmers.

Externally, their community work has been particularly impactful, including school partnerships, farm visits and education programmes that improve understanding of food, sustainability and career opportunities, especially for young people from underrepresented backgrounds.

Through programmes with Co-op Academies, the Country Trust and Connell College, Müller Milk & Ingredients is creating meaningful learning experiences and supporting future talent. Their leadership approach embeds inclusion across their business and partnerships, driving positive change both within the organisation and across the wider community.

BUSINESS USE

SMALL SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

SMALL SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR



DUNDEIS

Dundeis – Neil and Matthew have been fantastic partners as they look to grow their business with Co-op, successfully launching the Smokehouse Nut Mix and Jalapeño & Lime Peanuts with Honey Corn Mix.

Their collaboration and enthusiasm have been evident throughout the process. When a barcode issue was identified on day one of stock arriving (through no fault of Dundeis), they responded quickly and proactively.

They introduced additional stock and arranged extra shifts to manually sticker products, ensuring availability was restored as quickly as possible.

This response demonstrated excellent agility, ownership and a strong customer-centric approach, setting a high standard for a growing supplier. We look forward to continuing to work together on new opportunities in the coming months.

BUSINESS USE

SMALL SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR



CHU LO DRINKS

— RUNNERS UP

Since joining the Apiary Scheme in October 2025, Chu Lo Drinks has quickly made a strong impact, gaining recognition within the chilled drinks category for its trend-led, forward-thinking approach.

The brand delivers strong rate of sale, supported by distinctive flavour profiles and standout branding. Chu Lo demonstrates excellent innovation and agility, alongside a clear customer-centric focus.

Their collaborative and flexible approach makes them a valued partner, while their female-led leadership and community engagement add purpose and authenticity.

A dynamic small supplier driving both growth and differentiation.

BUSINESS USE

CUSTOMER-FIRST PIONEER

CUSTOMER-FIRST PIONEER



MULLER MILK & INGREDIENTS

Müller Milk & Ingredients demonstrated strong collaboration during a recent 3-star range review on milk. With their support, a significant emphasis was placed on improving on-shelf availability while also driving operational efficiencies across the category.

Their proactive engagement helped ensure that decisions were informed by robust data and aligned with customer needs, ultimately contributing to a more effective and cohesive approach to ranging. In addition, Müller played an active role in the Co-op's VST Planogram Publisher Solution trial. By participating in the trial and sharing their insights, they supported the successful embedding of the new tool across the wider supply base.

Their contribution at a supplier panel discussion was particularly valuable, as it helped to build wider understanding, confidence and adoption among other suppliers.

Through their involvement in the 3-star range review, alongside their collaborative approach to implementing the VST tool, Müller has clearly demonstrated how customer-led insight and data-driven decision-making can underpin more effective strategic choices. This approach not only strengthens execution at a store level but also supports sustainable growth across the broader category.

BUSINESS USE

CUSTOMER-FIRST PIONEER



VINARCHY

— RUNNERS UP

Vinarchy consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to placing the Co-op customer at the heart of category thinking, particularly through the insight sessions introduced to support Wine Hypercare.

Led by Max Hatton, these sessions provide a detailed view of customer behaviour, combining shopper data, promotional response and category trends to highlight what matters most. Increasingly, targeted “deep dives” are used to explore specific challenges, enabling a more nuanced understanding of customer needs. These insights actively shape category strategy and priorities. Regular insight packs highlight key opportunities and risks, from gaps in promotional coverage to shifts in demand across formats and styles.

This has directly informed Wine Hypercare and the wider performance improvement plan, helping to prioritise activity and focus on areas with the greatest customer impact. Crucially, Vinarchy translates insight into clear, actionable recommendations, supporting more proactive decision-making. Customer-first thinking is embedded into ongoing ways of working, with a consistent cadence of insight sessions ensuring decisions remain grounded in customer needs. Vinarchy’s support throughout Hypercare demonstrates their commitment to improving the customer experience, making them a true strategic partner in delivering a stronger, more customer-focused wine offer.

BUSINESS USE

GNFR SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

GNFR SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR



GXO

GXO's approach demonstrates the power of embedding social value at scale, while remaining responsive to local needs. GXO has truly placed social value at the heart of its operations, using its national footprint to create meaningful opportunities for underrepresented groups and local communities.

Through a strong partnership with Co-op and community organisations, GXO has delivered impactful programmes that break down barriers to employment, inspire future talent and strengthen community connections. From donating £464,000 through the Apprenticeship Co-op Levy and delivering 1,500 volunteering hours in our Co-op Academies, to raising funds for charitable causes, their commitment is clear.

With 30 engagement events focused on learning and inclusion, and partnerships such as Andy's Man Club to champion men's mental health, GXO demonstrates what can be achieved when purpose is backed by action. Their approach reflects scale, consistency and a genuine intent to evolve, and is a strong example of what can be achieved when purpose and action are truly aligned, delivering lasting social impact..

BUSINESS USE