



SCOTTISH WHOLESale ASSOCIATION

The voice of the Scottish Food, Drink and Allied Trades

DELIVERING GROWTH THROUGH WHOLESale

Case study – Cloutie McToot



Michelle's Journey

FOR local food and drink producers there's always one big advantage – their backstory. It feeds into consumer appetite for provenance, and it resonates with people who are increasingly looking to support Scottish and local.

In Perthshire, Michelle Maddox has a great story to tell, establishing Cloutie McToot, her cloutie dumplings business in 2017 and selling her product for the first time at Kinross Farmers' Market.

At home in Abernethy in 2015, her son asked her to bake for a stall at his local school fete. Michelle turned to her family's traditional recipe for cloutie dumplings with the aroma of the sugar and spice she recalled from her own childhood igniting her passion for Scottish cooking once again.

May 2018 saw the business open the doors of its new premises in the village – a converted horse barn and hayloft – to house the production facility and the Cloutie McToot Dumpling Shop, selling its own produce, of course, as well as a range of other Scottish artisan products.

Today, there are nine variants in the core Cloutie McToot dumplings range – including Traditional, Rum & Raisin, Apple, Pear & Cinnamon, Cherry, Date & Lindores Aqua Vitae, and Banana & Toffee – plus cloutie dumpling kits, shortbread, tablet, chocolate, coffee and accessories such as beanie hats.

Her journey continued at pace with Cloutie McToot picking up numerous awards – most recently,

the Local Supplier of the Year award at Scottish Wholesale Achievers 2024, presented by Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade.

Now that journey is moving in another exciting direction with the announcement in February 2024 that Cloutie McToot is partnering with Highlands bakery group Cobbs, based in Drumnadrochit near Inverness.

"I wouldn't hesitate in recommending other small producers to get involved"

Cloutie McToot – Delivering Growth Through Wholesale

Today, Cloutie McToot's products are securing a strong foothold in wholesale and since completing the Delivering Growth Through Wholesale Programme (DGTW) in January 2023, the business has been working with a further four new wholesalers and now has relationships with: Fife Creamery, Clarks Speciality Foods, Braehead Foods, Greencity Wholefoods, and Mark Murphy Dole.

Following the partnership with Cobbs, Fife Creamery will be Cloutie McToot's principal wholesale distributor but Michelle is keen to credit DGTW with helping the business to grow turnover and make positive inroads into the wholesale channel.



“The programme has been hugely beneficial for us in terms of expanding the reach of our products and in building relationships with wholesalers,” says Michelle. “One of the main breakthroughs has been getting Cloutie McToot in Signature Pubs [which has outlets in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Stirling and St Andrews].

“Before getting involved with DGTW, I had a meeting with a wholesaler and just didn’t understand the wholesale terminology and what wholesalers needed – all of that was very new to me – so the programme was really useful in that respect. I also learned how important wholesale is as a route to market so there are massive benefits and I wouldn’t hesitate in recommending other small producers to get involved.”

For Michelle, one of the biggest learning curves gleaned from DGTW has been understanding the value of wholesale to her business. She explains: “I was looking to hire a sales and marketing manager but after looking at how much that would cost the business, I realised that wholesalers employ their own sales and marketing teams and can do that legwork for you.”

Benefits Of Doing Business With Wholesale

Since completing the programme and up until October 2023, Cloutie McToot has achieved total annual sales through the UK wholesale channel of about £30,000 and secured six new product listings. “It’s been an insightful experience and I now know that wholesalers are worth their weight in gold,” says Michelle.

“By that, I mean the way in which a business like mine can benefit from a wholesaler’s buying, sales and marketing teams – they are the experts and know who to present your products to, to help you grow your business and break into new markets.”

Total sales including the wholesale channel have also surged and Michelle also points to the SWA’s new Scottish Wholesale Directory as being “extremely useful” in identifying the company’s “best fit” wholesalers.

Michelle believes that it is important for producers and wholesalers to trust each other. “To grow any business – not just in the food and drink industry – you need to forge strong relationships and collaborate,” she points out.

“At the start of my wholesale journey I felt quite singular but DGTW helped me understand their needs which made the communication process so much easier.”

“When you are a single operator, it is only when you start to scale up your business that you realise you can’t do everything yourself – it can be exhausting. So, you pick the things you are good at and can control – and work with others on the rest.”

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About Delivering Growth Through Wholesale

The SWA Delivering Growth Through Wholesale Programme (DGTW) was launched in 2021 to educate and engage with producers on the opportunities provided by the wholesale sector.

Designed in conjunction with SAOS and Scotland Food & Drink, and supported by the Scottish Government, the initiative equips local Scottish producers with the insights and strategies needed to successfully navigate the landscape of the Scottish wholesale channel.

The training consists of two half-day virtual workshops, followed by bespoke one-to-one support, covering content such as navigating the diversity of Scottish wholesale, recognising the value of wholesale as a vital route to market, developing an effective Scottish wholesale strategy, and other tools for success.

As of March 2024, there have been over 230 new Scottish product listings via 59 new wholesale partnerships – with both producers and wholesalers working together to bring exciting and innovative products to a wider audience.

To find out more, contact us at info@scottishwholesale.co.uk



The Scottish Wholesale Association (SWA) is the official trade body for Scotland's food and drink wholesaling industry. SWA members are 'the wheels to Scotland's food and drink industry', supplying products to over 5,000 independent convenience stores, 30,000 catering, hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses, and the majority of public sector establishments across Scotland.

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