

Collaboration for Sales

What is it like to design and produce a product for market?

Written by *Randy Mertens* (<https://cafnr.missouri.edu/?author=10>) · September 24, 2012

Azlin Mustapha, associate professor and director of graduate studies in food science, is working on a soon-to-be-revealed secret project for CAFNR. This project goes beyond the laboratory – it is designed to produce an exciting new product and have it be successful in the marketplace. It's joined CAFNR food science researchers and students with industry professionals in a unique collaboration with sales, research and education goals.

This project, and product, will be announced soon.

What was it like to expand the classroom into the boardroom? We asked Dr. Mustapha.

Is working with industry different from collaborating within higher education?

There are more issues to consider than just the research problem, such as cost and quality of ingredients, suppliers, marketing strategies and consumer preferences. And, of course, a business must make a profit from what they make. As a teaching and research faculty, I would not necessarily think about these things.

What did your students learn from working with an industry partner?

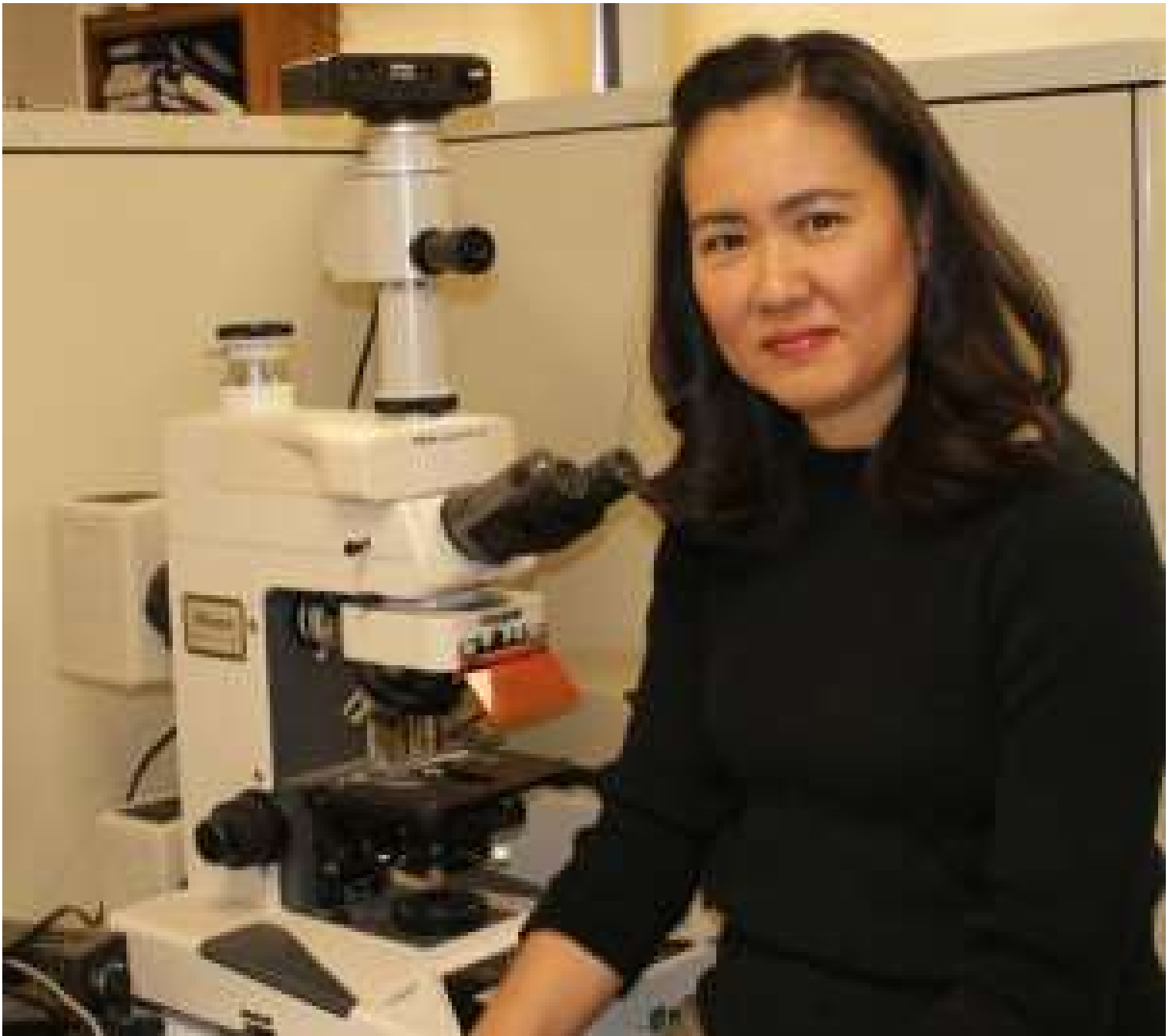
It takes a lot of trial and error to succeed in marketing a product. Working in a team with many perspectives can be both engaging and bring out new ideas, but it can also slow the thought process down when too many ideas clash. I believe the students learned that it not only takes a lot of science-based knowledge to develop a product, but also good marketing strategies, experience, common sense and plain gumption to make a product that will sell.

What did your industry collaborator get from the experience?

From my standpoint, I think he got some joy out of working with young inquisitive minds and being able to teach them a thing or two about his products and trade.

Will this experience better prepare your students for their careers?

I'm a big proponent of letting our students obtain first-hand experience in the food industry so they can take everything they learn in the classroom and see how that relates to making a product a successful reality. It also introduces them to the challenges and responses that have to be considered in order to be a successful entrepreneur and business owner. In addition, I feel that having them conduct independent



Azlin Mustapha. (http://cafnrnews.com/?attachment_id=12384)

projects and research in the laboratories and off campus as part of a course assignment or research fellowship is very important. This allows them to evolve into independent thinkers and become more prepared to enter the real job market.

Mustapha earned her Ph.D. in Food Science and Technology from the University of Nebraska. Her research interests include food safety and quality and developing novel foods containing health beneficial microbes.

**Right before Inside CAFNR went to press, the announcement came out detailing Mustapha's secret project. Find out what it is [here](http://cafnrnews.com/2012/09/crunch-time/) (<http://cafnrnews.com/2012/09/crunch-time/>).*

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