

Embargoed until 3pm 25 April 2018

The John Lewis Partnership reveals new retail tech innovation programme

- *For the first time, the JLAB programme will run throughout the year with the first theme focused on health and wellbeing*
- *Applications open on 25 April and will close at midnight on 25 May 2018*
- *JLAB 2018 will run in association with True*

One of Britain's most well-known retail groups - the John Lewis Partnership - today announced that its unique retail tech innovation programme, JLAB, will be expanded in 2018 with a number of new activities also launching later in the year.

For the first time in its five year history, JLAB will run throughout the year rather than as a one-off 12 week innovation programme. As one of the largest innovation programmes in the UK, there will be three chances in 2018 for both established businesses and new startups to participate, with the first pitch focused on health and wellbeing.

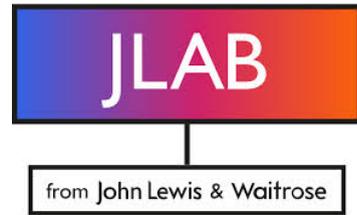
Waitrose joined the JLAB programme in 2017 and is setting the first challenge this year. Given Waitrose's position as a leading food retailer, it is looking for customer facing, digital propositions that provide customers with advice and inspiration that make it easier for them to lead healthy lifestyles and eat more healthily. These new business ideas will complement a raft of initiatives Waitrose is currently launching which make it easier for customers to make healthy choices.

Successful applicants will have access to a variety of benefits including expert advice and mentorship from John Lewis and Waitrose senior leaders, product validation from retail experts and customers, investment from the JLAB fund and office space.

John Vary, Futurologist at the John Lewis Partnership, said: "As more and more businesses face digital disruption, it's increasingly important for the Partnership to stay committed to the ideals of our founder, John Spedan Lewis, by experimenting and nurturing innovation both inside and outside our business. This is exactly why we have created a completely new JLAB for 2018. We wanted to take the programme to the next level by launching more events but with a focus on themes we feel are most significant to our customers as well as the future of retail. We're excited to see the market challenging ideas businesses will put forward."

JLAB 2018 will be run in association with True - Europe's only retail and consumer sector specialist, operating across the entire investment vertical. Applications to pitch ideas will be made via www.jlab.co.uk and will close at midnight on 25 May 2018. The John Lewis Partnership and True will then select a small group to pitch in June 2018. The successful business or businesses will be announced at a showcase later on in the year.

The launch of JLAB 2018 follows on from successful investments made in 2017, with [WeFiFo](#), which connects home chefs, supper club hosts and professional chefs with paying guests and [Exactly](#), an



intelligent addressing system that aims to put an end to failed deliveries, now working closely with the John Lewis Partnership to grow their businesses.

The John Lewis Partnership exists today because of the extraordinary vision and ideals of its founder, John Spedan Lewis, who believed in experimentation and openly encouraged it. JLAB was established in 2014, to highlight and encourage this vision and enable the Partnership to build entrepreneurs of the future.

-ENDS-

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Notes to editors:

The John Lewis Partnership operates 50 John Lewis shops across the UK, johnlewis.com, 353 Waitrose shops, waitrose.com and business to business contracts in the UK and abroad. The business has annual gross sales of over £11.5bn. It is the UK's largest example of an employee-owned business where all 85,500 staff are Partners in the business.

Waitrose has 353 shops in England, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands, including 65 convenience branches, and another 27 shops at Welcome Break locations. It combines the convenience of a supermarket with the expertise and service of a specialist shop - dedicated to offering quality food that has been responsibly sourced, combined with high standards of customer service. Waitrose also exports its products to 52 countries worldwide and has nine shops which operate under licence in the Middle East.

Waitrose's omnichannel business includes the online grocery service Waitrose.com, as well as specialist online shops including waitrosecellar.com for wine and waitroseflorist.com for plants and flowers and waitrosegifts.com for gifts. In recent months, Waitrose has been awarded the much-coveted European-wide Compassion in World Farming 'Best Retailer Award', Soil Association's 'Best Organic Supermarket Award 2017' and The Drinks Business' 'Retail Buying Team of the Year Award'.

John Lewis - John Lewis operates 50 John Lewis shops across the UK (36 department stores, 12 John Lewis at home and shops at St Pancras International and Heathrow Terminal 2) as well as johnlewis.com. John Lewis, 'Best In-Store Experience 2017', 'Best Furniture Retailer 2017', 'Best Homewares Retailer 2017'* stocks around 350,000 separate lines in its department stores and johnlewis.com across fashion, home and technology. Johnlewis.com is consistently ranked one of the top online shopping destinations in the UK. John Lewis Insurance offers a range of comprehensive insurance products - home, car, wedding and event, travel and pet insurance and life cover - delivering the values of expertise, trust and customer service expected from the John Lewis brand.

True - True (www.true.global), is Europe's only retail and consumer sector specialist that operates across the entire investment vertical. True has total funds under management of £200m and invests in retail and consumer sector business models which represent the future of the industry. True's Live Network model brings together its private equity companies, startup innovators, investors and leading industry partners to add value, both strategically and operationally, across the retail and consumer spectrum.