



Robin Ferris. Photo credit: Simon Veit-Wilson

Jul 15, 2024 09:30 BST

Tech for good social impact founder receives honorary degree from Northumbria University

The founder of the UK's first zero waste food donation platform has received an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law from Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Robin Ferris, who studied marketing management at Northumbria between 1999 and 2003, began his career in the music industry working as a market insight assistant for Sony Music.

He spent 20 successful years in the global record and media-entertainment industry. He worked for the Christian rock band Delirious? whilst at university, before moving to Island Records and promoting artists including Amy Winehouse, Drake, Stevie Wonder, Keane, the Fratellis, Sugababes, McFly, and MIKA. He also held account management roles at Warner Music UK and the Universal Music Group.

In 2010, Robin made the switch from music to television and began to work as an account manager for Universal Pictures before moving to Elevation Sales, a joint venture between two independent film companies Studio canal and Lionsgate. Here where he was nominated for a British Association for Screen Entertainment (BASE) award for his work with company client Play.com, the online retailer. After leaving Elevation Sales, he moved to BBC Studios, where he worked as a national account manager for video and music.

Robin returned to Elevation Sales for two years before founding his own socially focused business, Bankuet, with the aim of ensuring that food banks have what they need, when they need it. He is now applying his vast digital technology and marketing experience to supporting the third sector, by establishing the UK's first digital, zero-waste food donation platform supporting UK foodbanks - the first pilot was with Wandsworth in July 2019.

Bankuet was born out of a simple desire to help tackle food poverty and Robin's aim is to make foodbanks as easy as possible to donate to by streamlining donation procedures and providing updates of stock levels, to ensure donors are giving products which have the most impact.

Bankuet uses technology to provide food banks with exactly what they need when they need it. Its innovative model allows donors to contribute funds via the platform, which then enables bulk purchases of essential items requested by food banks to be made from trusted retailers. For every £1 donated, Bankuet delivers more than £1 worth of food, and this zero-waste system ensures efficiency and prevents food waste.

Bankuet is the UK's first zero waste food donation platform and the number one supplier of food for many large food banks across the UK. Founded to achieve social impact rather than profit, Bankuet was born with the final aim of tackling food poverty, its vision is a simple one: that no one in the UK will go hungry.

From a small start up with a single employee and one volunteer, Bankuet saw 165 people volunteer during the lockdowns as the company scaled up across the nation in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bankuet now partners with nearly 300 food banks across the UK, operates in 70 towns and cities, and has made bulk deliveries every week since the outbreak of the pandemic and throughout the cost-of-living crisis. Bankuet has seen over £3 million donated via its platform and has delivered over 2.9 million food and household items to help tackle food poverty.

Robin himself was a foodbank volunteer and his business has helped to transform how food banks operate and he has received significant accolades in the food, tech, and charity sectors.

In 2021 he received the Spectator Innovator of the Year Award and the Environmental and Social Governance Excellence Award. In 2022 he received a Social Impact Fellowship from the Global Insight Network GLG and finished the year in royal company meeting with His Majesty King Charles III and sharing with him the work Bankuet are doing.

Robin always reflects fondly on his time at Northumbria and upon receiving his honorary degree from the University, he said: “Receiving this honorary degree from Northumbria University is not just a personal accolade but a moment to highlight the collective effort in tackling food insecurity in the UK. Through Bankuet, we’ve introduced a sustainable model that ensures food banks receive precisely what they need when they need it, enhancing the impact of each donation. This recognition reaffirms our commitment to innovation and the urgent need to address food poverty.”

In 2022, Robin supported the Northumbria Students’ Union (SU) to onboard Bankuet as their donation platform and help facilitate the SU Foodbank operation, donations, and products.

The following year, he joined a 13-strong team of alumni and staff from the University, cycling 300 miles over four days. They cycled from Northumbria’s London campus, arriving at the University’s Newcastle Campus to help raise over £11,000 for the Northumbria University ‘Higher Education Without Barriers’ Fund, aimed at providing life-changing opportunities for those who would not otherwise be able to access higher education.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk

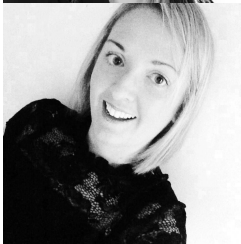


Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk