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UK CEO Cuddigan Aims to Lead Plant-Based Brand to Profit

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Mark Cuddigan, CEO of British plant-based food company This, is leading the firm through a pivotal transition. Known for its meat alternative products, This recently launched its new “Super Superfood” range offering more protein than tofu, high fibre content, and minimal processing. Cuddigan describes it as “a genuine innovation,” following strong feedback from 500 scientists and nutritionists in The Hague.

Cuddigan, who is not vegan or vegetarian, calls himself the company's "ideal customer" due to his flexible diet. He believes flexitarian consumers are crucial for scaling plant-based eating. "I've completely changed what I eat since I joined," he told reporters.

Before joining this, Cuddigan was CEO at Ella's Kitchen, a leading children's food brand. Under his leadership, the company's revenue more than doubled from £41 million to £100 million. He took over from Thisco's Andy Shovel and Pete Sharman in 2023, who had jointly led the business since its founding in 2019.

The company has been recognised for its unconventional and bold marketing tactics, a reputation established under Shovel. Cuddigan intends to continue that momentum, applying his leadership approach developed over more than a decade at Ella's Kitchen.

He attributes part of his leadership style to the book *Turn the Ship Around* by former US Navy officer David Marquet. The book, which outlines decentralised decision-making aboard a nuclear submarine, influenced Cuddigan's management philosophy. "It showed me that leaders don't have to make every decision. They need to build trust and empower others," he said.

Cuddigan is working to restructure this for profitability. The company, which employs more than 50 staff, has historically operated at a loss. Recently, it streamlined its product range from over 100 items to just above 40, and exited the Netherlands market to focus on the UK.

He also cites culture as a key motivator for joining the firm. A short walk from his London home to the company's offices and a desire to create an engaging workplace environment factored into his decision. "When people leave here, I want them to expect more from wherever they go next," he said.