

Making Food Safety a Priority

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Lessons Learned

- **Rapidly changing industry**
- **Vigilance**
- **Maximize food safety firewall**



Key Areas of Influence

- **No list of “wish we did’s” or “next time we will’s”**
- **4 Key areas of influence**
- **What they were and how we used them**



Areas of Influence

- **Senior management commitment to food safety**
- **Corporate food safety culture**
- **Supplier (food chain) management**
- **End user motivation for a food-safe program**



Food Business Truths

- **Food safety is the only area you bet your business on every minute you operate**
- **Obligation to provide safe food**
 - Expected
 - Legal
 - Regulatory
 - Real threats (chemical, physical, microbiological)
 - Operational disruption
 - PR
 - \$\$\$\$\$



Senior Management Commitment to Food Safety

- **Everyone believes food safety is a priority**
- **People want to do the right thing**
- **Senior leadership commitment is the key**
 - Sets the tone. Makes the food safety decision OK
 - Believe, prioritize, encourage, challenge
 - Failure in this area is not an option
 - Align colliding priorities across the organization
 - Output vs. food safety protocol
 - Cost vs. food safety testing
 - Timeline vs. hold and release
 - Least cost raw material vs. best raw material supply
 - Communicate, provide tools, reward performance



Corporate Food Safety Culture

- **Food safety must be at least on par with your most important operational focus- if not the most important system to be managed**
- **Food safety influences all areas of the operation**
 - Sales and marketing
 - Purchasing, Inventory Management and Distribution
 - Employee management and scheduling (HR)
 - Manufacturing requirements and variables
 - Accounting
 - Legal, Risk Management, and Insurance
 - Construction and Facilities Management
 - QA and R&D Departments
 - Operations and Training
 - Communications and PR
- **Create and live a food safety culture within the organization**
 - There is not one “**food safety guy**”- food safety must be an organizational theme, culture, belief, etc.



Corporate Food Safety Culture

- **People want to do the right thing**
- **Show them what the right thing is**
 - How does food safety impact their world, what's at stake
 - How does their world impact food safety
 - Educate them about food safety
 - Show them how they fit into the food safety program
 - Encourage their participation
 - Ask them questions, explain, communicate, listen
 - Reward good food safety decisions



Corporate Food Safety Culture

- **Invite participation**
- **Cross functional teams**
- **Heavily management and operations populated**
 - Procedural development
 - Operation execution
 - Facility design
 - Training programs
 - Support systems
 - Looking forward



Corporate Food Safety Culture

- **Incorporate systems and formats familiar to your organization**
- **Monitor/manage data flow**
- **Begin in a consulting mode, not enforcement**
- **Identify “all-stars”: Celebrate success, disseminate best practices**
- **Continuously review and enhance your programs**
- **Share food safety ownership**
- **Don’t be exclusive. Who’s answering the call?**



**Cultural Shift = New Thinking
New Thinking = New
Opportunities**

- **Sharing with the industry**
- **Sharing and partnering with the regulatory community**



Sharing with Industry

- **Food safety is not a point of competition**
- **Foodborne illness impacts everyone**
 - Consumer confidence
 - External pressures
- **Benefits of sharing**
 - Benchmarking
 - Share best practices
 - Add proven tools for the challenge of defending food safety



Regulatory Community

- **Food safety rules, priorities, and interpretations have a degree of variance**
- **Perception within the regulatory community**
 - Sharing programs
 - Supporting efforts
 - Building a relationship
- **Be proactive**
 - Reporting yourself, asking for help
 - Being helpful in the investigation
 - Being a resource



Supply Chain Food Safety Management

- **Supplier/Customer: Two connected links in the food supply chain working under the same assumptions:**
 - Provide safe food all the time
 - Customers will buy your product
 - Customers don't anticipate your product getting them ill
 - If a customer buys your product and gets ill, it's a bad thing



Supply Chain Food Safety Management

- **Set and maintain high standards for product safety and align with suppliers/end users which have similar standards**
- **Hold to your standards and don't compromise**
- **Challenge your partner(s)**



Supply Chain Food Safety Management

- **Understand where your product comes from**
- **Know where your product goes**
- **Agree to (don't accept) product parameters**
- **Maintain open communication**
- **Be open to suggestion, criticism, improvement**
- **Align processes which provide redundancies**



Supply Chain Food Safety Management

- **Standards (Facilities, food, trailers, production data, food safety systems)**
 - Safe
 - Realistic
 - Work within your systems
- **Evaluate against your criteria**
- **Make decisions on deficiencies**
- **Manage performance information and share it**
- **Reward success, react to deficiency**
- **Don't compromise**



Supply Chain Food Safety Management

- **Share your standards with your supply chain, verify alignment**
- **Gain agreement**
 - 1/3 will (they're already where you want them to be)
 - 1/3 might (get them there, they'll stay a long time)
 - 1/3 will leave (thank them for their honesty)
- **Set up and use a strong communication path**
- **Be consistent in your expectations**
- **Honesty and loyalty go a long way in maintaining a strong food safety relationship, even in tough times.**
- **They manage your product's safety until you do. You must have a mutual trust and confidence in order to be consistently and jointly successful**



End User Motivation for a Food Safe Program

- **Well intended people put into place to execute the final steps of your food safety program**
- **“18 year old” rule**
- **Our incident occurred in 1993. An 18 year old now would have been 4 years old then.**
- **We must go beyond a historical or emotional reference to achieve success.**



End User Motivation

- **Food safety hurdles upstream**
- **Build in food safety, don't try to catch it**
- **Reduce the risk of that last food safety decision**
- **Food safety awareness**
- **Food safety training**



End User Motivation

- **Position Food Safety as its own program**
 - Don't hide it among other procedures
- **Explain the “why” behind the “what”**
 - People will do the right thing if they understand it
 - Why cook chicken to 165°F?
 - Why not thaw meat on the counter?
 - Why am I doing this? What if I don't?



End User Motivation

- **Keep food safety on a high level**
 - Not the flavor of the month program
 - Once it fades it never comes back
- **Consistent modeling at all levels**
 - Hair/jewelry
 - Hand washing
 - Procedures



End User Motivation

- **Food safety techniques should be critical**
 - Don't allow their value to be diluted
 - Minimum temps vs. "It looks done"
 - Time/Temp restrictions vs. OK to extend the time
- **Don't waste the food safety bullets**
 - By rationalizing everything as a CCP



End User Motivation

- **Integrate food safety techniques into daily activities, not in conflict with them**
- **Ask about food safety**
 - People will react to the anticipated question
 - Culture will evolve towards the desired behavior



End User Motivation

- **Don't ask for superhuman achievement**
 - Food safety is manageable
 - Procedures are achievable across a broad skill level
 - Everybody plays a role. Don't set anyone up to fail



End User Motivation

- **Barriers are removed and competing programs are aligned which complement the food safety process**
 - Speed of service vs. Proper cooking
 - Food Waste vs. Throwing it out
 - Labor time vs. Completing HACCP checks
 - Scheduling vs. Working when ill



Motivation: Surveillance and Scoring and Discipline

- **Scoring and disciplining performance has value**
 - Demonstrates what's important to the organization
 - Generates a response
 - Verifies what can be done while being watched
 - Verifies people can fill out a form
 - *Or worry more about the form than the process*



Motivation: Surveillance and Scoring and Coaching

- **Scoring and coaching has more value**
 - Promotes a culture of proper technique vs. proper demonstration
 - Promotes better understanding of the procedure and its importance
 - Opportunity to explain, correct, develop action plans in a non-threatening environment



End User Motivation

- **Listen and Reward**
 - Celebrate victories
 - Listen to your audience
 - May be a better way
 - Accept feedback
 - You need buy in
 - Recognize best practices
 - Adapt to what works



Summary

- **Success in the area of food safety greatly depends on the strength of the food safety culture in an organization**
- **Senior management is key to driving that culture. Sets the tone and makes food safety an organizational priority**



Summary

- **Food safety touches the entire organization. Demonstrate how, get buy in, make food safety part of the organizational culture**
 - There's not one "food safety guy"
- **Supplier base is critical to success**
 - Set and hold to good standards
 - Define your expectations
 - Select partners that will meet your expectations
 - Communicate and manage them



Summary

- **People want to do the right thing**
- **Teach them what the right thing is and why**
- **Remove barriers to your goals**
- **Consistently model food safety**
- **Listen, watch, coach, train, reward**

