Making Food Safety a Priority

Tennessee Food Safety Task Force
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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**