

oneSAFE™

SINGLE-GLOVE DISPENSING SYSTEM



Making food safety a top priority for your business

In the food business, it is critically important that everyone – from company executives to line workers – understands and embraces the central role that employee hygiene and safe food-handling must play. If a culture of food safety is not at the heart of the organization, the health of customers, employees and the business's bottom line can all be damaged.

The risks are not trivial. The majority (68%) of foodborne illness outbreaks in the U.S. are related to restaurants or delis¹, and the CDC has identified poor personal hygiene among food workers as one of the top-five foodborne illness risk factors. This is why the FDA's Food Code identifies hands as a vehicle of contamination as one of five key control measures and includes specific recommendations on both proper hand washing procedures and the correct use of single-use gloves or other suitable utensils when handling ready-to-eat foods.²

If customer safety is jeopardized, there is the financial risk of lawsuits and legal fees, increased insurance premiums and a decrease in business. There are soft costs associated with an outbreak as well, such as staff retraining and employees missing work. Current estimates of the cost of foodborne illness in the U.S. per year start at \$14.1 billion and go as high as \$152 billion³ – figures everyone in the food business must take seriously. Even if a store or restaurant is able to absorb these financial losses, possible closure by local health authorities and negative media exposure can impact the business for years.

Given the risks, how can businesses ensure that everyone understands the importance of food safety? How do they inculcate a culture of food safety across the organization, especially in store managers, supervisors and front-line workers?

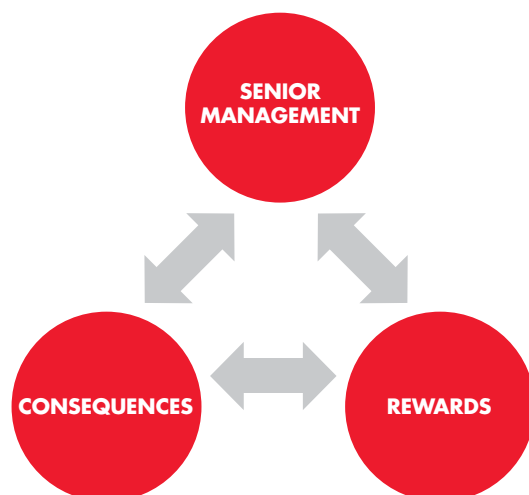
Walk the walk

While there is a myriad of tactics, some of which we will discuss here, for influencing the culture in an organization, they all stem from the same basic fact. Culture is determined by actions. Documentation, training and signs can serve as reminders or explanations, but if the people in the organization, particularly management, don't follow words with actions, they won't replace the dominant culture.

To create a culture of food safety in your organization, senior management must be truly committed, in words, in actions and in investment dollars. If management talks about food safety, then questions spending on gloves, the safety message will be lost. If store managers post signs about correct hand washing techniques, then push workers to speed through or even skip washing, the signs will be ignored. Leaders set the expectation and reinforce the culture.

One of the best things management can do to create a culture of food safety is to provide a feedback loop consisting of a combination of both rewards for good behavior and consequences for poor behavior. Retail businesses with a large number of front-line workers often have contests or games to promote new initiatives or encourage sales, but these techniques work equally well for reinforcing food safety behaviors.

Equally important is treating violations of best practices for food safety as seriously as other employee misbehaviors. If the proper techniques for washing hands and donning new gloves before handling ready-to-eat foods are ignored or treated as unimportant, employees will correctly infer that food safety is not as important as other work rules. If an employee steals food or cash, he or she would be fired immediately. If you consider the possible cost of a foodborne illness outbreak, severe discipline for infractions related to food safety are just as crucial. The rest of the team will only adopt the same priorities when they see their leaders make the tough decisions.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that foods consumed in the U.S. that were contaminated with 31 known agents of foodborne disease caused 9.4 million illnesses, 55,961 hospitalizations and 1,351 deaths each year.⁴ The CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cite five highly infective pathogens that can easily be transmitted by food workers and cause severe illness:

- Norovirus
- *Salmonella Typhi* (typhoid-like fever)
- *E. coli* O157:H7, Enterohemorrhagic or Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*
- *Shigella* spp. (causes shigellosis)
- Hepatitis A virus⁵

Consider your audience

One often-overlooked aspect to creating a culture of food safety is different learning styles. While the majority of people in senior or executive roles are likely literate learners – meaning that they are accustomed to assimilating information they receive through written documents or instructions – the majority of food service workers are likely oral learners.⁶ This means that they are more accustomed to learning by verbal explanations, by in-person training and by demonstrations.

Research has also shown the effectiveness of not only showing employees what actions you want them to take,⁷ but by ensuring that they understand the importance of implementing those practices. Real-life examples get food workers' and managers' attention and help them learn. When employees understand the reasons behind what they are being asked to do, they are much more likely to remember and engage in those activities.

“Real-life examples get food workers' and managers' attention and help them learn.”

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER TACTICS THAT HAVE SHOWN SUCCESS IN COMMUNICATING FOOD SAFETY CONCEPTS:

Use stories and sayings that include vivid examples that allow food employees to feel the impact of a behavior	Stress the importance of role models who show and model appropriate behavior in supportive ways	Whenever possible, individuals who have a relationship with employees should provide the information
Use familiar words and examples that your employees can relate to and understand	Present information verbally and often	Use eye contact
Use straightforward signs/posters as reminders	Offer information in multiple languages tailored to specific regional needs	Allow for two-way communication
	As part of the learning, demonstrate concepts and have employees demonstrate the concepts back to you	

Implement tools and technology

Training, incentives and demonstrations are some of the critical components needed to inculcate a culture of food safety. Another important factor is providing effective tools and technology to make it simple and fast to observe best practices for safety.

First, food-handling areas need to provide an adequate number of hand washing sinks in convenient, easy-to-reach locations. If sinks are out of the way, overcrowded or lack warm water, soap and paper towels, employees will be tempted to skip the important step of proper hand washing. This is of particular importance for employees in frontline roles to ensure they do not feel as if practicing proper hygiene reduces customer service.

Clean hands are imperative for the sanitary use of food-handling tools, including utensils and disposable, single-use gloves, which are required by the FDA Food Code when preparing and serving ready-to-eat foods. For an extra measure of safety, especially in cases of inadequate hand washing, consider employing the single-glove dispensing technology to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Gloves and other food-handling tools need to be abundant and convenient so that employees don't waste time searching for them or worse, serve food with bare hands and transmit pathogens to customers. Putting single-use gloves at every point of interaction, right in the line of employees' sight, both serves as a reminder to change gloves often and mitigates objections to interrupting workflows to change gloves.

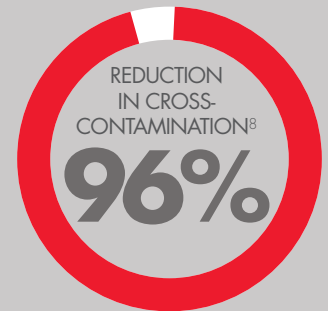
Create procedures

Once employees have internalized the importance of proper food safety practices and a business has provided the right tools and technology, the final ingredient in creating a culture of food safety is to implement procedures that support and reinforce best practices. A single session of training will not prompt ongoing and consistent attitude changes, and even a robust communication plan will fade from memories over time and with staff turnover. The key is being consistent and making sure that everyone understands the company's expectations where food safety is concerned.

Procedures that encourage food safety should include purchasing and management processes as well. By mitigating incentives for store and regional management to save on safety supplies such as cleaning agents and gloves, organizations can send a strong signal that food safety is more important – and ultimately more valuable – than incremental savings on supplies.

Did you know?

Single-glove dispensing systems that dispense at the cuff are shown to greatly decrease cross-contamination



93%
LESS
BACTERIA
VERSUS TRADITIONAL DISPENSERS⁸



faster to put on
versus traditional
dispenser gloves

For more details on the advantages of single-glove dispensing, see the Swann-Morton Study, 2009 & 2010

Bring it all together

Safe food handling is one of the most important things any store or restaurant can do for its customers and its bottom line. To ensure that it is a priority throughout the organization and over time, businesses need to dedicate resources and take actions that create a positive culture of safety that takes the learning styles of employees into account. They need to implement technologies that make best practices a natural part of doing business, and finally, they need to reinforce those practices with the right policies and procedures.



¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Surveillance for Foodborne Disease Outbreaks — United States, 1998-2008. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/pdfs/reported-outbreak-settings-508c.pdf>

²U.S. Public Health Service. (2013). Food Code (NTIS Issue Number 201410). Rockville, MD: Food and Drug Administration. [Link to <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/UCM374510.pdf>]

³<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib-economic-information-bulletin/eib118.aspx>

⁴CDC. Emerging Infectious Diseases, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2011. Retrieved from <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/17/1/pdfs/p1-1101.pdf>

⁵U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Retail Food Protection: Employee Health and Personal Hygiene Handbook. Retrieved from <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm113827.htm>

⁶Tart, A., & Pittman J. (2004). Proceedings from AFDO 114th Annual Education Conference. Norfolk, VA. [Link to: <http://www.afdo.org/Resources/Documents/4-news-and-events/past-presentations/1006221600TartPittman.pdf>]

⁷Clayton, D. A., Griffith, C. J., Price, P., & Peters, A. C. (2002). Food handlers' beliefs and self-reported practices. International Journal of Environmental Health Research, 12(1), 25-39. [Link to: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187704281304398X>]

⁸Swann-Morton Study, 2009 & 2010 available at www.oneSAFEsystem.com.

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