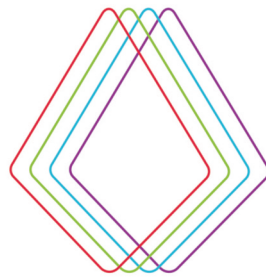Campden BRI
food and drink innovation

Talking Safety and Quality Culture Excellence
at Campden BRI's 5th Annual Seminar

CULTURE
EXCELLENCE

Talking Safety and Quality Culture Excellence at Campden BRI's 5th Annual Seminar

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Emma's PhD project (collaboratively supported by a food manufacturing and processing business partner) focuses on assessing hand hygiene compliance and food safety culture with a view to implementing bespoke interventions to enhance food safety behaviour. KESS2 is a pan-Wales higher level skills initiative led by Bangor University on behalf of the HE sector in Wales; partly funded by the Welsh Government's European Social Fund (ESF) convergence programme for West Wales and the Valleys.

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On Tuesday 3 December 2019, Bertrand Emond, Event Director, welcomed participants to the 5th Safety and Quality Culture Excellence seminar at Campden BRI.

In his opening address, Bertrand highlighted the current drivers for pursuing culture excellence including a rise in unannounced audits, a desire to build on current audit scores, earning recognition as well as a growing appreciation that cultivating a strong 'culture' was essential to reinforce safety and food safety procedures. Similarly, a growing awareness among investors and insurance companies - realising the benefit of a mature safety culture - was also driving businesses to embrace their culture excellence journey.

As an industry professional, remaining humble and never becoming complacent in the pursuit of culture excellence was the tone that Bertrand set for the day. Emphasising that we were, fundamentally, "here to share", provided a fitting introduction to an illustrious group of speakers who generously shared valuable global insights into managing food safety and safety quality culture from their own company perspectives. In anticipation of the Global Food Safety Initiative's (GFSI) benchmarking requirements (Issue 8) in 2020, guest speaker experiences are structured around the dimensional framework provided by the GFSI's position paper on food safety culture.

Vision and mission

Having a clear vision and mission is vital to progress the culture journey. It establishes a common aim, sets the direction and defines a path to success that can be embedded across the whole organisation; something which Lydie De Meyer and the management team at Danone have first-hand experience of. While the company had always worked towards culture excellence, previous efforts had been contained in individual sites. As such, developing a shared, one company culture established a common mindset with a common language whose purpose was to actively engage the 100,000 'Danoners' (i.e. Danone employees) worldwide under the aptly named *iCare* programme.

iCare embodies quality in everything that Danoners do simply because they 'care'. The company vision is to excel in quality everywhere every day underpinned by four values - to be preferred, be efficient, be trusted and be proud. Danone's key focus areas include fostering employee ownership, encouraging peer involvement, levering leadership commitment and always ensuring that the messaging was credible.

Similarly, Sharon Birkett echoed that defining the strategy, engaging senior leaders and developing a vocabulary of terms had been key to kick-starting the OSI road to culture success. Committing time and resources in balance with other competing business priorities ensured that complacent attitudes were not perpetuated. Sharon stated that accepting "good enough" inevitably prevented "world class" achievement but having clear direction and setting milestones kept the company vision and mission alive. Indeed, awareness across the company was key to propelling the culture momentum, something which Dr. Bizhan Pourkomailian (McDonald's) was also keen to share.

People

In any organisation, at every level the people are the critical component. Behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, competencies and personal values can all have an impact on culture and recognising the diverse characteristics is a pre-requisite to any progress. For McDonald's, talking to each other - as well as listening - had been vital in re-assessing their food safety culture. As a global enterprise with a diverse workforce, remaining food safety relevant while embracing regional customs led to development and implementation of a 'one-way' food safety programme that was innovative, intuitive and simple. Pourkomailian noted that to positively mature culture, a deeper understanding of the generational characteristics of McDonald's employees had been necessary. This entailed not only understanding how age and national culture affected behaviour but also an appreciation of how those generations worked best together.

For Coca-Cola and their quality and safety culture, it was most definitely "all about the people". With 700,000 system associates worldwide (company and independent Coca-Cola bottlers' employees), engaging and developing employees to readily take safety ownership had been led by CEO James Quincey whose transparent and open commitment to the safety culture encouraged people "to believe". Neil Marshall spoke of Coca-Cola's culture road-map - CARE - which communicated, assessed, reinforced and enabled leaders to plan and progress their own 'personal' journey at a local level. In supporting Coca-Cola's values, employees were encouraged to operate beyond compliance, to always pursue excellence and focus on bringing products that were trusted everywhere to market. Sharing, collaboration and transparent reward and recognition programmes had supported the QSE (Quality Safety Edge) journey - but keeping the messages relevant (i.e. always ensuring the message content connected to the business goals) maintained employee engagement.

Consistency

Speakers were in universal agreement that a 'consistent' approach was paramount for success. Developing a suite of documentation (i.e. a 'toolbox') had ensured that Danone and Coca-Cola's message remained consistent but also provided sites with a mechanism to 'personalise' their own culture journey. In the early stages, delivering Coca-Cola's QSE vision from both a top down and bottom up perspective identified that whichever way the strategy was directed, connecting the message back to the business values was essential. This had ensured that every Coca-Cola associate was empowered to play their part in the culture journey as the common aim was understood.

Having a clear communication plan was also reiterated in the presentation given by Liz Ward and Zoe Shuttleword (McCormick). Frequent conversations with plant leaders enabled teams to discuss their culture activities and to share insight into what had, on occasion, not worked so well. Using Yammer (an organisational social network) provided a company-wide platform to raise awareness and communicate progress quickly. McCormick realised that while a 'one size fits all' programme gives structure it was also important for plans to remain flexible as every site will be starting their journey from their own unique culture standpoint.

Indeed, Tim Jackson (Grupo Bimbo) spoke about development of 'QACCP' (Quality Analysis Critical Control Point) which maintained consistency in their organisation's process. Identifying critical control points had ensured that training, equipment, resources and investment, to name a few, were optimised to deliver Grupo Bimbo's progress with their culture journey. Tim Jackson also observed

that when culture communication was led by the leader or leadership teams the positive effect was greater; 'keeping it simple' had been key to employee buy-in. For all the speakers, a consistent approach ensured that key performance measures and milestones could be designed into the culture strategy from the outset.

From an academic perspective, Emma Samuel, a KESS2 PhD research student from the ZERO2FIVE Food Industry Centre at Cardiff Metropolitan University, highlighted some of the practical issues involved in maintaining consistency in a multi-site food manufacturing facility. Even with a well-designed communication strategy, company-wide initiatives raising food safety culture awareness could be affected by simple factors that were not always immediately obvious. For example, food safety terminology adopted in established company policy, procedure and during training should remain consistent with the food safety culture message being delivered to avoid confusion or behavioural conflict. Nevertheless, this demonstrates once again that one size may not fit everywhere, and an appreciation of site characteristics can ensure the plan is adapted to counteract contradictions from the outset.

Adaptability

Martin Watson (Müller) brought an insight into the health and safety perspective of culture to the stage. Overcoming different company systems, processes, performance measures and safety management systems during Müller's amalgamation of four major businesses, identified the need for strategic prioritisation. This included monthly health and safety campaigns, having clearly defined roles and responsibilities, frequent huddles and chuddles and a 'you said - we did' campaign.

Innovative use of media - such as creating short news skits - enabled Müller to convey their culture messages effectively to all staff members. The use of humour to deliver a serious health and safety message (such as 'Trolley Folly' to promote safe manual handling) had captured employee attention, subsequently demonstrating a substantial reduction in loss-time incidents. Nevertheless, the Müller journey had not been entirely without issue and remaining adaptable was essential to ensure the culture strategy did not lose momentum.

Hazard and risk awareness

Richa Bedi-Navik, Technical Manager at BRCGS noted that when it came to 'culture', businesses were in essence capturing something that cannot be seen. As such, recognising that food safety culture was fundamental to the management of product safety, Issue 8 had been developed with a two-phase approach to the auditing progress. In the first year, businesses were expected to develop a plan of action to improve food safety and quality culture together with a set of actions to implement the same.

During the second year, evidence of the plan effectiveness would be assessed and Richa emphasised that the strategy must be site dependent with a clear recognition of the business' needs. Auditors would expect to review evidence that aligned with the original plan, that satisfied the standard and demonstrated that it was actively evolving. Notably, since the introduction of Issue 8 in February 2019, 19% of businesses receiving a non-conformity for Clause 1.1.2 (including 159 majors) were, more often than not, as a result of having no structured plan in place. Where minor non-conformities had been raised, these related to missing elements or lack of evidence that the plan had been updated or reviewed.

Justin Rix and Maddie Blanks (Grant Thornton) highlighted the benefits of bringing expertise and specialism together as a tool to address the culture challenge. In Grant Thornton's experience in assessing organisational culture across a breadth of industries, many leaders perceive it as a 'pink and fluffy concept'. However, it is absolutely essential that the C-Suite are engaged as it ultimately drives employee engagement and leads to higher performance. To avoid common pitfalls (such as apathy towards a programme that appears endless), culture must be assessed from many different perspectives. Indeed, to thrive, it must be aligned with a realistic and well-developed business strategy that is formally recognised and discussed frequently.

Once a strategy is developed the next challenge is to understand what the 'people' are doing so that the plan is pertinent to behavioural change and business culture maturity. Leaders must be engaged so that they always lead by example, are visible on the shop floor and bridge the power-distance gap. Being able to draw a line and measure exactly where the business sits in relation to their culture is key to making progress as is an aspiration for future development. Both Maddie and Justin highlighted that implementing any change programme required careful monitoring, reviewing and continual improvement. The aim should be to monitor the whole culture landscape to effectively move the 'culture dial' forward.

To that end, Mike Wilson (BRCGS) spoke of the challenges he had encountered while working in developing countries. Every business must recognise that as part of a global supply chain, what is 'normal' in the developed world may be quite different to standards or expectations elsewhere. Remaining cognizant of traditions, cultures, behaviours and regional variations would enable an organisation to incorporate change and address risks that may otherwise go unnoticed. This included consideration of transient populations, the effect of seasonal migration on supplies, and designing bespoke training programmes that met worker's needs. It was important to understand the 'person' before the 'professional' could be engaged; a useful reminder that 'culture' was an organic concept, extending far beyond what can ordinarily be seen.

Culture excellence survey

For many participants, TSI's Culture Excellence survey provided an independent mechanism to monitor and track progression. The user-friendly platform offered immediate results and highlighted areas requiring improvement or additional resource. At Coca-Cola, collaboration with the TSI team had demonstrated the company's commitment to progressing their quality and safety culture; celebrated on World Food Safety Day with leaders from across the organisation taking part in a 'sign-up pledge'.

At McDonald's, the Culture Excellence survey had given the company a fresh perspective on assessing progress which had previously been an introspective undertaking. Whether done in stages, as at OSI and McCormick, or rolled-out company-wide, the survey provided detail not otherwise being captured by the business internally. The concept that the survey was being conducted by an entity external to the business allowed employees to express their thoughts more freely. As discussed by speakers from Grant Thornton, knowing where the business stood in terms of their culture maturity provided a starting point from which positive change could be made. In effect, the survey was straightforward, convenient and easily shared with employees anywhere in the world.

Joanne Taylor finished off the day by sharing the latest Culture Excellence developments. These included:

- continuing to develop and grow the survey - particularly in relation to increasing and refining the language options available
- developing an enhanced response distribution view so that businesses could explore exceptional responses at either end of the spectrum in greater detail

- a maturity view conveniently indicating colour-coded progression, and

- a hierarchical structure view which could be examined by country or region.

In addition, 2020 would see the continued development of a correlation view for the platform which would allow users to assess where sites sit (e.g. being categorised low-low would reflect a low audit result and a low Culture Excellence score) so that additional support and resources could be target based. Regional benchmarking by industry and region, a condensed dynamic culture report and a BETA version were also underway. TSI would also be launching an additional module - Environmental Sustainability - which would enable businesses to quantify their progress and demonstrate a proactive approach to corporate social responsibility. Fundamentally, Joanne noted that this valuable addition to the TSI suite had been developed as it was increasingly recognised that 'being a good business was good business' and that culture, in any context, must be discussed everywhere.

Lessons learned

Understandably, for every business the food, safety and quality culture journey will be unique. Any culture strategy being developed must be coherent, clear, consistent and credible and should never stand still. In part, the progress or success would appear to rely much on understanding employees; how they work, how they engage and how they are recognised for their efforts in collectively progressing the company aim. Joanne Taylor noted that positivity was key to making real progress - be it promotion, better work-life balance or simply saying thank you. The Culture Excellence survey offered opportunities to address poor performing areas which were linked directly to the safety and quality goals.

As a take-away, the generous insights shared by the day's speakers highlighted some important - and universal - lessons derived from their culture journey experiences, including:

- developing a vision and mission at the outset was essential

- having a catalyst, or a core group, to frame and drive the journey was key

- being aware that one size may not fit all, and that local personalisation was essential

- ensuring the message was relevant to the business and relevant to the people

- continuously adjusting the strategy as the journey progresses

- timely reward and recognition keeps the message alive and fosters engagement

- sharing best practice internally and externally supported positive growth

- to be innovative, employ new technologies and embrace new communication channels

- identifying champions, conducting regular huddles and chuddles, frequent cross-site communication and feedback and mentoring programmes raised awareness and kept the culture conversation going

- adopting the Culture Excellence survey to encourage feedback and monitor progress provides a tangible, actionable, measure of growth.

In closing, Bertrand Emond and Joanne Taylor both reminded the audience that treating people as **they** would like to be treated was an important thought to keep in mind. Investing in the culture journey not only leads to sustainable business success but attracts and retains talent, embeds employee pride and purpose and creates job satisfaction. Ultimately, positive culture progression is essential to support organisational safety systems as it extends beyond the written and spoken word into the human experience. Something which every business in every industry sector has in common.

Question and answer session

Following the speaker presentations, audience members were invited to ask questions and an overview is provided below.

Can you explain how adopting a 'bottom up' approach differs to 'top down'?

Lydie De Meyer noted that by creating a tool-box, sites are able to choose and plan their own route to achieving the company vision and that having role models, who encourage and disseminate the company message, is vital to the journey's success. Similarly, in Coca-Cola's experience, having different tools or options available to sites made the journey more personal in relation to ownership. Neil Marshall noted that Coca-Cola had adopted a top down and a bottom up route and had even shared across before eventually deciding that there was no 'right way'. In many ways, businesses should develop a journey that embraces all routes or pathways.

How do you build on a 'culture' that already exists without it being perceived as a 'fad'?

Pourkomailian responded that it was always important to remind people of what they already know - that culture is not new; it has always existed. It was also important to identify role models and develop a mentoring programme that would keep pushing the 'culture' topic forward. This type of approach will eventually gather its own momentum and will quickly become embedded within the company. Lydie De Meyer also cautioned that the world is moving faster and faster and that businesses cannot afford to stand still. They need to be in a position to make decisions faster as any issues arise. Developing people ownership in this context is essential.

How do you drive the message to the shop floor?

Neil Marshall (Coca-Cola) highlighted the benefit of 'culture champions' as well as identifying regional and plant champions. Lydie De Meyer also noted that having a global programme resulted in developing a lot of material available for the shop floor that can, and should be, customised at a local level to suit needs.

How did TSI's Culture Excellence survey responses differ to internal company engagement surveys? Was there a difference in findings?

Liz Ward and Zoe Shuttlewood (McCormick) responded that broadly, both surveys returned similar results. However, in McCormick's experience, the TSI platform provided responses that were much more honest. For example, as the survey was entirely independent of the business, participants felt comfortable about providing more detail by way of feedback in comparison to any previous internal surveys. The TSI platform also provided a mechanism for McCormick to drill down into the finer detail. The responses had been much stronger than in any surveys conducted by the company themselves.

How do you avoid participants becoming 'surveyed-out'?

In McCormick's experience 'death by survey' is very possible so striking a balance is important! Martin Watson (Müller) added that timing is key to a successful survey and so communicating with - and involving - other departments across an organisation to avoid multiple survey requests was very important.

Some of the questions are not understood by workers when translated
- would it be useful for plants to verify the questions first?

Zoe Shuttlewood (McCormick) agreed that this was a very good point and that in their experience they had trialled a dummy set of questions on-site first using localised support. They had also needed to facilitate completion in some areas because they wanted to make sure that employees understood the questions. Martin Watson (Müller) added that gathering feedback was useful to improve future surveys that required translation. Joanne Taylor said that she would welcome feedback from any experienced users so that the translated surveys could continue to evolve and be refined to meet employee needs.

What are the challenges in involving temporary or agency staff in the survey?

In McCormick's experience, very few employees were agency staff and so they were not included in their survey. However, if staff were agency but employed for a fixed term they were encouraged to participate. In effect, this decision was driven by the number of temporary employees in the business at the time the survey was conducted. Bertrand Emond noted that every business was different in this regard and that it would be a decision for the company to make. Joanne Taylor added that if temporary workers were a distinct sub-group of a business, they could be included but identified as such in the survey process. This would enable the business to filter results as desired following survey completion or have the sub-group results displayed separately.

With many campaigns in businesses to raise awareness (such as mental health initiatives) how do you avoid 'campaign weary-ness'?

Martin Watson responded that Müller planned ahead in running their campaigns to coincide with an identified upturn/trend in incidents. Similarly, Joanne Taylor added that it was important to have a 'campaign strategy' that positively launched an initiative but did not let it fade away. To communicate campaigns effectively, strategies, which recognise what works best for employees, must be joined up across an organisation. A well-thought out strategy would also help to avoid campaign fatigue.

Is the culture survey suitable for management as well as shop floor?

Joanne Taylor responded that including management in the survey was important as, in TSI's experience, there was a statistically significant difference between management and employee responses. The differences were not huge, but management clearly perceive their culture differently to shop floor. As such, having a year on year comparison was better than having too many surveys too close together (avoiding death by survey). It was also important to note that survey findings (when repeated) were used to recognise positive improvement and not as a tool to compare sites to each other (which could have a detrimental effect on future survey involvement).

Can you give any examples of the benefit of a culture survey
in relation to the return on investment?

Maddie Blanks (Grant Thornton) responded that it was important to define what the ROI objective was for the business, for example, was it productivity (i.e. where did the business perceive or want the benefit to be). In any event, the greatest benefit to conducting the Culture Excellence survey in any business was the ability to use the findings to start moving the culture 'dial'. Joanne Taylor added that, unfortunately, as practitioners we do not mention or measure food safety and quality culture in

'deaths' (unlike health and safety for example). As such, senior leaders needed to be open to having the 'food safety and quality culture' conversation and to realise that the benefit may not always be financial. It may simply result in employees feeling proud to be part of a company that took their responsibility for food safety culture seriously by initiating the survey and acknowledging and actioning the responses. Senior leader conversations needed to be started early to ensure that meaningful progress across an organisation could be captured.

Are there compelling examples of what worked i.e. we did this, and this happened?
What are the tangible benefits of culture change?

Joanne Taylor responded that 'credibility' comes from all the businesses who say that conducting the survey made a positive impact; not least in recognising what individuals need to be - and remain - motivated (i.e. following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory). However, if as a business you are struggling financially, then the perspectives or approach to improving culture are inevitably going to differ. Justin Rix (Grant Thornton) added that drawing a line was a useful starting point; find the links from any activity back into the business and, in particular, business successes. What makes the business more successful? Is it better customer satisfaction? Appreciate where the business lines are.

Can culture change be used to influence the supply chain or not?   Can you enforce it?

Pourkomailian noted that in McDonald's experience, many suppliers had been assessing their culture anyway which prompted McDonald's to do so also. The benefits became evident almost immediately, but people do have to be engaged first. Joanne Taylor replied that the survey shows people that food safety and quality culture is being taken seriously. For example, as a business leader you are indicating to employees that you want to hear what they have to say so that you can act upon it.

Have any of the case studies here today engaged HR departments
in their campaigns towards improving culture?

Both Bertrand Emond and Joanne Taylor noted that HR involvement was important as they frequently had experience in change management and are also able to provide useful input on designing reward programmes. HR departments are well placed to offer valuable employee insight from across an organisation. Essentially, all departments must be included in any food safety and quality culture campaigns from the outset; culture is not shaped by sites or departments in isolation - it exists everywhere.

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Seminar programme 3 December 2019 at Campden BRI

Safety and Quality Culture Excellence

Part 1: Introduction and what has been happening in the world of safety and quality culture

Dr. Joanne Taylor, TSI and Bertrand Emond, Campden BRI

David Brackston, BRCGS – update and feedback on issue 8

Part 2: Global and supply chain perspectives

Output - sharing insights and examples of best practice that people can take away with them to improve their safety and quality culture

Lydie de Meyer, Danone

Neil Marshall, Coca Cola

Dr Bizhan Pourkomalian, McDonald's

Part 3: Culture case-studies

Output - sharing examples of specific parts of the journey of assessment and / or improvement that people can take away with them to improve their assessment and / or improvement of their safety and quality culture

Sharon Birkett, OSI Europe

Liz Ward and Zoe Shuttlewood, McCormick

Tracy Chambers and Tim Jackson, New York Bakery Bimbo

Martin Watson, Müller

Part 4: Culture - new development and wider issues

Output - sharing new ideas and stretching the mind

Justin Rix and Maddie Blanks, Grant Thornton (high performing business and C-suite engagement)

Emma Samuel, PhD Student, Cardiff Met University (food safety culture and hand hygiene practices in a multisite food manufacturing business)

Mike Wilson, BRCGS (challenges in developing countries including local conditions and ethical considerations)

Dr Joanne Taylor, TSI (culture excellence programme - new development)

About Campden BRI

Campden BRI helps food and drink businesses succeed

We do this through practical scientific, technical and knowledge support

We work closely with industry to ensure the absolute relevance of all our activities - from analysis and testing, process validation and safety assurance to product innovation, consumer studies and training, events, databases and publications

All our activities are underpinned by a strong programme of research - steered by industry for maximum relevance

Membership-based, we provide services to companies all along the supply chain

Vision

To be the partner of choice for the development and application of technical knowledge and commercially relevant solutions for the food and drink chain

Mission

Practical application of technical excellence for the food and drink chain

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