Cultivating a Food Safety Culture in the Philippines

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Food Safety

- Food safety covers the handling, storing, and preparing of food, including the prevention of infection, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

- The WHO reported that foodborne diseases are not limited to developing countries. It is estimated that in the United States, foodborne diseases result in 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths each year.

The Status of Food Safety in Southeast Asia

- Facilities and infrastructure are still inadequate, and there is lack of knowledge and expertise on new or modern technologies and practices.

- Moreover, there remains little appreciation for good hygienic practices (GHP), good agricultural practices (GAP), and good manufacturing practices (GMP), especially among smaller-scale food processors.

- Most systems in Southeast Asia will typically face challenges in strengthening the following key components: food legislation; food control management; inspection services; laboratory services; and information, education, communication and training (Othman, 2010).

ASEAN Initiatives in Food Safety

- The ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety (AEGFS) provides the overall oversight, facilitation, and coordination of food safety activities in ASEAN.

- Ten program areas have been identified for improvement, namely, legislation, laboratory, monitoring and surveillance, implementation, of food safety systems, food inspection and certification, education and training, information-sharing, research and development, international participation, and consumer participation and empowerment.

Food Safety in the Philippines

- "The Philippines meets food safety standards compared to other ASEAN members," said Dra. Maria Victoria Pinion of the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She recommended, however, for food manufacturers to continuously strengthen the quality of the food they produce.
- President Benigno Aquino III singed Republic Act No. 10611 or the Food Safety Act into law in 2013. The law aims to strengthen the country's food safety regulatory system to protect consumer health and to facilitate the market access of local foods and food products.

Food Safety in the Philippines

- Seminar-Workshop by DOST Towards Understanding ISO 22000:2005, ISO 9001:2000
- Servsafe Certifications
- HACCP trainings
- Highschool courses and Tertiary courses on Food Safety and Sanitation
- Appreciation of Food Safety Standards through a psychological approach

Why the Focus on Culture?

- (Coreil, Bryant, and Henderson, 2001) states ''Culture is patterned ways of thought and behavior that characterize a social group, which can be learned through socialization processes and persist through time.''
- A more technical definition by the Health and Safety Commission (1993) states, ''The safety culture of an organization is the product of the individual and group values, attitudes, competencies and patterns of behavior that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization's health and safety programs.
- The organization's culture will influence how individuals within the group think about safety, their attitudes toward safety, their willingness to openly discuss safety concerns and share differing opinions, and, in general, the emphasis that they place on safety.

Why is Culture Important

- Stewart Parnell, CEO of the Peanut Corporation of America, once boasted processing the "finest" peanut products; the former company executive however was effectively sentenced to life behind bars for knowingly shipping out deadly food.
- The 2008 salmonella outbreak traced back to peanut butter paste manufactured by PCA killed nine people and sickened 714 others, some critically, across 46 states.
- It was the deadliest salmonella outbreak in recent years and resulted in one of the largest food recalls in American history -- from Keebler crackers to Famous Amos cookies to the snack packets handed out on airlines.

Who Creates Culture?

- In an organization or social group, food safety is a shared responsibility.
- According to Edgar Schnein (1992),"Organizational cultures are created by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership may well be the creation, the management, and – if and when necessary – the destruction of culture.''


How Is Culture Created?

- Having a strong food safety culture is a choice. Ideally, the leaders of an organization will proactively choose to have a strong food safety culture because it's the right thing to do. Safety is a firm value of the organization.
- ''Food Safety is a value and not a priority (Yiannas, 2009).''
- Priorities can change; values should not (Geller, 2005).
- The organization chooses to have a strong food safety culture, because it values the safety of its customers and employees.
- The leaders of the organization have vision and foresight, knowing that having a strong food safety culture is important and that it directly and indirectly benefits the business.

How Is Culture Created?

- The Foundation
- Core Elements
- Leadership at the Top
- Confidence in the part of the employees
- Clear Management Visibility and Leadership
- Accountability at all levels
- Sharing of Knowledge and Practices
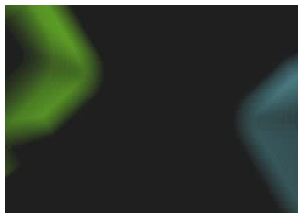
A Systems-Based Approach to Food Safety

- The term food safety management system usually refers to a system that includes having prerequisite programs in place, good manufacturing practices (GMPs), a Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Point plan, a recall procedure, and so on.
- It's not only process focused, but it's also people focused. It's a total systems approach based on the scientific knowledge of human behavior, organizational culture, and food safety.
- Behavior-based food safety management system

Systems Thinking

- According to Webster's dictionary (1985), a system is a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.
- A system calls for a more complex understanding of relatedness, such as feedback relationships, to explain the role of the various components in the system as a whole.
- Only by acquiring a systems-thinking mindset, can we as food safety professionals adequately develop a behavior-based food safety management system.

Behavior Change Theories and Models

- Behavioral Theory
- Social Cognitive Theory
- Health Belief Model
- Theory of Reasoned Action
- Trans theoretical Model
- Social Marketing

Behavioral Theory

- The theory is based on the pairing of the desired response or behavior with a reinforcer.
- Repeated pairing of the desired behavior with a positive or negative reinforcer can either increase or decrease the behavior.
- For example, an employee who gives a customer outstanding service may get a recognition card (with value) from the supervisor.

Social Cognitive Theory

- A person's behavior will be influenced by their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.
- Central concepts in the social cognitive theory are those of skills and self-efficacy.
- If a person perceives an incentive related to a specific behavior, they must believe they are capable of performing it (self-efficacy).

Health Belief Model

- It is based on four key concepts (Janz, Champion, & Stretcher, 2002).
- The first is an individual's perception of their susceptibility or risk of contracting an illness or disease. For example, if based on family history, a person believes they are at increased risk for cancer; they may be more likely to listen to health advice.
- The second key concept is the person's perception of how severe the illness or condition could be. Illnesses and conditions that are not very severe are less likely to get someone's attention.
- The third concept is a person's perception of the benefits of taking some form of preventive action. If a person doubts the effectiveness of a remedy or recommended solution, they are unlikely to follow it.
- And lastly, the fourth key concept relates to a person's perceived barrier to taking action. Barriers can be varied and they include language, cultural, financial, and others. For example, if a person perceives that eating healthy costs more, they may be less likely to change to their dietary purchasing habits.

Theory of Reasoned Action

- According to this theory, a person's intention to perform a specific behavior is motivated primarily by their intention (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2002).
- A person's intentions, their health beliefs, are influenced by two key factors.
- One, their level of intention is greater if they have a positive attitude about the behavior.
- Second, their level of intention is greater if they are motivated to comply with a social norm.

Transtheoretical Model

- The Transtheoretical Model explains behavior change as a series of six stages a person goes through related to their readiness to change.
- The stages are pre- contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986).

Social Marketing

- As defined by Andreasen (1995), ''social marketing is the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of pro-grams designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of society.''

"Every man's ability may be strengthened or
increased by culture. "
-Sir John Abbott, 3rd Prime Minster of Canada
(1821–1893)

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