

February 11, 2021

## 3 ways Food Safety Culture can benefit your business



What's the point of having a food safety culture assessment tool? This is a question many sites may ask themselves.

Really, it is about assessing your business on all the categories relating to food safety. You want insights and recommendations to improve your food safety culture.

But this comes back to the first question posed...why is assessing culture important?

## The potential negatives of having no food safety culture assessment

The reasons for it are numerous. Studies have found that companies who do not monitor, or do not

have processes to improve food safety culture, perform poorly in a number of areas.

Firstly, the Institute of Food Science and Technology found that cultural immaturity can impact the cost of delivering food quality to customers, equating to a potential loss of 22.5% in sales.

Secondly, 97% of food safety outbreaks involved food handler error/malpractice [1]. Reducing these mistakes can be helped by monitoring culture.

Thirdly, there is a \$10 million average cost of recalls to a food company, not including lost sales or damage to the brand. A food safety assessment can help mitigate these potential negative effects on your business.

Maple Leaf Foods is a good case study. In 2008 they experienced an outbreak of listeria, resulting in the tragic deaths of 23 people. Now, food safety culture plays an integral part of the organisations strategy to improve upon food safety. In 2019, they had zero food safety recalls.

## The 3 ways a food safety culture assessment can benefit your business

We can see the negative consequences of lacking a food safety assessment. So, what are the potential benefits?

### 1. Regulatory compliance







If the local legislation demands it, you must adopt food safety culture practices. And more regulatory organisations are adopting it.

In a [draft legislation document](#), the European Commission announced that it will include food safety culture as a general principle into [Regulation \(EC\) No 852/2004](#). The draft legislation states:

‘Food Safety Culture enhances food safety by increasing the awareness and improving behaviour of employees in food establishments. Such impact on food safety has been demonstrated in several scientific publications.’

In addition to the draft EU legislation, there have also been new requirements introduced in North America. The [US Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) has introduced Food safety Culture requirements, a core component of its [New Era of Food Safety Blueprint](#).

Finally, in Australia / NZ there has also been a joint effort to introduce food safety culture assessments into the dairy industry. The [requirements](#) require dairy producers to monitor and act on matters of food safety culture.

So, you can see how important food safety culture assessments will be to ensure compliance with the relevant regulation. As more lawmakers around the world incorporate these types of requirements into legislation, food safety culture assessments will be an integral part of remaining compliant.

## 2. Reducing non-conformities





In a survey to sites that performed the Food Safety Culture Excellence assessment, 89% of respondents said it helped reduce non-conformities.

The reason for this? Food safety culture requirements are not only adopted by **GFSI** but they are included in all BRCGS Standards.

With the coverage that GFSI and BRCGS have, this means that you increase your chances of winning contracts with brands that recognise both GFSI and BRCGS.

### 3. Business performance benefits

So far, we've identified that a food safety culture assessment will help meet regulatory requirements and satisfy BRCGS and GFSI requirements.

But it will also improve your bottom line.

Let's take incidents and waste as examples. One study by Brunel University found that 10.9% of food waste was caused by human error. And the Institute of Food Science and Technology identified that 54% less errors occur in businesses that have a strong culture.

Therefore, with 85% of sites seeing a reduction in the risk of incidents, a food safety culture assessment is an obvious way to reduce these types of losses and improve financial performance.

### Food safety culture benefits everyone







It's clear that a food safety culture assessment can help elevate your business performance, remain compliant and reduce non-conformities. These are all important business measures.

What's also been noted is how employees are more likely to come forward with information. Liz Ward and Zoe Shuttleword of **McCormick** stated that Food Safety Culture Excellence provided more open and honest feedback because 'participants felt comfortable out providing more detail than any previous surveys'.

At McDonald's, the Culture Excellence survey had given the company a fresh perspective on assessing progress which had previously been an introspective undertaking.

*Bizhan Pourkormailian (McDonald's)*

Growth and innovation are key elements for us and to sustain our strategy we need also to focus on strengthening our quality culture and people's values. Thus, we decided to use the instrument of the Culture Excellence assessment tool to measure our level of awareness and put in place actions to further enhance it.

*Vitalyi Novikov (Coca Cola Hellenic Bottling Company)*

The Culture Excellence platform provided responses that were much more honest. As the survey was entirely independent of the business, participants felt comfortable about providing more detail in a to any previous internal surveys. *Liz Ward and Zoe Shuttleword (McCormick)*



We started in a selection of our food sites, then expanded into homecare and personal care. What is extremely valuable from my perspective is having access to quantitative and tangible data that goes further than looking at just non-conformities or engagement.

*Michel Delroisse (Unilever)*

We first used the Culture Excellence program in 2018 and have continued this journey across 6 countries. We knew our culture was strong but having data that showed us exactly which parts worked well for everyone and where there is room for improvement has been a powerful diagnostic. Giving a voice to everyone has been an absolute top priority for us in order to get the full scope of our culture. *Tariq Naeem (Almarai)*

A food safety culture assessment will help develop a culture of trust and honesty within your business. Employees will feel more confident that management is taking issues seriously and that their voices are being heard.

If the [BRCGS Food Safety Culture Excellence](#) assessment is something you are interested in, then you can find out more information on our website [here](#). And feel free to sign up on our [register interest page](#) to receive the latest BRCGS news.

Register Your Interest

[1] Howes et al, 1996

[Back](#)

Share



Print

