



Protect your customers, your business
and the restaurant industry by prioritizing
food safety.

ServSafe.com



Large industry, large responsibility

With 2016 sales expected to reach \$783 billion, the restaurant industry is big business. According to the 2016 National Restaurant Association Forecast, the industry is projected to provide a record 14.4 million jobs this year, and the momentum continues into the next decade. Specifically, jobs that combine food preparation and service are projected to rise more than 15 percent between 2016 and 2026, a gain of 504,000 positions.

Last year, two in five restaurant operators said they plan to devote more resources to employee training. After all, great employees are informed employees. According to the Center for Disease Control, roughly one in six Americans gets sick from a foodborne illness annually. When food safety procedures are correctly followed and entrenched in a business' culture, error rate is reduced, return on investment is greater, employee empowerment soars and your reputation is intact.

That being said, culture is complex. A set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterizes an organization doesn't fall into place overnight. Reflection, planning and investment must occur, and senior leadership must want, lead and reinforce the cultural shift.

In this paper, we're delving into the importance of creating comprehensive food safety culture that is embraced from the top down. Food safety goes beyond passing health inspections and meeting regulatory requirements. Proactive, well-executed efforts prevent hazards detrimental to the health of your guests and your business alike. Through your diligence, the industry as a whole becomes an even stronger force.



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Number of jobs the industry is projected to provide this year.

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Projected job growth from 2016-2026 for jobs combining food prep and service.

\$783 b

2016 restaurant sales are expected to reach \$783 billion

2 in 5

restaurant operators said they plan to devote more resources to employee training.

Source: National Restaurant Association Forecast



Find your system

Every organization's needs may be slightly different, but the goal of food safety remains the same: keep customers safe. To accomplish this, leadership should implement a food safety management system consisting of programs, procedures and measures that actively control risks and hazards through the flow of food.

An example of a food safety management system is active managerial control. A proactive approach to food safety, this system includes having certified food protection managers on staff, defining standard operating procedures for critical steps and monitoring effectiveness along the way.

The forward-thinking principles of active managerial control can be applied to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, a system based on the idea that significant biological, chemical or physical hazards can be prevented if they are identified at specific points within a product's flow through an operation. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the success of a HACCP plan depends on educating and training management and employees in the importance of their role in producing safe foods.

More than a decade ago, *Food Safety Management* author Hal King carefully crafted Chick-fil-A's food safety system, which currently includes ServSafe-certifying all operators as well as conducting company-specific training. Chick-fil-A selects its franchisees, which King credits as a factor to the company's overall culture of commitment. He leveraged this when implementing the system.

Though not required by health code, all Chick-fil-A food handlers wear color-specific gloves for various kitchen tasks to avoid cross-contamination. To show a commitment to cleaning and sanitation, the staff can use disposable, premoist-

ened wipes, rather than reusable cloth rags, to clean customer tables. In addition, they provide customers with premoistened hand wipes in the dining room.

Now president of Public Health Innovations, King believes that exemplary food safety procedures result in higher quality food and enhanced profit margin through prevention. Sharing ideas with other entities involved or concerned with food safety can help strengthen your system.

"I have found that partnerships with industry, government and academic colleagues have led to the success of our program. You can't do things alone; you can't know it all," King said.

Chick-fil-A and other high-performing companies continually evaluate their food safety procedures to stay ahead of potential foodborne illness crises. For example, BJ's Restaurants, a California-based, 174-unit chain, audits its restaurants at least 12 times a year to not only gain a clearer understanding of operations, but also to reinforce the importance of proper food safety behaviors.





CREATING FOOD SAFETY CULTURE

Set the standard

Important components of firmly engraining food safety culture are strong modeling behavior and reinforcement from leadership. If employees see management disregard food safety procedures or fail to reinforce or correct improper procedures within the establishment, they may not feel like food safety protocol is necessary.

The ABC Model, a cognitive management tool, states that an individual or group needs a set of antecedents (A) to consistently achieve desired behaviors (B), which then bring consequences (C). An example would be training an employee how and when to wash his hands correctly (A) and allow him to correctly perform the task independently (B). That results in positive reinforcement from the manager and safe food for consumers. Consistent consequences are crucial to starting and stopping behaviors. In food safety, mixed signals lead to confusion and costly errors.

To fortify training messaging, use consistent terminology, and when possible, teach employees in their native languages. When Burger King sought food safety training programs for its overseas restaurants, its executives asked the ServSafe creators to develop a new program that could be used to create global food safety standards in various languages. Now the product is available in almost 30 languages, making it the largest global food safety training product by market share.

Visual aids and participatory exercises also can positively impact the learning process. When you encourage employees to ask questions if they don't understand a concept or procedure, you open communication lines and start a dialogue. Make it known that senior leadership was involved in the training development process and expects steadfast implementation.



THE ABC MODEL

A Individual or group needs a set of
ANTECEDENTS

B In order to consistently achieve desired
BEHAVIORS

C Which then bring
CONSEQUENCES



Empower your team

One senior leader can't perform every food safety-related task in each of his or her restaurants. While creating a food safety culture begins at the senior level, managers and other on-the-ground team members realize food safety in your restaurants. Because of this, every team member should feel educated and capable to handle any and all tasks correctly and completely.

"Training empowers employees," said William Weichelt, ServSafe director. "They feel a part of the process and a part of your team. The more training employees receive, the more they feel valued and the more likely they will act as brand ambassadors for your restaurants."

While training involves expense, it steers off much larger, reactive costs stemming from foodborne illness outbreaks.

"Food safety pays for itself," said King. "When you engrain a strong food safety culture into your business, employees are more likely to comply with procedures. You don't spend as much money on internal quality recalls, and you don't lose time and sales resulting from throwing out affected product. You can show enhanced profit margin through prevention."



FOOD SAFETY AT UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

A multiline entertainment operation, Universal Studios serves thousands of meals to guests annually. Though exempt from state food handler training laws because of its union status, the corporation has chosen to implement food safety training programs at its theme parks.

Brian Strasburger, learning and organizational development training manager at Universal Studios Hollywood, feels food safety training is the right thing for foodservice businesses to do. Managers and food handlers at the California location's 12 quickservice restaurants, 12 kiosks and two employee dining venues must obtain ServSafe certification, in addition to completing knife skills and personal protection equipment training. The company ingrains food safety culture through a four-step training method.

By making food safety a priority, "We, as a company, have a greater sense of confidence rolling out new menu items or opening new venues. It represents us as a first-class organization," said Strasburger.



Evaluating your culture

Have you prioritized food safety by incorporating it into your restaurant's culture? Preventing foodborne illness — and the cost an outbreak can impose on your business — is no short order. When implementing or analyzing your restaurant's food safety standards, complete this exercise:

FIND YOUR SYSTEM

- Is my current food safety management system effective? If not, why isn't it?
- What training certification program is the best fit for my restaurant?
- Would incorporating company-specific training benefit my staff and customers?

SET THE STANDARD

- Are you and other senior leaders exhibiting strong modeling behavior?
- Does your training messaging use consistent terminology?
- Do employees know senior leadership was involved in the training development process?

EMPOWER YOUR TEAM

- Do you emphasize the value and purpose of food safety training to your staff?
- Are you highlighting the importance of food safety on individual and team levels?
- Do team members, in turn, feel confident in their food safety knowledge?

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

If you are interested in learning more about establishing food safety culture within your organization, contact ServSafe's experts at ServSafe@restaurant.org.



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KINDA SAFE

Trust the programs that over 80% of restaurants use, ServSafe.





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