

Improve

food & drink sector skills council

Food Safety Training Guidance



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Improve Ltd
www.improveltd.co.uk

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Food Safety Skills

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Introduction

Anyone responsible for running a food business must ensure that adequate provision and procedures are put into place to ensure that all employees are aware of the potential food safety risks that may arise. Through increasing the knowledge and skills that individuals have in regards to potential food safety hazards, risk can be greatly reduced and public health protected.

There is no prescriptive way to implement training of your staff. This ensures that whatever training content and methods are used, they reflect both the working pressures of your business and the nature of the potential food safety hazards that you need to manage. However, there are some common principles which should be followed to ensure that training is effective.

This guide has been produced to enable you to make informed decisions regarding the best way to implement robust and effective means of developing the skills and knowledge of your staff. The document is split into three distinctive sections:

A – Legal requirements:

outlines what is legally required regarding the food safety training

B - Ensuring compliance:

describes the minimum actions needed to achieve compliance

C – Best practice:

describes a range of solutions and approaches for achieving compliance

Section A – Legal Requirements

What are the legal requirements?

The regulation relating to training states the following:

Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs, Chapter XII Annex II

Training:

Food business operators are to ensure:

1. That food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activity;
2. That those responsible for the development and maintenance of the procedure referred to in Article 5(1) of this regulation or for the operation of relevant guides have received adequate training in the application of the HACCP principles.

In the context of this guide, a 'food handler' is anyone who handles food stuffs as part of their job role and include wrapped or open (un-wrapped) foods. 'Supervisors' are individuals at either a team leader, shift manager or management level who hold responsibility for ensuring that employees comply with the food safety management procedures implemented within your organisation.

The regulation has been designed to require that food businesses implement training activities that are appropriate to the needs of the business operation. This means that as a food business owner/proprietor, you are required to evaluate the risks associated with the different job functions that you have and provide food safety training which is relevant to these job roles.

What it does not demand is that all employees go through standardised, classroom based training programmes.

Section B – Ensuring Compliance

What action is needed to achieve compliance?

Food business operators must ensure that all food handlers receive instruction and/or training in food safety appropriate to their specific work duties. This applies to all staff no matter their contractual status within an organisation and includes part time, temporary and staff provided via agencies.

Any training or instruction provided should ensure that food handlers have sufficient knowledge and competence to handle food safely. In addition, all food handlers must be supervised to an appropriate level.

What needs to be provided for different groups of employees?

Compliance for food handlers:

For these staff, training should be directly related to their daily work activities, including food safety risks associated with the food stuffs that they handle, how it should be stored, handling waste etc.

Consideration should also be given to training/instruction that may be required for contractors working on your site and staff supplied through employment agencies.

There is no legal requirement for staff to attend formal training courses or obtain a qualification. The appropriate knowledge and competencies can be obtained in a number of ways, including on the job training, self study through expertly produced guidance materials, attendance on formal training courses or prior experience.

What should the training cover?

As outlined above, the decision regarding what constitutes appropriate training 'commensurate to [the] work activity' will be greatly influenced by both the individual staff member's job role, and the nature of food stuffs dealt with in your premises. As a guide, you may wish to use 'National Occupational Standards' (NOS) referring to food safety. These standards specify knowledge and competencies associated with food manufacturing roles and which have been designed to meet the minimum standards of compliance. The standards are also used as the basis for food manufacturing specific food safety qualifications.

Compliance for Managers and supervisors with responsibility for maintaining food safety management procedures:

The food business operator must ensure that those within the business responsible for developing and maintaining food safety management procedures, e.g. HACCP based procedures, are appropriately trained.

Managers and supervisors should receive a more advanced level of training which builds on the subject matter targeted at operative workers, but highlights the specific responsibilities associated with supervising and managing a safe food manufacturing operation.

The training should develop an understanding what the principles of effective food safety management procedures are, how they are incorporated into working practices and procedures, what the key processes are and how they are implemented within the business.

As in the case of food handlers', food business operators are responsible for determining how training in the food safety management procedures is achieved. There is no legal requirement for staff to attend formal training courses or obtain a qualification. The appropriate knowledge and competencies can be obtained in a number of ways, including on-the job training, self study through expertly produced guidance materials, attendance on formal training courses or prior experience.

What should the training cover?

As outlined above, the decision regarding what constitutes appropriate training 'commensurate to [the] work activity' will be greatly influenced by both the individual staff member's job role, and the nature of food stuffs dealt with in your premises. It is suggested that training should both develop the individual's understanding of the principles of food safety management procedures and their ability to actually implement them within the workplace.

Again, you may wish to use food safety specific 'National Occupational Standards' (NOS) as a guide.

Compliance for Managers and supervisors with responsibility for maintaining food safety management procedures based on a specific guide

If your organisation chooses to implement food safety management procedures e.g. HACCP procedures, outlined within a specific industry guide, (i.e. this one) then it is critical that managers and supervisors responsible for implementing it are given effective training regarding the content of the guide.

Food business operators are able to choose the appropriate means for delivering the training dependant on the needs of individuals selected to undergo training.

What should the training cover?

The training should develop the individual's understanding of how the guide is set out and how it can be applied to the operation.

Section C – Best Practice

The use of National Occupational Standards

To assist with defining the range of skills and knowledge coupled with varying job roles, National Occupational Standards (NOS) can be used. NOS are statements of 'competency' developed to reflect the relevant skills and knowledge associated with specific job tasks.

NOS are developed by the Sector Skills Council for each industry sector through researching common and good practice used across all industries. They are used as a benchmark for the performance of individuals. The NOS are reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure that they always reflect current legal requirements and good practice.

There are a series of NOS standards developed by 'Improve', the Sector Skills Council for the food and drink manufacturing industry, to reflect the food safety specific skills and knowledge required by workers in the food and drink manufacturing industry. Improve developed the standards following extensive research of industry practices and with due consideration to the regulatory requirements associated with food safety.

The following tables outline the NOS developed for the food and drink manufacturing industry and identify the job roles for which they will be relevant.

Level 1 – Operative roles		
NOS title – practical component	Knowledge based component	Job relevance
Maintain personal hygiene standards in food manufacture	Awareness of food safety in food and drink manufacturing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep him/herself clean and hygienic - Keep the work area clean and hygienic - Keep the product safe 	Relevant to food handlers at all levels. May also be applicable to regular contractors, and agency staff.

Level 2 – Operative roles		
NOS title – practical component	Knowledge based component	Job relevance
Maintain workplace food safety standards in manufacture	Principles of workplace food safety in food and drink manufacturing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take personal responsibility for food safety - Keep him/herself clean and hygienic - Keep the work area clean and hygienic - Keep the product safe 	All operative roles who deal directly with food stuffs. May also be applicable to longer term agency staff

Level 3 – Supervisory and technical roles		
NOS title – practical component	Knowledge based component	Job relevance
Raise food safety awareness in manufacture	Principles and practices of food safety management in food and drink manufacturing: - Ensure compliance with legislation - Apply and monitor good food safety practices - Implement food safety management procedures - Contribute to staff training - Food safety auditing Safe procurement and supply in food and drink manufacturing: - Implement and maintain procurement procedures - Schedule supply - Implement and maintain product traceability - Implement and maintain and audit trail - Receive goods	Supervisory staff, team leaders, managers
Monitor food safety at critical control points in manufacture		Supervisory staff, team leaders, managers
Contribute improvement of food safety in manufacture		Supervisory staff, team leaders, managers
Control and monitor safe supply of raw materials and ingredients in food manufacture		Supervisory staff, team leaders, managers

Level 4 – Managerial roles		
NOS title – practical component	Knowledge based component	Job relevance
Allocate roles and responsibilities for food safety management in manufacture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key requirements of food safety management procedures ▪ Roles and responsibilities required for implementation of procedures ▪ Key principles for reducing the risks associated with relevant food safety hazards 	Management and roles concerned with food safety management procedures and their implementation
Implement controls to manage safe food sources and products in manufacture		
Assess operation for effectiveness and compliance with food safety standards in manufacture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Records applicable to food safety management systems ▪ Critical control points relevant to audits ▪ Relevant regulations ▪ What constitutes non-compliance ▪ Relevant corrective actions ▪ Recording and reporting procedures 	Management and roles concerned with food safety management procedures and their implementation
Report on compliance with food safety requirements in manufacture		
Analyse food safety hazards and risks in manufacture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of effective food safety management ▪ HACCP principles and practice and their application ▪ Nature and type of hazards that may occur ▪ Risk assessment and management techniques ▪ Methods of hazard control 	Management and roles concerned with food safety management procedures and their implementation
Produce action plan to control food safety hazards and risks in manufacture		
Develop policy and guidelines to manage food safety in manufacture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of multidisciplinary approaches to preparation of guidelines and systems ▪ Importance of systematic approaches to food safety management ▪ Role of hygiene procedures ▪ Best practice within relevant industry sectors ▪ Key principles of hazard analysis and risk assessment ▪ Provision of food safety training to staff ▪ Importance of continuous improvement 	Management and roles concerned with food safety management procedures and their implementation
Develop working practices and procedures to manage food safety in manufacture		
Develop recording procedures to monitor food safety in manufacture		

Provide guidance on food safety information	Provision of food safety information in food and drink manufacturing for consumers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant legislation and regulation ▪ Food safety information ▪ Labelling and packaging 	Management and roles concerned with food safety management procedures and their implementation
Implement systems for food safety information		

How can the national occupational standards actually be used?

You can use the NOS to help you check that what training/instruction you do provide is relevant to differing job roles and as a guide to what you should cover as a minimum. The standards highlight the practical competencies that should be developed and the associated knowledge relevant to each activity. They can also be used to help with the design of training/instruction programmes by clearly identifying the key subject areas that need to be covered and by highlighting the appropriate level. The knowledge aspects of the standards can also be used to provide the basis for assessments.

The standards are based on industry good practice and will therefore still require you to add information specific to your organisation i.e. your company specific food safety management procedures etc.

The full copies of the relevant NOS standards for the food and drink manufacturing industry can be obtained from:
www.improveltd.co.uk

How can training be implemented?

Once you are clear on what the relevant level of skills and knowledge are required by your workers in regards to food safety, the next step is to develop a plan of how a suitable training programme can be developed and delivered.

There is no one, single, 'off the shelf' training programme that you are required to use. This would be inappropriate, as a single training programme would be too broad in its coverage, if it were required to cover the training needs of all workers who handle food as part of their job. Subsequently, there are a number of options that can be considered depending on the nature of your organisation.

The following section describes three different options that may be followed. What may be ideal for your organisation could be either one or a combination of the approaches described. Common to all of the options are the stages of planning, development, delivery and review. These stages reflect the key components of the 'training cycle' which will be familiar to anyone who has responsibility for training and development activity.

Option 1: Develop and deliver a training programme specific to your organisation

Overview

Option 1 centres on the approach of developing and delivering a training programme which is specific to your organisation/business and which addresses the specific skills and knowledge that you have identified as being 'commensurate' to the job roles across your workforce.

Planning

Development of the programme might be instigated by internal training staff working with people who are sufficiently knowledgeable about the relevant food risks that may arise in your business. The format of the training could be a class room based programme, an on-line programme or some form of shop-floor delivered workshop.

Whatever approach is taken, it should be one which ensures that the key training messages are clearly understood. This might mean that consideration is given to potential language barriers, or the literacy skills of your staff when engaging in training sessions which cover theoretical subjects.

Development

As basic knowledge regarding food safety is relevant to the majority of staff within a food manufacturing business, it may be appropriate to incorporate key food safety messages into your company induction programme, or even briefing sessions provided to contractors working on your site.

When developing the programme(s), food safety specific NOS may be used as a reference tool to ensure that key subject areas are covered.

Implementation

Critical to the implementation of the training will be the inclusion of some form of assessment or review of the learners understanding. The assessment should take place at the end of the training activity, and be used to measure the effectiveness of the training. The assessment should demonstrate that the learners have understood the key food safety messages included within the training. Should it be clear that the messages have been misunderstood, then this would suggest that either the training programme needs to be re-developed to ensure that it is clearer, and/or that individual learners have specific learning needs that may require additional learning support/training.

Review

It is essential that the assessment evaluates understanding of the full range of the content of the training programme, to ensure that it is a fair assessment of an individual's understanding. It is also important that you record and retain records of the training delivered and the results of any assessments. Should a breach of food safety procedures be identified in the future, the assessment records can be used to check as to whether the breach was due to a lack of understanding.

Advantages:

- Training is very company specific and directly related to the activities your workforce carry out on a regular basis
- Can be integrated into other internal training activities i.e. corporate induction, briefing for contractors
- Self sufficiency allows for a degree of flexibility as to when and where the programme is delivered
- Training can be easily altered in advance of changes in working practices

Disadvantages:

- Requires time and investment to develop an appropriate training and assessment programme

Option 2: Working with an external training provider on site

Overview

Option 2 centres on using a commercially developed training programme, delivered on your premises by an external training provider.

Planning

There are many external training providers who hold the appropriate accreditation which enables them to implement externally developed and nationally recognised food safety training programmes.

Training providers might include local further education colleges, independent food safety consultants or private training companies with a track record in food safety and manufacturing issues.

Development

Implementing training through an external provider enables you to utilise their expertise and knowledge whilst at the same time have some level of control. Key to the success of this approach is a clear understanding as to what training is needed to reflect the working practices in your business, and an in-depth briefing session for the external trainer. Through effective briefing, the trainer will be able to customise and emphasise the key messages that need to be put across during the training session and, despite being based on a standardised programme, can ensure that the training is directly relevant to your company. This can be through the trainer using company specific examples, referring to internal food safety management procedures and documentation, or even just having a clear understanding of the types of food stuffs used by food handlers in your factory.

Delivery

Delivery can either be on site or at a convenient location for the needs of your business. If on site, it will be important for you to co-ordinate with the trainer to ensure that you have a suitable space for the training to take place. You will also need to make sure that the trainer is aware of any language barriers or special learning needs that trainees may have in order that adequate provision can be made. This might include the use of interpreters. Many professional trainers now make use of learning materials that are translated into a number of other languages.

If the training programme offered is a standard 'off the shelf' package, it is highly likely that it will be accompanied by an assessment tool in the form of a short test, to be administered at the end of the training session. This may also lead to the award of an externally recognised qualification. If this is offered, then you must ensure that you keep a record of who has attended what training sessions and whether they have reached the required standard. If assessment is not offered, then you must make provision to ensure that some form of checking process is in place which measures the level of understanding that the trainees have gained from the training activity.

Whatever the approach, for any learner who does not reach the required standard, provision should be made that requires that they either undergo additional training which is targeted at the areas where they were weak in the assessment, or undertake the whole training programme again.

Review

When the training programme has been delivered, it is important that you discuss with the trainer what went well, what was not so clear and what improvements can be made to make the training more effective next time. A good indication of areas where improvement may be needed will be found in the records of any assessments made. Where trainees have performed weakly, then these are the areas where perhaps more time needs to be allocated to the section or perhaps the style of delivery will need to be revised.

Advantages:

- Useful if business does not have a large internal training capacity
- Training is often accompanied by an externally accredited certificate and/or qualification which can be motivational and rewarding to staff
- Element of flexibility if adequate brief is given to trainer

Disadvantages:

- Not cost effective to deliver on a one to one or small group basis which could present a risk for new employees within the business
- Reduced level of flexibility in regards to the content of the programme

Option 3: Use an off site training provider

Overview

Option 3 focuses on the delivery of standard packages of food safety training delivered by an external provider off site. This may be through a further education college, private training provider or local authority.

Planning

Training delivered by an external training provider will most likely follow a structure and content set by an accrediting body, based on relevant sector specific NOS (see above). It is highly likely that the training will also be accompanied by a suitable assessment process in the form of some form of test followed by the award of a certificate/qualification. Delivery will often be to groups made up from a mix of staff from other local businesses and organisations. In some instances, this can be a beneficial aspect to the training as it exposes your staff to different approaches and ideas, particularly when being used for the delivery of training for supervisors and managers. However, it may also cause confusion through the key messages having to be adapted to a wide audience. Therefore, you may want to discuss with the training provider how they delivery the training to avoid confusion.

Prior to sending staff off site to attend the training, it is important that sufficient information is gained concerning the content of the training programme, the target audience and how it is assessed. This will ensure that you are able to make decisions regarding the suitability of the training content to your business, i.e. does it cover issues relevant to the types of food stuffs you deal with? It may also be pertinent to assess the learning abilities of the staff you intend to send on the training, to see if they have any learning difficulties that may present a barrier to them fully participating in and, from gaining, the full benefit of the training. These may include language barriers, concerns regarding reading/writing abilities or physical disabilities. In these cases, you should discuss the needs of your staff with the trainer to see what methods/tools they can use to overcome them. It is highly likely that the barrier has been encountered before and that they can be easily overcome.

Delivery

Learners should be briefed before they attend the training to ensure that they are clear as to what they will be doing and as to the benefit to both the business and themselves of participating.

As training delivery will be taking place away from the regular work place, it may be necessary for you to provide transport and/or clear instructions as to where to find the training centre and to make appropriate travel arrangements for anyone with a physical disability.

Review

Finally, it is essential that you gain feedback from the course tutor as to the level of understanding gained by the learners. This might readily be gained through the provision of a qualification. It is also suggested that, to ensure

that what has been learnt is applied to the work place, a review session is held with the learners to discuss what they gained and how they would apply it to their job role. Should poor levels of understanding be identified, then this might be a sign that you should either discuss any concerns with the training provider or, that you investigate other sources of food safety training that may be more suitable.

Advantages

- Useful for covering staff when needed on a periodic basis
- Practical approach, particularly for smaller businesses
- Potential to achieve a nationally recognised qualification

Disadvantages

- Limited, if any, opportunity for customisation to company needs
- Courses may not be available as and when your business needs them

Using Qualifications

As identified in the options for training implementation listed above, some training programmes have opportunities for gaining nationally recognised qualifications. Qualifications are useful as they demonstrate that the training and associated assessment has been carried out to an accredited standard and that strict quality assurance mechanisms are in place. There are a number of food safety qualifications currently offered which are targeted at either food handlers or supervisor/manager level.

Qualifications for food handlers:

Framework	Qualification Title
Level 1	Award in induction to food safety for manufacturing
Level 2	Award in food safety for manufacturing

Qualifications for supervisors/managers with responsibility for implementing and monitoring food safety management procedures:

Framework	Qualification Title
Level 3	Award in food safety supervision for manufacturing
Level 4	Award in food safety management for manufacturing

Qualifications for supervisors/manager who have specific responsibility for the technical design of procedures.

Framework	Qualification Title
Level 3	Award in HACCP management for food manufacturing
Level 4	Award in HACCP management for food manufacturing

All of the qualifications listed above are offered by a range of 'awarding bodies':

City & Guilds:	www.city-and-guilds.co.uk
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health:	www.cieh.org.uk
EDi:	www.ediplc.com
Food & Drink Qualifications:	www.fdq.org.uk
NCFE:	www.ncfe.org.uk
OCNW:	www.ocnw.com
Royal Institute of Public Health*:	www.riph.org.uk
Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*:	www.rsph.org.uk
Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland:	www.rehis.org
Scottish Qualification Authority:	www.sqa.org.uk

These organisations ensure that the training providers offering these qualifications operate to stringent quality standards.

(* Note: in October 2008, The Royal Institute of Public Health and the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health will merge to form the Royal Society for Public Health)

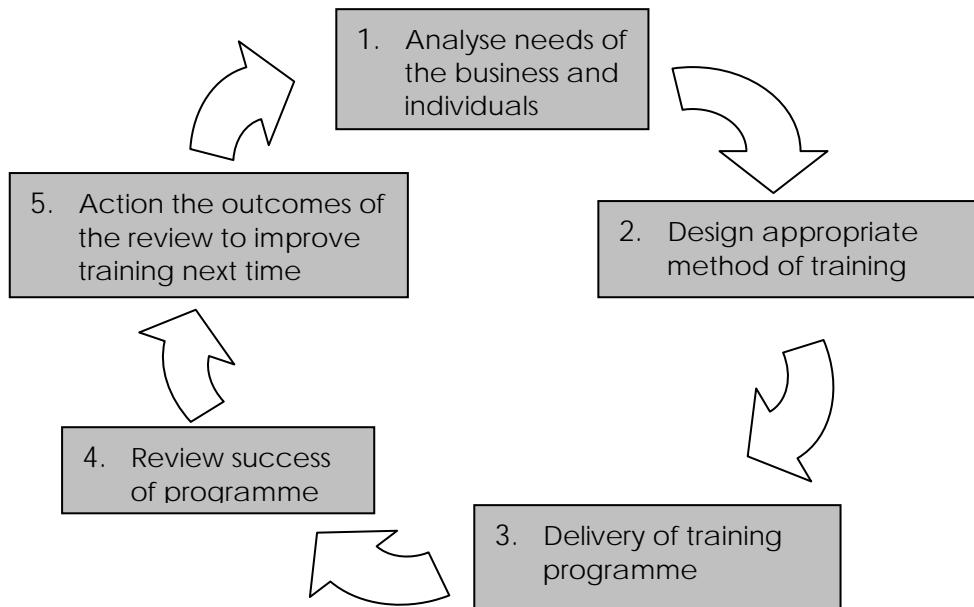
What to do when staff already hold food safety qualifications:

When recruiting new staff who hold a nationally recognised food safety qualification, the legal imperative that supervision and training is 'commensurate with their work activity' still stands. You should not assume that they have the relevant skills and knowledge. Therefore, to ensure that individuals have the level and breadth of skills and knowledge you require, it is essential that you assess them through some form of 'one to one' interview/assessment. If you use an internal training programme, then you should require the individual to sit the assessment component. Where appropriate, you should provide additional training.

Alternatively, you should require that the individual goes through the food safety training process that you operate for all of your staff.

Common Steps to be followed with all options:

Whatever approach you choose to follow when implementing food safety training, you should follow defined steps to ensure that you plan and implement training that has the maximum impact. These stages represent the key steps of the 'training cycle' which are used when designing training activities to target specific performance issues.



The following table sets out the training cycle stages and relates them to actions when dealing with food safety:

Step	Process	Action required	Approach
1	Identify training needs	Careful consideration of what issues need to be included within the training, particular issues with high risk foods, concerns regarding storage of food items, issues with chemical, physical, micro-biological, allergenic contamination	Work with your operations team to identify risks. These may already be clearly identified within the food safety management procedures.
2	Develop suitable programme and delivery method	Do you have the facilities to run classroom style training sessions? Would it be more effective to use an external training provider? Could computer based delivery be of benefit? Important to ensure that	Use National Occupational Standards as a basis for an internal programme, or at least as a means of identifying a good external training programme.

		<p>training is delivered in a way which ensures the message comes across.</p> <p>Is written material of use?</p> <p>Has consideration been given to the language in which the training is given?</p>	
3	Implementation	<p>Ensure that staff are provided with the appropriate time to attend training</p> <p>Ensuring that staff are briefed before hand</p> <p>Ensuring that training is well run</p>	<p>Work with shift managers to ensure that sufficient time for training is provided.</p>
4	Review of learners	<p>Assess learners to check that understanding has been developed to a suitable standard.</p> <p>Record and store assessments for use during audit processes.</p>	<p>Use external qualifications as basis for assessment, or, develop internal assessment based on National Occupational Standards as a guide for content.</p>
5	Review of training programme	<p>Assess the success of the training and seeing what would work better next time</p>	<p>Review relative success of learners and work with trainers to assess how the training could be improved to make increasingly effective and reflective of changes in operational need.</p>
6	Refresh	<p>Review the need to revise the training process in light of changes within the business, i.e. new working practices, new products and food stuffs being used.</p>	<p>Consider revising learning materials and activity.</p> <p>Implement refresher training for existing staff to underpin existing practices and to introduce new ones.</p>
7	Action	<p>Implement relevant changes needed to improve training method.</p> <p>Implement specific actions to ensure individual learners understand requirements.</p>	<p>Develop a plan and work with key staff to ensure training is effective.</p>

Case studies: Will use this as a reflection of the three 'Options' for implementation.

1. – Large organisation developing and implementing own training
2. – Smaller organisation using off the shelf qualifications – delivered by outside provider
3. – Small business using external training provider 'off site'

Case Study One: Kinnerton (Confectionery) Company Ltd

About the company

This Norfolk based company produces a wide range of chocolate and chocolate novelty products for a range of retail clients. Products are also sold under their own brand name.

The company employs approximately 620 full time staff although this number increases greatly by a further 1000 sourced through well established and managed links with staffing agencies to address peak demands on production i.e. the run up to both Christmas and Easter.

Challenges

Company needed an approach to food safety training that could be effectively implemented for the relatively high number of seasonal staff that it needed. This required a training programme that could be delivered in a variety of languages.

The company also has a very strict barrier system in place to prevent cross contamination threats caused through the use of nuts in some products.

Due to the number of major retailers that the company supplies, well documented and implemented food safety procedures are required to meet audit standards.

Design and development

Under the direction of the Health, Safety and Training Manger, Kinnerton has embarked on a development process to design an approach to food safety training that will be both flexible to meet changes in organisation demand, and self sufficient in its implementation.

The design of the programme has required input from internal staff responsible for monitoring production standards. As a result, the training programmes developed are very company specific and refer directly to internal food safety procedures, equipment and terminology.

Kinnerton has also employed the services of an external training provider to assist with developing the skills of internal staff to become trainers.

End result

As a result of the design and development process, Kinnerton now has a multi-tiered training model with foundation skills and knowledge being covered within the company induction programme. Further more detailed training is provided after three months.

This initial training programme is also used by the local staff agencies used by Kinnerton to ensure that temporary staff are ready for work when they arrive.

All staff are required to partake in refresher training and review every three years.

At supervisory and management levels, Kinnerton sends its staff to a local training provider to receive more specialist training which leads to the award of a qualification by a food safety specialist awarding body. This approach is seen as being more cost effective than running higher level training in-house and also provides an opportunity for delegates to learn from the experiences and working practices used in other companies.

Case Study Two: Grampian Country Food Group Limited

About the company

Based in rural Suffolk, this company slaughters and processes a range of poultry based products including whole chickens ready for sale and portions which are distributed to other sites for further processing.

Approximately 500 full time staff are employed at the site. Due to the consistency in demand for poultry based products, agency staff are only used to cover staff absenteeism.

Challenges

Due to the high risk nature of the food stuffs being handled, the company needed a robust and effective food safety training mechanism that ensured that both employees and the products being produced were well protected.

A solution was also needed that took into account the transport needs of staff who came from a wide geographical area. The training would also need to be supported by robust recording procedures to ensure that both company and client audit processes were satisfied.

Design and development

The Human Resources manager identified a well established, locally based training provider, Poultec Ltd, who both understood the nature of the business and who had a track record of implementing food safety training programmes. The solution developed would be one which would be delivered on-site by trainers employed by Poultec. This would reduce the pressure on internal staff, and ensure that highly experienced trainers could be used.

The training programme would build upon fundamental messages regarding food safety covered within the highly structured company induction programme. Training material would be developed which would include a high degree of imagery to ensure that messages could be easily put across and understood.

End result

The model now implemented is a two tiered approach. All staff, on starting with the company undergo an induction programme which covers fundamental food safety messages. This is supported through close supervision by an 'instructor' when new staff develop their understanding of their job role.

After approximately two months, staff members then attend a training programme, led by the external provider. This more in-depth training programme, if successful, leads to the achievement of a NOS based Level 2 Food safety (Manufacturing) award which is accredited by a national awarding body.

Grampian Country Foods Ltd has developed a close relationship with Poultec Ltd which has enabled the external trainers to generate an in-depth

knowledge of the working practices, pressures and food safety issues relevant to the business.

Supervisors and managers are required to attain a higher level food safety qualification. This is delivered by an external training provider on a 'as and when basis'.

Case Study Three: Small food manufacturing businesses

About the company

Supporting the needs of a wide range of food manufacturing and hospitality clients, HSF Training Ltd, is a small training provider which delivers a wide spectrum of health and safety and food safety programmes.

The company employs a number of trainers who work closely with clients both large and small to deliver effective training solutions.

Challenges

The challenge for smaller businesses when developing food safety training systems, is frequently related to the potential costs, flexibility and the relevance of the training. Due to the relatively small numbers of staff who need to receive training at any one time, bespoke or 'on-site' delivery can often be too costly.

At a supervisory and management level, these issues are compounded and may also be relevant to larger organisations. The number of supervisors and managers employed within a business will always be smaller than those working at operational levels, therefore the need for higher level training activities will subsequently be smaller and more infrequent.

Design and development

The many small business clients of HSF Training Ltd utilise the opportunity to send staff on externally run training programmes. The programmes, leading to the achievement of nationally recognised, NOS based qualifications, are run on a periodic basis and are usually attended by staff from a cross section of employers.

At supervisory and management levels, training focuses on the delivery of training which leads to the achievement of NOS based qualifications at levels 3 and 4. Again, these programmes are open to a cross section of food manufacturing businesses resulting in a mix of delegates from differing companies.

End result

The small businesses who utilise the training opportunities described, benefit by being able to take advantage of training programmes as and when needed by the business. This means that training can be planned for quieter periods in business cycles and/or when new staff join the business. This is particularly pertinent to supervisors and managers.

Despite the training having to be more generic in focus to ensure its relevance to the needs of all delegates attending, through effective briefing of the trainer, specific examples and discussion points can still be built into the training session to make it increasingly relevant.

The mix of delegates also stimulates discussion regarding differing processes and procedures used within the respective businesses. At supervisory and management levels, this provides an added feature to the training by

highlighting alternative methods for resolving common manufacturing challenges and problems.