

The **Extru-Tech**nician

The perfect match

Searching for the right food safety personnel



EXTRU-TECH, INC.

George S. Patton said it well: “Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory.”

Such is also true of petfood manufacturers, as they would be remiss to believe they are not entrenched in a war... with food safety. The enemy is not consumers, equipment (or providers thereof), vendors or even regulation or government. In fact, vendors such as equipment manufacturers serve as able partners in this battle against contaminants, unsanitary practices and other safety hazards that can threaten your products, brand reputation and company.

But your first and best allies are your own employees: operators, maintenance personnel, safety engineers, quality assurance professionals and others who are knowledgeable,

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Understanding your food safety culture

Have you ever considered the food safety culture of your organization? This issue of *The Extru-Technician* will challenge you to do so.

Every organization has a corporate culture, and those that deal with food safety also have a food safety culture – good, bad or somewhere in between. In the last issue we took a big-picture look at what's happening in your plant in terms of measuring and managing processes for food safety, and this issue builds on that, delving into how this translates into a food safety culture.

We'll explore in this issue how leaders and middle managers are ultimately responsible for this culture. Another key in creating a positive culture for food safety is ensuring all employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas and have a platform from which to do so.

Aside from open communication from the top down in an organization, developing this will also require dynamic problem-solving, including succinct goals, an action plan and achievement metrics that are measurable and benchmarked.

We hope this issue of *The Extru-Technician* will help you to continue developing a positive food safety culture in your organization, and, as always, please feel free to share with us your comments and thoughts.

Sincerely,

R. Scott Krebs

R. Scott Krebs
Executive V.P., C.O.O.

[Extru-Tech, Inc.](#)

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EXTRU-TECHNICIAN

Extru-Tech, Inc. Corporate Office

PO Box 8
100 Airport Road
Sabetha, KS 66534
+1.785.284.2153 Tel
+1.785.284.3143 Fax
extru-techinc@extru-techinc.com
www.extru-techinc.com

Extru-Tech, Inc. Administrative Staff

LaVon Wenger, President/CEO

Don Wenger,
Executive Vice President

R. Scott Krebs,
Executive VP/COO

Extru-Tech, Inc. Marketing & Editorial Staff

Norm Schmitt,
Corporate Sales Manager
norms@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.284.2153

Will Henry,
Technical Sales Engineer
willh@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.284.2153

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Extru-Tech, Inc. Equipment Sales Staff

Bill Huseby, Director of North
America Sales
billh@extru-techinc.com
+1.913.522.9014

Bob Annan,
Director of European Sales
boba@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.284.2153

Osvaldo Munoz, Director of
Latin America Sales
osvaldom@extru-techinc.com
+56.2.955.25.74
Santiago-Chile

Enzhi Michael Cheng, PhD,
Director of Asia Sales
michaelc@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.285.0703

Doug Coverdale,
Sales Engineer
dougc@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.284.2153

Extru-Tech, Inc. Part Sales Staff

Darryl Becker
darrylb@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.284.2153

Mike Dunlap,
miked@extru-techinc.com
+1.785.284.2153

Extru-Tech Events

You can find Extru-Tech Inc. experts and personnel at these upcoming events:

Extrusion Seminar, December 7-9, 2011, Bogota, Columbia. All you need to know about extruding dry petfoods. Contact: Osvaldo Munoz, osvaldom@extru-techinc.com, +56.2.955.25.74.

Victam Asia 2012, February 15-17, 2012, Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre, Bangkok, Thailand. Join us at one of the largest agrifeed events in the world. Contact: Norm Schmitt, corporate sales manager, norms@extru-techinc.com, +1.785.284.2153.

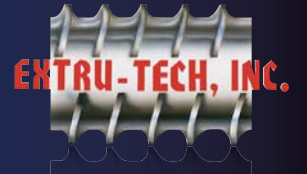
Petfood Forum Asia 2012, February 16, 2012, Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre, Bangkok, Thailand. The leading petfood conference returns to Bangkok for the third edition. Contact: Norm Schmitt, corporate sales manager, norms@extru-techinc.com, +1.785.284.2153.



Next: appropriate steps toward scientific validation

The **Extru-Tech**nician

In the next issue of *The Extru-Technician* (November 2011), we will address taking the appropriate steps toward scientific validation, beginning with assessment, analysis and prescription. Extru-Tech Inc. has designed this process as a solution for manufacturers, ready for implementation. Watch for the next issue to learn more!



On the cover:

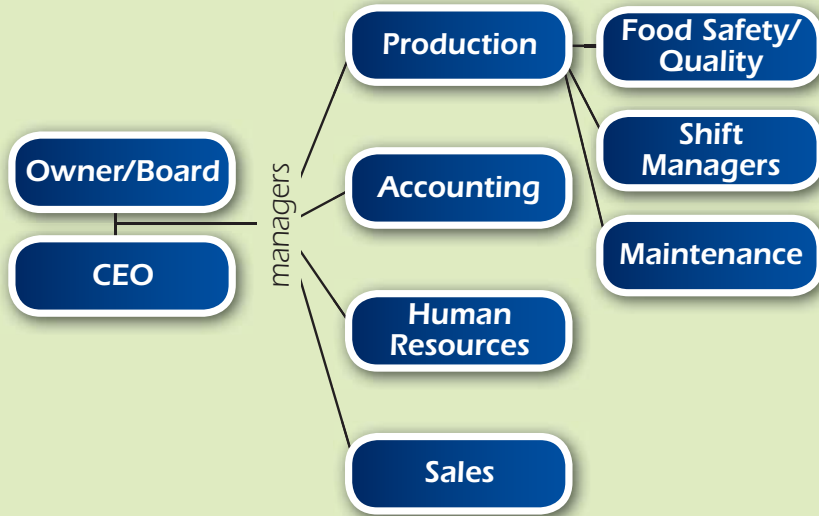
Creating an effective food safety culture starts with finding personnel who are knowledgeable, well trained and the right fit.

well trained and, most importantly, the right fit to help you create a food safety culture.

Values of the perfect food safety match

In creating an effective food safety management system, considering the food safety culture is crucial. To develop such a culture, you need the right personnel with influence, plus dynamic problem-solving and achievement metrics.

Figure 1. Traditional organization chart



In a traditional organizational hierarchy, the safety and quality functions report to the production manager, at least one level down from company executives.

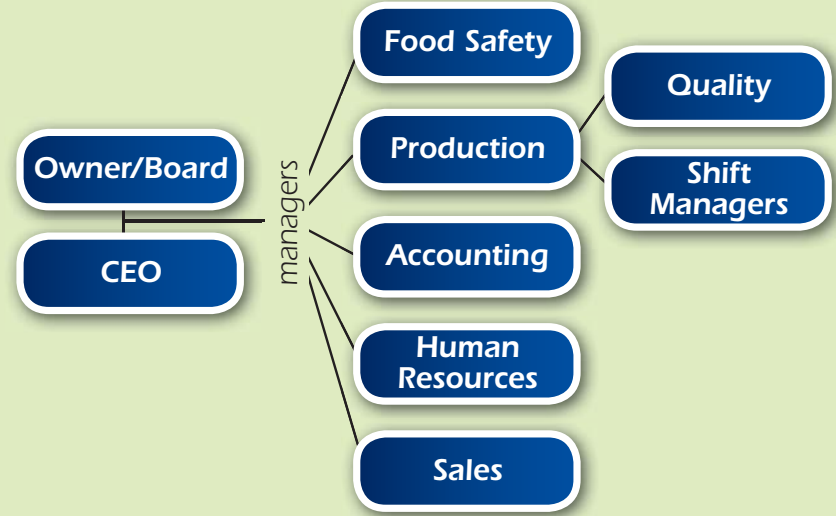
Influence

“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,” said Edgar Schein, as quoted by Frank Yiannas, VP of food safety for Walmart, in *Food Safety Culture: Creating a Behavior-Based Food Safety Management System* (Yiannas, 2009) .

That said, Yiannas also stresses the importance of mid-level managers being able to communicate suggestions up the chain of command.

Part of cultivating this hinges on the organization being open to suggestions

Figure 2. New organization chart



To facilitate a true food safety culture, safety is a management level function reporting directly to the CEO and/or board.

and allowing for a certain level of decentralization. Mid-level managers also “own the culture,” according to Yiannas. For example, new organization charts of food safety-conscious companies show that the food safety function reports directly to the chief executive or financial officer.

To encourage this upward communication, some organizations are offering incentives or rewards for proven, value-added recommendations from the employees. Using this behavioral theory (B.F. Skinner, 1953), employers understand that changing culture requires changing people’s behavior and also that this is an involved, multi-phase endeavor.

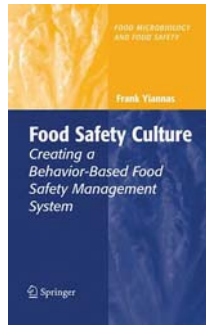
Employees must be able to develop concepts and communicate their ideas. Educating employees on how to do this requires that the team leader not only is able to create and manage the proper culture, but also be able to effectively destroy bad culture.

Employers understand that changing culture requires changing people’s behavior.

Yiannas notes this quote is stark, but realistic: “A food safety culture starts at the top and flows downward. It is not created from the bottom up.” He says leaders are responsible for the food safety culture in a company and that the responsibility flows down from there.

If mid-level managers can see their role in aiding the creation of good culture, they’ll be more likely to communicate ideas to leaders. Not only does this upward communication require good communication skills; it also assumes the managers understand well the components of culture and behavior.

At the end of the day, “The goal of the food safety professional should be to create a food safety culture—not a food safety program” (Yiannas, 2009). ■



Food Safety Culture: Creating a Behavior-Based Food Safety Management System, by Frank Yiannas.

Dynamic problem-solving

Developing positive food safety culture requires dynamic problem-solving. The culture will define the action plan, and this plan should lead directly to the end goal.

The market now is moving to secure against food safety events, but due to a lack of precise regulation, a clear target is lacking. After the petfood recalls of 2007, the US Congress enacted the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 (FDAAA), most of which is related to safety, with a small part specific to

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petfood. The law requires the US Food and Drug Administration to better deal with contamination events, both with regulators and the public (Dzanic, 2008).

Under FDAAA, the petfood industry is required to be part of the Reportable Food Registry, which requires organizations to report within 24 hours any food or feed likely to cause serious adverse health issues or death to humans or animals. The report includes the organization’s Bioterrorism Act registration number, the date the food was determined to be reportable, description of the food and the extent and nature of the issue (Dzanic, 2009).

Under the Food Safety Modernization Act passed in January 2011, petfood manufacturers registered under the Bioterrorism Act will be required to prove they are following risk-based preventive programs, among other new requirements, but as noted, FDA has yet to issue specific requirements or deadlines.

Still, neither management nor employees should shy from unclear projections in this area. ■

Achievement metrics

Food safety goals should be achievable, specific, risk-based (behaviors linked to food-borne disease), measurable and documented (Yiannas, 2009).

Achievement metrics for food safety need to be goal driven—reward based. Many clients already reward based on

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These metrics should be clearly measurable and benchmarked.

production numbers and personnel safety, and most are also including food-safety metrics.

These metrics should be clearly measurable and benchmarked. Rewards for achieving set goals can be earned individually or by shift, department or company.

Accountability for meeting the benchmarks of these goals is key at all levels. Checks and balances are necessary for operators, quality assurance professionals, food safety consultants and C-level employees. Ideally, though, checks and balances will be accomplished more organically through a culture in which employees have a natural drive to perform at higher standards. Note that checks and balances are a means to an end, but you can't always entirely get rid of them. ■

References

Dzanic, David A. DVM, PhD, DACVN. "Recall update: regulatory changes." *Petfood Industry* Feb. 2008: 38.

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Yiannas, Frank. *Food Safety Culture: Creating a Behavior-Based Food Safety Management System*. Springer, 2009.

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**THE
INDUSTRY
IS ABOUT
TO CHANGE.**

ARE YOU FOCUSED ON PETFOOD SAFETY?

Petfood safety has become the industry's key topic affecting producers, manufacturers and consumers. Moving forward, every company involved will have to be actively engaged in a food safety program that fulfills universal food safety schemes to ensure consumer safety.

At Extru-Tech, we maintain trained and certified consultants on-staff as well as within our network of partners to assist clients with process focused behavioral-based food safety management systems. Our team will assist in analyzing, monitoring, controlling, testing and validating every step in the petfood production process to create a food safety culture.

There is no better time than now to become skilled on food safety certification. It's just one more way the market's best manufacturers partner with Extru-Tech to optimize petfood safety.

Contact one of our professional consultants today at 785-284-2153.



Corporate Office
P.O. Box 8 • 100 Airport Road
Sabetha, KS 66534, USA
Phone: 785-284-2153 • Fax: 785-284-3143
extru-techinc@extru-techinc.com • www.extru-techinc.com