



Interacting with Regulators 101

Building Regulatory Relationships



- Promotes better communications during outbreaks, emergencies, and other situations.
- Assists when considering new novel methods.
- Develops stronger food safety partnerships.
- Engagement should be brand, but also at local level.



How to Build Relationships

- Attend regulatory meetings such as:
 - Annual AFDO Conference or Regional AFDO Affiliates
 - FDA Retail Seminars (for retail industry)
 - Annual NEHA Conference and State and Regional Affiliates
- Set up regulatory meetings in states your organization has a significant presence.
 - Introducing new equipment or techniques
 - Periodically when new personnel are introduced to an area
- Periodic discussions

Tips for Interacting with Regulators



- Be respectful
- Know your facts, don't provide inaccurate information
- The establishment and inspector have the same goal—safe food—collaborate
- Inspectors are generalists, if they seem confused offer to explain the process

Tips for Interacting with Regulators



- Don't escalate issues up several levels immediately, always start at the lowest level possible
- Try resolve as soon as possible, delay lessens chance of success
- Before making major changes, visit with the regulars and let them know it's happening
- Ask questions



What if We Disagree with Inspection Results?

- Approach disagreements constructively
- Be prepared, have evidence, show why this was wrong
- Typically, harder to dispute observations, less hard to dispute application of regulations
- Present yours concern as soon as possible
- Try a phone call rather than an email
- Follow up after the call with an email
- Consider a written response to the inspection showing you take findings seriously



Collaborating with Regulators and Health Officials During an Outbreak

- Ask questions, if you don't understand
- Provide information expeditiously
- Be prepared to provide recipes, sources, invoices, shipping records, etc.
- Be appreciative of early information
 - Maybe preliminary, but gives you early warning of a potential problem
 - Allows you provide information, before a conclusion has been made