



Governing Food Safety as an Enterprise Risk

Moving beyond localized compliance to establish fiduciary accountability and durable public health protection.

Hal King, PhD
Managing Partner



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MAY 11-14 | 2026 | ROSEMONT, IL

Why we do what we do!



“Never forget that no matter what name is on the check, we work for six-year-old kids and grandparents. I really appreciate the efforts you have put forth to save lives yourself.”

—David Theno, Ph.D., former Senior Vice President,
Quality and Logistics, Jack in the Box Inc.

What is the state of the public health in the foodservice industry- United States?

2009

DISEASE OUTBREAKS IN THE UNITED STATES- 2009



By Hal King, Ph.D., Managing Partner, Active Food Safety LLC

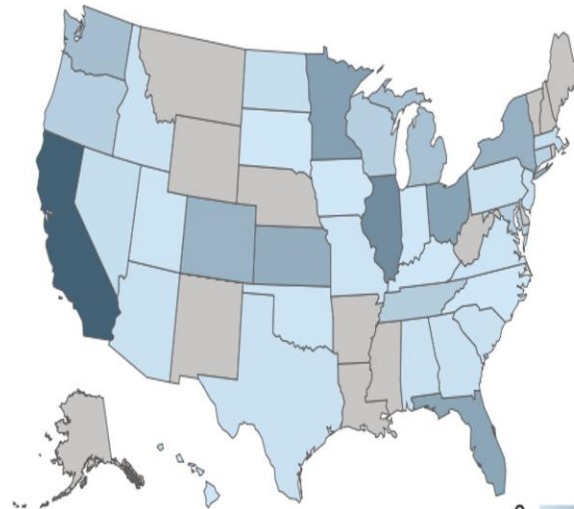
During the course of my career in public health, I have always worked to understand the root cause of various infectious diseases that are transmitted to humans by environmental exposure—for example, infection from microbial pathogens from drinking water, fruit and vegetable misting machines in grocery stores, or in food prepared in a restaurant. This career path has been challenging, but the mission of helping to prevent illness and save lives has always been my reward.

With foodborne illness, where the root causes (i.e., hazards) are well known, the controls of each these hazards are proven effective, and there is robust research and development from the federal government and academia to continually improve our knowledge. The challenge comes from gaps in prevention—i.e., the interpretation, implementation, and execution of this knowledge by the retail foodservice industry. It is this gap that drives myself, along with many of our food safety management solution providers, to help the retail foodservice industry prevent foodborne illnesses with innovative products and services, and also collaborate to ensure effective preventive controls.

If you have read any of my books or previous articles, you will know that I always describe the state of public health in the retail foodservice industry by showing the numbers of foodborne disease outbreaks associated with this industry. This is proof that more work needs to be done by everyone to assure food safety. The number of foodborne illnesses caused by the retail foodservice industry has not declined over the past 15-plus years, and has averaged about 60 percent of total foodborne disease outbreaks year to year.

The most current U.S. data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via the Beam Dashboard,¹ which uses National Outbreak Reporting System (NORS) data, shows 307 outbreaks, 4,429 illnesses, and 7 deaths (a preventable tragedy) caused by retail

Outbreaks per State



0 48

Quick Stats - Current Filters

Outbreaks	Illnesses
320	3,862
Hospitalizations	Deaths
184	1

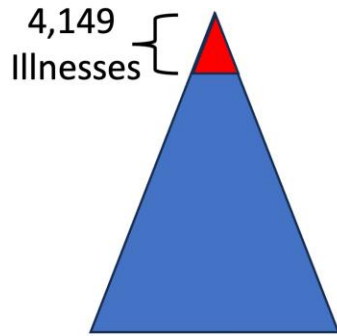


BEAM Dashboard
National Outbreak Reporting System (NORS)

Data from April 30, 2025

What is the state of the public health in the foodservice industry- United States?

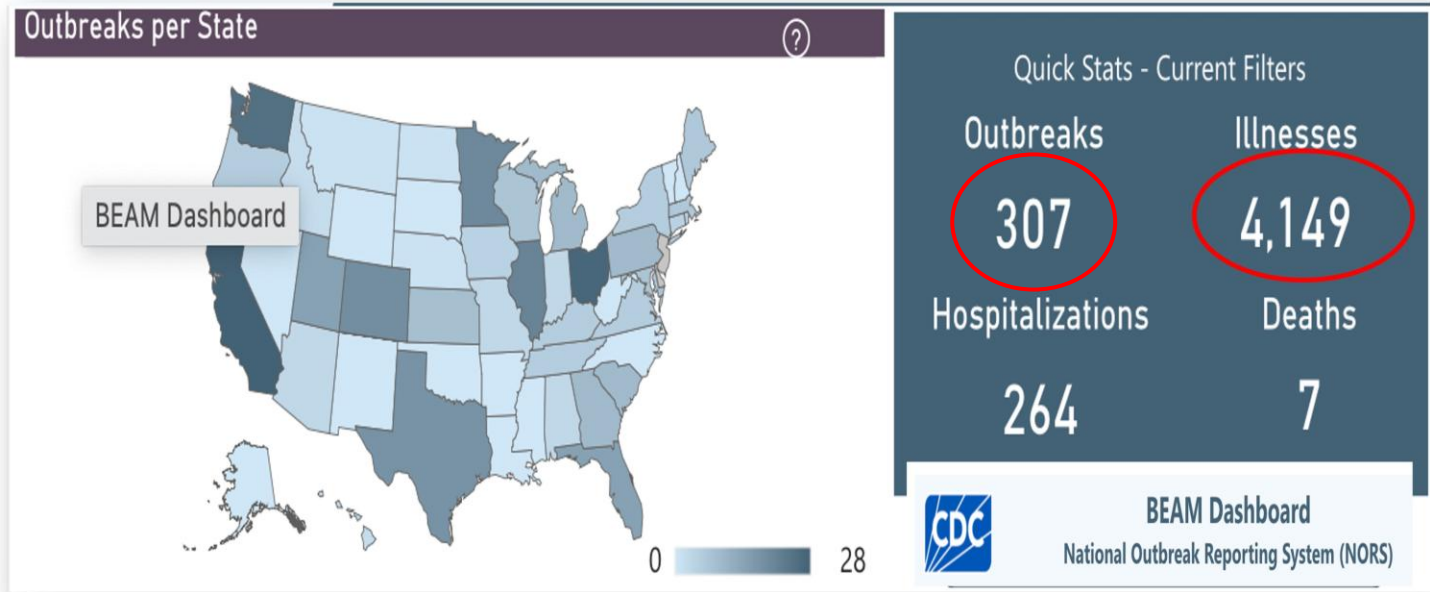
Outbreaks are only the "tip of the iceberg"



50% of all foodborne disease outbreaks in the US

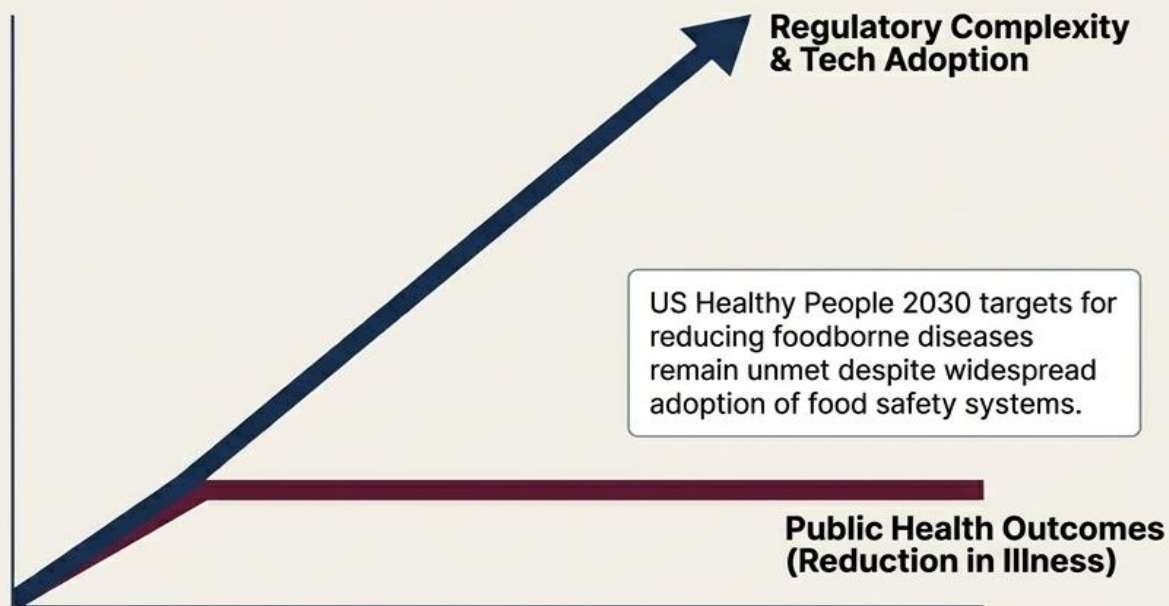
2023

DISEASE OUTBREAKS IN THE UNITED STATES- 2023



Data from April 30, 2025

Increased regulations and technology have not reduced foodborne illness.

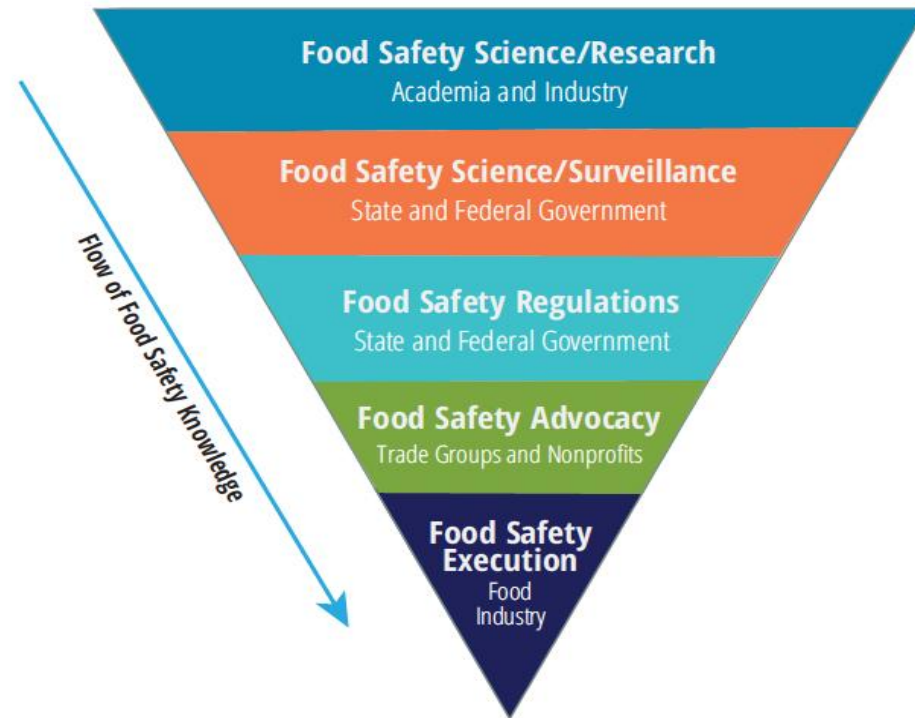


- National surveillance data from the CDC and FDA shows the burden of foodborne illness in the US has not meaningfully declined.
- Hospitalizations and deaths persist at stable or increasing rates.
- The limiting factor is no longer scientific knowledge or regulatory enforcement.
- The limiting factor is how accountability is structured and governed.

FoodNet 2024 Preliminary Data



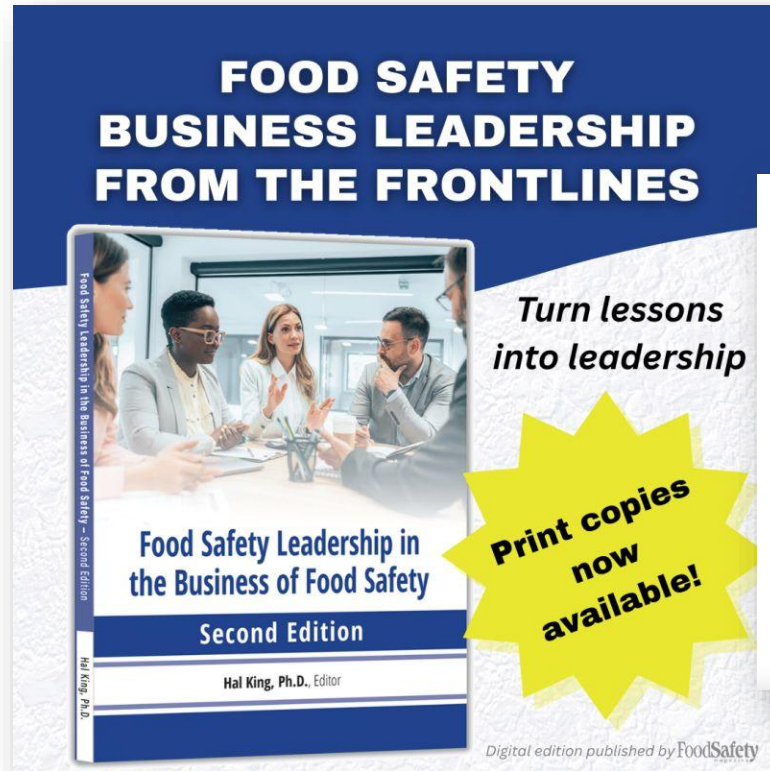
This risk can only be managed and prevented directly by the food business and its suppliers



All this knowledge must be developed into programs and systems that can be executed within the food business to maximize food safety for the public health

Figure 3. The source, degree, and flow of food safety knowledge to the food industry, where it must be executed properly by the food business and by a food safety business leader.

A book was published to begin the dialog on the importance of food safety business leadership in our industry and for the public health



CONCLUSION
Food Safety Business Leadership and Its Impact on the Consumer and Public Health
 By **Mitzi D. Baum, M.Sc.**, CEO, Stop Foodborne Illness

Food safety has been synonymous with public health from the inception of microbiology. The two became linked in perpetuity when Louis Pasteur, who is widely known as the founding father of food microbiology, began his work focused on "the germ theory." Pasteur asked the pivotal question, "Why can we not see what makes us sick?" and "How does sickness spread?" His search to answer these questions led to the permanent connection between food and disease. The first successful test of his theory of what is now known as pasteurization occurred in 1862, but Pasteur's work is built upon the shoulders of other forgotten food safety and public health pioneers—the original food safety leaders.

The Foundations of Food Safety Leadership
 Historically, prominent scientists and their declarations of how science impacts public health have been received in a less than amicable manner, or their discoveries were simply ignored. For example, Lancelot Shattuck was a mid-19th-century politician and is credited by many to be the architect of the American public health service. Shattuck, an American, based his work on that of Edwin Chadwick, a London attorney who was secretary of England's Poor Law Commission in 1833. Chadwick conducted and disseminated the lives of those that lived in squalid conditions.

In 1850, Shattuck also observed that the dense living conditions in Massachusetts cities were responsible for perpetuating widespread public health risk to the entire community. He published his *Report of the Massachusetts Sanitary Commission*, which stated, "If you people with decent homes were killed in their efforts to resist diseases of the behavior of others invited the visitation of epidemics." Yet, in the same vein as other transformative discoveries, his work was largely ignored.

In the U.S., over 70 years later in 1923, this extraordinary idea of the transference of public health and cultural understanding of cause and effect would be declared as "The Great Sanitary Awakening" by Charles Edward Amory Winslow. Pivotal in the public health research and leadership, Winslow published 274 articles and speeches during his career and almost single-handedly built the Yale School of Public Health. Winslow was its first endowed professor and director in 1915, and he led the growth of the school for 20 years.

Louis Pasteur's advances, based on Robert Koch's advances, which were working people who were compelled to live—and die—in appalling conditions, were more susceptible to disease even if they tried to maintain their own personal space. These observations and the linkage came to be known as Chadwick's "sanitary idea."

Van Leeuwenhoek's published letters, *The Theory World Reflections on Leeuwenhoek (1677, Concerning Little Animals)*, provides historical perspective on his advances in microbiology, his creation of the microscope, and the discovery of bacteria.

The study of disease—and ultimately the breakthrough in science connecting food and food animals to it—is plotted with leaders that were underhanded at the time, yet whose contributions were monumental. Shattuck, Winslow, van Leeuwenhoek, and Koch are only a few. These individuals paved the way for the more well-known, modern food safety leaders. Their achievements are not only pivotal for the advancement of public health and food safety, but they also demonstrate the inspiration and sustained leadership for public health and consumer protection.

The efforts of those before him provided Harvey Wiley with the thrust needed to propel food safety and the safety of consumers into the public conscience. In the 1880s, Harvey Wiley began focusing his career on increasing public awareness on food safety, honest labeling, and food adulteration. His passion for reducing

Understanding the impact of the intersection of food safety and public health is essential as a food safety business leader, and each food safety business leader works in the prevention of foodborne diseases as a significant part of public health.



Mitzi D. Baum, M.Sc.
 Former CEO, Stop Foodborne Illness
Conclusion: Food Safety Business Leadership and Its Impact on the Consumer and Public Health



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The foodservice business must have a food safety business leader to translate food safety knowledge into business execution

INTRODUCTION

What is Food Safety Business Leadership?

Why is food safety business leadership so important to the success of a retail foodservice or sales business, and how does it impact public health?

By Hal King, Ph.D., Managing Partner, Active Food Safety LLC

"Never forget that no matter what name is on the check, we work for six-year-old kids and grandparents. I really appreciate the efforts you have put forth to save lives yourself. It helped guide you along in that direction at all, that's my best reward. Hope our paths cross soon when we have more time. Take care, amigos."
—David Thero, Ph.D., former Senior Vice President, Quality and Logistics, Jack in the Box Inc.

The business of food preparation, service, and sales in the restaurant and grocery industries has always included the risk of foodborne disease outbreaks and injury due to food safety hazards. Biological, chemical, and physical hazards are well known and inherent with food manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, food preparation, and sales—but they are preventable.

Some have suggested that the modern era of the focus on food safety by the retail foodservice and sales industry and the corresponding regulatory actions needed to hold this industry accountable began after the 1993 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the multi-state outbreak of *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 infections from hamburgers sold by Jack in the Box. Certainly, evidence exists of positive progress in the development of food safety requirements by regulatory authorities. The U.S. Food Code (first published, coincidentally, in 1995) contains a wealth of science-based



Figure 1. FDA Food Code Adoption Status (as of December 31, 2022)²

rules that are continually established and updated in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code, and which have been adopted by a number of states² (Figure 1).

However, the FDA Food Code is not federal law enforced in every state, and this most current source of knowledge for the industry and regulatory authorities to follow on hazards and how to prevent them is not harmonized across the U.S. Only two states enforce the most current 2022 Food Code, with all other states enforcing versions released from 1995 to 2017. This leaves gaps in the ability of regulatory authorities to monitor

and enforce the most current food safety controls that would maximize their work for the reduction of food safety risk in the food industry. It also provides little incentive for the retail foodservice and sales industry to apply the most current Food Code rules, except as a minimum standard in each state and often based on outdated food safety controls. For example, FDA recently updated the Food Code to include sesame as an allergen reflecting the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2021 that established sesame as the ninth major food allergen. The new rules in the Food Code include a requirement to inform consumers, in writing, of major food

- Leads the food safety management program and leads the appropriate staff with the relevant expertise
- Assists the business in identifying its current food safety risk across the enterprise
- Leads development of standard operating procedures, training requirements, and the food safety management systems and works with the other business functions to execute them

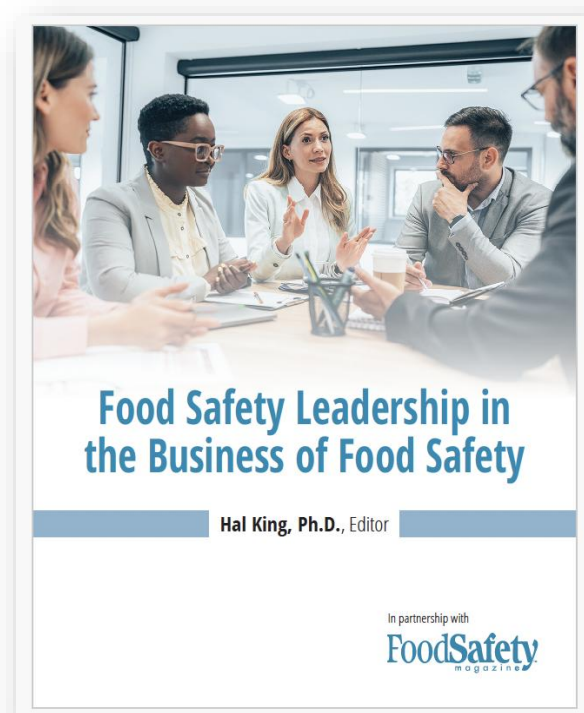
As this business professional works within the business, they influence and help sustain the food safety culture of the business.



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Each food safety business leader was asked to focus on a different attribute of business leadership working in their current or past foodservice brand



CHAPTER 2

Leading a Food Safety Program via a Value Proposition for the Business

By **Steven A. Lyon, Ph.D.**, Director of Food Safety, Chick-fil-A

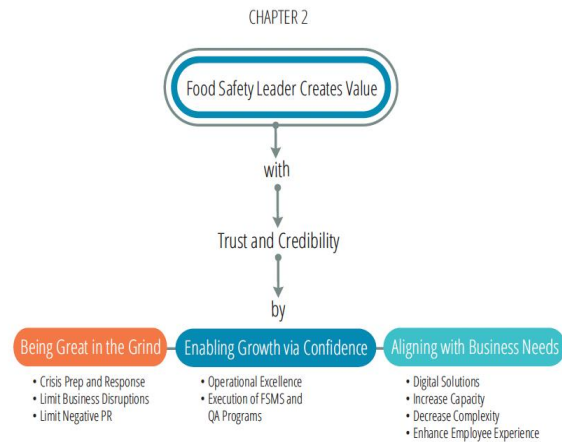


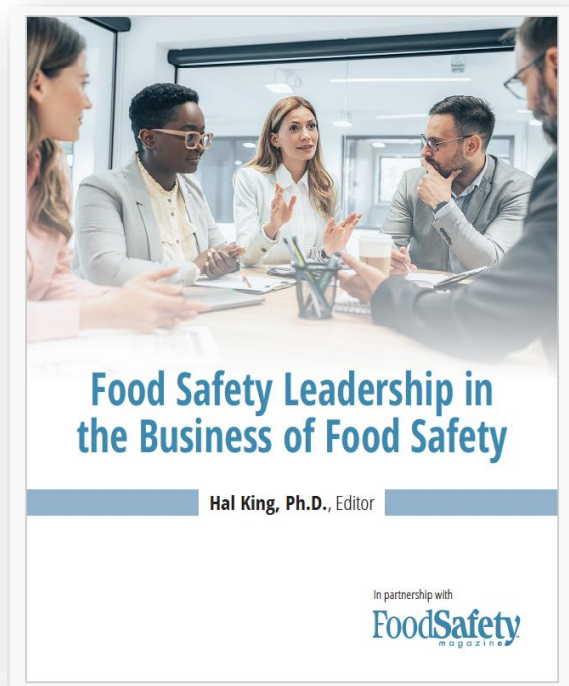
Figure 1. How a Food Safety Leader Can Create Value

Leaders have the mindset to find root causes for problems and implement solutions to fix them.



Steven A. Lyon, Ph.D.
Director of Food Safety, Chick-fil-A
Chapter 2: Leading a Food Safety Program via a Value Proposition for the Business

Each food safety business leader was asked to focus on a different attribute of business leadership working in their current or past foodservice brand



CHAPTER 1

The Attributes and Priorities of a Successful Food Safety Business Leader

By **Jorge Hernandez**, Vice President of Quality Assurance, Wendy's

"The role of a leader is to guide their team towards uncharted territories."
— Henry Kissinger

Effective food safety business leaders have the power to influence, build, and cultivate strong cultures that yield remarkable results. They possess the ability to engage and inspire others.

When we refer to a food safety professional in the context of a business, we are describing someone who assists individuals or groups in achieving a shared objective to prevent foodborne illnesses from a business' foods. These leaders possess qualities associated with leadership, such as the capacity to motivate, inspire, and encourage others to pursue a shared vision.

However, in the food industry, the term "food safety business leader" sometimes takes on a different meaning in the realm of management. In this context, it often refers to a designated individual responsible for overseeing food safety within an organization. These individuals are fulfilling a specific role within the organization and might or might not have the skills described above.

Nevertheless, when we apply the term to encompass leadership qualities, food safety business leadership signifies a proactive and strategic approach to building an organizational culture that prioritizes food safety as part of its culture and is critical to its business success. This

approach ensures that all products or services offered by the organization align with its business model and goals. Moreover, this type of leadership is not limited to the organizational level; it extends to leading and influencing departments, crews, teams, or shifts to prioritize food safety as a core imperative.

Drawing from my 30-plus years of experience in leadership positions within regulatory and industry organizations across multiple sectors at local, national, and international levels and working with food safety business leaders all along the way, I have come to realize that "leadership" is a skill. One does not need to hold a formal leadership role to be a food safety business leader. Effective food safety business leadership involves utilizing key skills and practices at the right time to influence others toward a common food safety goal. It is the ability to create a shared vision that motivates others to follow and work toward it. When aligned with the business, food safety business leadership creates a powerful force for change and evolution that leads to a food safety culture.

Why Should Anyone Follow You? Leadership is an essential skill in any field. Whether you are a manager, a parent, a volunteer, or a food safety professional, leadership skills will help you achieve your goals and make a difference in the world.

However, the question, "why should anyone follow you?" holds significant

importance when contemplating food safety business leadership. The answer to this question is likely to shape your leadership approach, serve as a guiding principle during challenging times, provide the necessary courage to make tough decisions or deliver bad news, and help you project authenticity. Indeed, great food safety business leaders are best when they are authentic.

The good news is that there is no one-size-fits-all food safety business leadership style. If such a style existed, people would constantly strive to imitate it, resulting in inauthentic and insincere leaders. Food safety is a global necessity, which means that leaders can emerge from any corner of the world. They come in all shapes, sizes, colors, cultures, and nationalities. They can be of any gender, speak any language, and have many accents. Their backgrounds vary, ranging from extensive scientific knowledge and formal food safety education to basic understanding of the science behind food safety. However, all exceptional food safety business leaders I know share one common trait: a passion for food safety that extends beyond personal gain. They strive to ensure safe food for everyone. Some even believe that they have the power to prevent illness and death.

Learning from Your Life Story The reasons why food safety business leaders choose to lead are as diverse as the leaders themselves. Personal experience

To be an effective food safety business leader, there is one universal challenge that every leader must overcome if they are to be successful: they must be laser focused on aligning food safety programs to their organization's goals and deliver food safety results as part of their ongoing business.



Jorge Hernandez
Vice President of Quality Assurance,
Wendy's
Chapter 1: The Attributes and Priorities of a Successful Food Safety Business Leader



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How can the food safety management business function work with other business functions (e.g., Marketing and Operations departments) to reduce risk while improving their business outcomes

Post-pandemic, the customer experience of restaurant cleanliness and its association with the perception of food safety is likely to be a significant driver of sales for the first time in the history of the restaurant industry.



EDITOR
Hal King, Ph.D.
 Managing Partner at Active Food Safety LLC and former Director of Food and Product Safety, Chick-fil-A Inc.

Introduction: What is Food Safety Business Leadership?
Chapter 11: Connecting Food Safety to the Customer Experience to Enhance Food Safety Culture

CHAPTER 11

Connecting Food Safety to the Customer Experience to Enhance Food Safety Culture

By Hal King, Ph.D., Managing Partner at Active Food Safety LLC and former Director of Food Safety, Chick-fil-A Inc.

One of the important roles of a food safety business leader is to lead continuous improvement of food safety management by performing risk assessment across the business in each of the business functions that execute food safety controls. This is especially important as the business grows, increases sales per location, and changes are made to the menu and business' suppliers. I have always advocated the need for continuous improvement to address new food safety risk in the business via use of a third-party gap assessment! These assessments provide the business with unbiased, expert recommendations to help the food safety business leader prioritize and obtain support for food safety initiatives. However, food safety risk alone is not always the best value proposition for how a business spends money.

One of the important lessons I learned early on in my career in the foodservice industry was to always be prepared to show the value proposition to the business, beyond the food safety risk reduction, for any food safety continuous improvement initiative. This is especially important if the new initiative/cost is not in response to a food safety risk experienced by the business (e.g., a foodborne disease outbreak or a large foodborne illness claim) or a new regulatory requirement the business would be required to implement [e.g., changing the refrigerator equipment to

meet U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code requirements]. Food safety initiatives that connect the value proposition to the customer experience, after a business establishes an effective food safety management program and executes control of food safety hazards by effective food safety management systems, can actually lead to improvement of the business' food safety culture.

Early Lessons in Connecting Food Safety to Customer Experience in a Restaurant

My first employment in the food industry was at a Chick-fil-A restaurant in 1977 in a local mall at the age of 16. I was hired by the restaurant operator, who was the son of the founder/owner of Chick-fil-A Inc., and also a family friend. This was also my first encounter with how the business of food safety, specifically restaurant cleanliness, could impact customer experience. The corporate founder/owner wrote about my first employment in his first book, *It's Easier to Succeed Than to Fail!*, because he thought it was an important lesson about connecting a work ethic involving cleaning toilets to the customer experience. However, what I experienced then and what I understand now is that the restaurant operator valued restaurant cleanliness because it not only affected the customer experience, but also the brand equity of his restaurant business.

Let me tell you about this lesson in a quick story that is relevant to the context of this chapter. I was a new employee in training, and I was asked to clean a lot of things in the restaurant, including the restrooms and equipment. I thought about quitting and finding another job. I wanted to run the cash register and talk to customers and my friends, not clean restrooms. Since the owner was a family friend, my mom called to ask him to talk with me about this because, well, he also owned more than 76 Chick-fil-A restaurants, and my mom saw that there might be an important lesson for me here. The founder/owner said to me (quote from his book), "When you report to work, see if you can get the job of keeping the restrooms clean, but this time, clean the walls and the floors with extra effort. Shine those mirrors. And when you get to the commode, clean it as though you're going to drink out of it. And after you've done your best, better than anyone else has ever done it, step back and receive the thrill of a job well done."

As you might guess, when I got to work, I did not really want to clean toilets, and I definitely did not want my friends to see me cleaning toilets; a lot of my friends worked at this Chick-fil-A and ate there, too. However, the founder/owner was very successful in the business of customer service (he started the iconic "My Pleasure" at every Chick-fil-A, where Chick-fil-A employees are required to respond to customers with "my pleasure" anytime a customer says

SURFACES

Dirty, reusable cloth towels can be a source of cross-contamination and are poor guest experience



Some of the cleaning and sanitation tools we use in restaurants actually contribute to the cross contamination of foods when used improperly



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Relying on a single champion creates an unsustainable food safety culture.



The Flaw:

In too many businesses, food safety culture survives only as long as the lone food safety leader has the energy and political capital to push it uphill.

The Result:

When that leader leaves, gets overruled, or runs out of runway, the system degrades and the culture rolls backward.

The Fix:

Culture cannot sit inside a siloed function as a program to be championed. It requires a structural, enterprise-wide executive mandate.



The Synergy Between Food Safety Management and Food Safety Culture in the Governance of Food Safety

Both food safety culture and food safety management matter, and alignment between them at the operational level is essential to success

By Hal King, Ph.D., Managing Partner, Active Food Safety LLC

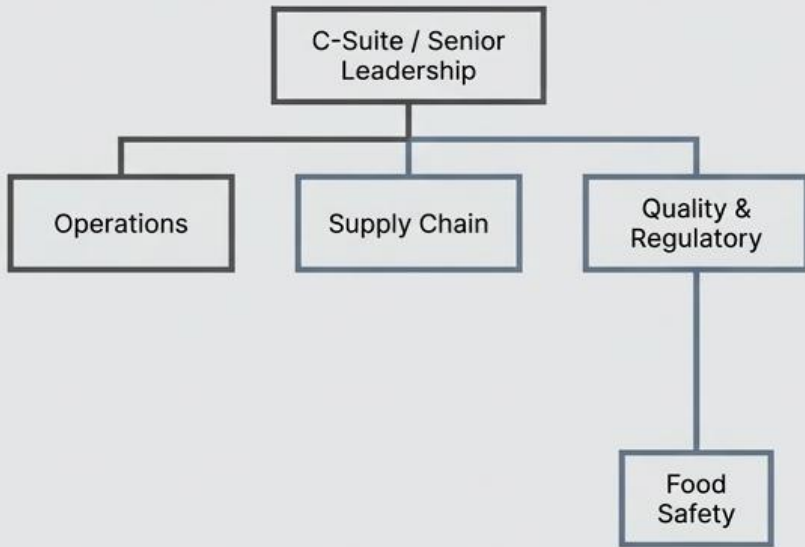
The number of foodborne disease outbreaks caused by the retail foodservice industry has not declined and has averaged about 50–60 percent of total foodborne disease outbreaks year to year. The most current data in the U.S. from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Beam Dashboard¹ (using National Outbreak Reporting System (NORS) Data) shows that in 2023, there were 307 outbreaks resulting in 4,429 illnesses and 7 deaths caused by retail foodservice establishments. These figures represent 50 percent of the total number of 593 foodborne disease outbreaks from all settings in the U.S. When these data are compared with the data from 2009 (the first year that CDC began reporting outbreaks via NORS), there has been no significant change in the total number of foodborne disease outbreaks caused by the retail foodservice industry. Clearly, we must do more to continuously improve the governance of food safety risk in the retail foodservice industry to reduce foodborne disease outbreaks and illnesses.

The retail foodservice industry is principally made up of both independently owned restaurants and franchised/owner-operated restaurants associated with corporate brands, both contributing to the high numbers of foodborne disease outbreaks annually. Many of the foodborne disease outbreaks and illnesses caused by these restaurants have a root cause related to operational failures in basic food safety management requirements in restaurants. These contributing factors² are well known and cause the majority of the foodborne disease outbreaks in the U.S. Ultimately, the owner of the independent restaurant or the leadership/corporate governance of the brand's restaurants has failed in its duty to assure public health by failing to ensure that the business has a food safety culture (FSC) governing its food safety management (FSM) of the risk.

Interdependence Between Food Safety Management and Food Safety Culture
This failure in FSC governance of FSM at the restaurant level specifically affecting the

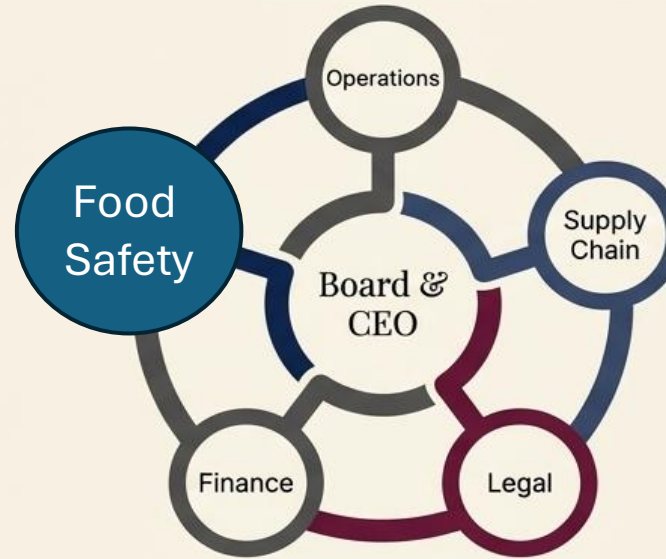
Food safety must evolve into an enterprise accountability system

FROM: The Isolated Program



- Managed by a specialized technical function.
- Success measured by facility compliance and inspection reports.
- Accountability rests on a single champion.

TO: The Enterprise Accountability System



- Governed by the Board and executed by the C-Suite.
- Shared competency across operations, supply chain, legal, finance, and HR.
- Success measured by systemic risk reduction and sustained culture.

FOOD SAFETY IS A TEAM SPORT. TREAT IT LIKE AN ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

One Food Safety System. Defined by Experts. Executed by Every Function. Measured for Results.
When food safety management and culture are enterprise-wide, we protect our guests, our brand, and our business.

WHY AN ENTERPRISE SYSTEM MATTERS

- Every function impacts food safety
- Consistency reduces risk and variation
- Data-driven decisions drive performance
- A strong culture protects people and brand

1. DEFINE THE STANDARD Food Safety sets the specifications



The Food Safety Professional / Program
Establishes enterprise food safety requirements, standards, and expectations across the business.

- ✓ Policies & Standards
- ✓ Risk Assessments
- ✓ Specifications & Controls
- ✓ Monitoring Requirements
- ✓ Training Requirements
- ✓ Verification & Validation
- ✓ Corrective Action Criteria

ONE SET OF ENTERPRISE SPECIFICATIONS
Clear. Consistent. Risk-based.

2. EXECUTE ACROSS THE BUSINESS Functional leaders integrate and execute

SUPPLY CHAIN Source safe. Deliver safe.	RESTAURANT OPERATIONS Prepare safe. Serve safe.	FACILITIES MANAGEMENT Build safe. Maintain safe.	TRAINING & PEOPLE Know it. Do it. Own it.	QUALITY ASSURANCE Verify. Validate. Improve.
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplier approval & management • Specifications & COAs • Receiving controls • Traceability 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food handling & storage • Cooking & cooling • Cross-contact control • Cleaning & sanitizing • HACCP plan execution 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventive maintenance • Pest management • Water quality • Equipment calibration • Sanitation infrastructure 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-based training • Onboarding & refreshers • Competency validation • Behavior expectations • Culture & engagement 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits & inspections • Environmental testing • Product testing • Issue management • CAPA management

EVERY FUNCTION PLAYS A PART. EVERY ACTION COUNTS.
Executing to the same standards—every day, every location.

3. MONITOR, MEASURE & ACT One view of performance. One plan for action.

ENTERPRISE FOOD SAFETY KPI DASHBOARD

Compliance Rate 96% ▲ 4% vs target	Critical Violations 8 ▼ 30% vs target	Corrective Action On-Time 92% ▲ 6% vs target	Training Completion 98% ▲ 5% vs target
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TREND OVER TIME (PAST 12 MONTHS)



TOGETHER WE:

- ✓ Review performance
- ✓ Identify risks & trends
- ✓ Prioritize actions
- ✓ Take corrective action
- ✓ Verify effectiveness
- ✓ Drive continuous improvement



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By Hal King, Ph.D., Managing Partner, Active Food Safety LLC

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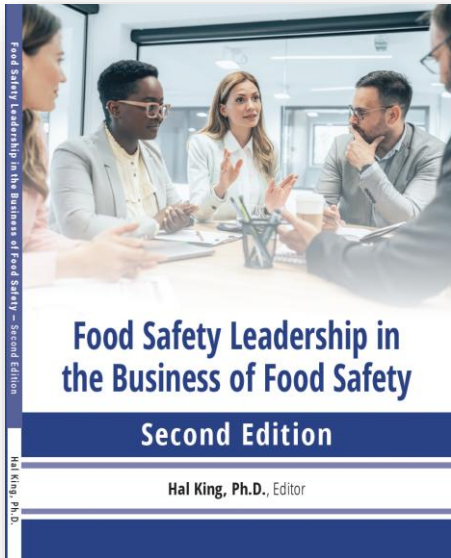
Food Safety Management (FSM) and Food Safety Culture (FSC)

“While traditionally viewed as distinct, FSM and FSC are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they are complementary, and when aligned under effective leadership/corporate governance, they can form a resilient structure that reduces risk and drives continuous improvement.”



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“True food safety leadership involves influencing organizational culture, enabling business decisions, and managing reputational risk at the governance level.”



Attribute	Explanation
Food safety leadership is strategic, not operational	The book distinguishes leadership from management. ⁹ True food safety leadership involves influencing organizational culture, enabling business decisions, and managing reputational risk at the governance level. Executives must lead by example and integrate food safety into boardroom strategy, not just kitchen operations.
Embedding food safety into cross-functional governance	Corporate FSM must intersect with all business units. From legal to supply chain and marketing, the message is clear: the governance model should assign food safety ownership across functions and use enterprise-wide data to assess performance.
Culture is the execution engine	Organizational culture is not a "soft" concept. Food safety business leaders emphasize the multiplier effect of culture on food safety programs. Trust, communication, and values alignment are essential governance levers for sustainable risk management.
Food safety as brand protection and growth driver	Multiple contributors to the book ⁹ illustrate how aligning food safety with customer expectations can both prevent crises and drive loyalty. The book argues that food safety is a brand equity issue that must be governed as such.
Mentorship and talent development as leadership imperatives	Leadership succession and mentoring future food safety professionals are highlighted as necessary governance priorities. Leaders must institutionalize knowledge, behaviors, and decision-making frameworks to ensure long-term resilience.

TABLE 2. Key Food Safety Business Leadership Attributes Analyzed for the Corporate Governance of Food Safety⁹

What we are doing to help



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ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

What is Food Safety Next?

Food Safety Next is a curated forum for executive business leaders who are responsible for food safety across a corporate enterprise. It starts with enabling the relationships and exchange between the food safety management business function and the supply chain, operations, legal, finance, risk management, facilities and equipment, and other business functional leaders.

Food Safety Next is not a traditional conference. Our model connects three interconnected pillars — our annual Conference, our focused Roundtables, and ongoing Food Safety Next Business Networking — creating a continuous cycle of insight, connection, and action that can enhance enterprise food safety management and culture for the foodservice industry.

It enables a working environment where food safety management and culture are collaboratively developed — not merely presented — then translated into best practices for real-world implementation.

[Learn More](#)

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A CURATED LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

The Leadership Exchange Shaping the Future of Enterprise Food Safety

Bringing together executive business leaders in foodservice to share, collaborate, and innovate meaningful improvements of the corporate governance of food safety.



MAY 11-14 | 2026 | ROSEMONT, IL



Food Safety Leadership – Adding Value to Your Business

Produced by
FoodSafety
magazine™

Steven A. Lyon, PhD



Food Safety Leader Creates Value

with

Trust & Credibility

by



Being Great in the Grind

- Crisis Preparation & Response
- Limit/Avoid Business Disruptions
- Limit/Avoid Negative PR

Enabling Growth via Confidence

- Operational Excellence
- Execution of FSMS
- Food Safety Culture

Aligning with the Needs of the Business

- Digital Solutions
- Data Influenced Decisions
- Increasing Capacity
- Decreasing Complexity

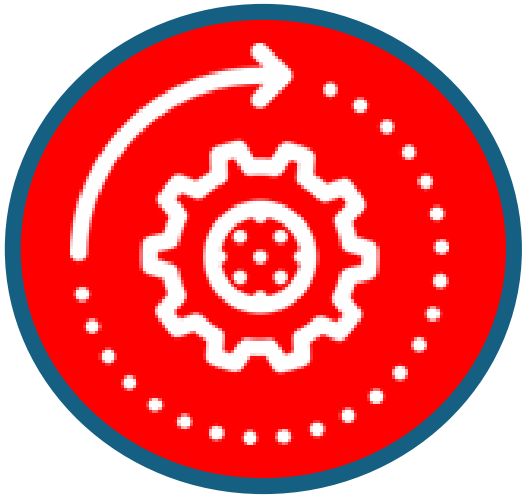


Who is a Food Safety Business Leader?

- Experienced
- Credibility
- Respected Reputation
- TRUST
- Led Self, Teams and Organization

Being Great in the Grind

- **Crisis Preparation & Response**
- **Limit/Avoid Business Disruptions**
- **Limit/Avoid Negative PR**



Embrace the Challenge:

- FSQA is a difficult position and often with little credit and recognition.
- Our industry faces challenges constantly. Seize the moment!

'Be Ready so you don't have to get ready':

- Leaders prepare well
- Quick actions and control during a crisis elevates reputation and credibility

Value in limiting/avoiding disruptions – food safety protects current revenue:

- Limiting/preventing business disruptions allows the business to meet sales and their monetary goals.
- Saves business with liability, litigation and insurance
- Connecting business losses, especially minimal, to sales and key metrics will earn Sr. Leader's trust

Value in not damaging your good name/brand:

- One reason you were hired was to protect the brand and owners/shareholders
- They should know who the FS leader in case of any catastrophe. Do they know your name? If so, do they trust you?

Enabling Growth via Confidence

- Operational Excellence
- Execution of FSMS
- Food Safety Culture



Show value via metrics and meeting goals:

- ROI of preventing outbreaks/recalls/outages
- KPIs that support Operational Excellence
- Brag on the wins and be humble enough to make changes post-action review

Show value in continuous improvement:

- Perfection is the goal, but excellence is the standard
- Avoid complacency

Best in class systems – be an industry leader by setting THE standard

Agile and ability to get better – Growth Mindset:

- Always be willing to listen, learn and innovate
- Remain calm and cool under pressure

Value with customer trust and transactions:

- Cannot meet growth plans if there is a major Food Safety failure

Aligning with the Needs of the Business

- Digital Solutions
- Data Influenced Decisions
- Increasing Capacity
- Decreasing Complexity



Contribute to the success of others:

- Especially beyond your team. Leaders not only embrace challenges, but they contribute to others taking on their challenges
- Season for Challenges and for Contributing

See and Shape the Future:

- Have vision and shape it for others
- Forward thinking of how you can execute food safety in partnership with other key departments

Align Food Safety with Core Values:

- Are your FS values in action? Do they align with the business values?
- Easier to gain buy-in

Results & Relationships:

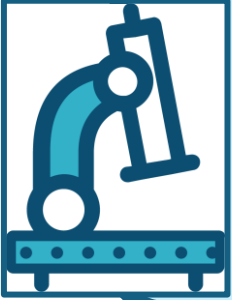
- eQ, be the guy everyone wants to work with AND the guy others come to for trusted answers
- Own SME role
- Value in making things easier and safer



What Food Safety Leaders MUST Do to Add Business Value:

- Shape the Future with Vision
- Coach to Develop Others
- Grow with Integrity & Humility
- Focus on both Results and Relationships

Leaders Must See & Shape the Future



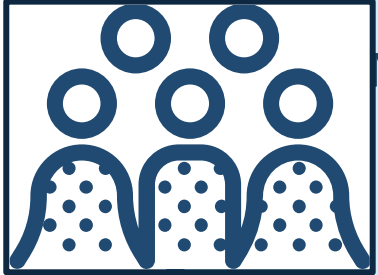
Understand and show how their work aligns and connects to the organization's purpose, strategy and goals

- See patterns, trends and gaps by connecting the organization's dots
- Be a Strategic Thinker in your work and when leading others
- Hire Eagles
- Create a culture that makes the work gratifying



Cast vision to others on the preferred future state and gaining buy-in via influence

Leaders Must Engage and Develop Others



Maximize connections by investing in their growth and development



Celebrate the success of others in and out of your department

Share your wisdom and lessons

- Know how to create the best mix of talent
- Provide Timely & Effective Feedback
- Know how to lead self and others

Leaders Must Grow through Agility and Humility



Embrace Change

Continuous Improvement Mindset



Seek Exposure to New Trends

Learn new ways to work

- Explore ways to overcome obstacles and coach others toward that approach
- Open to new ideas
- Build upon solutions offered by others
- Demonstrate judgement when to end pilot tests
- Aim for opportunities where innovation is needed

Leaders Must Value Results & Relationships



Set and maintain the standard

Coach to the standard



High iQ and eQ

Leverage the unique strengths
of your team

- Apply knowledge of business and industry trends to advance the organization's goals
- Empower others with meaningful decision making and program ownership
- Coach others to success
- Leverage relationships for influence and buy-in



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Food Safety Leaders Add Value to the Business By:

- Enabling Business Goals and Growth
- Trusted Leader that Limits Disruptions
- Financial Based KPIs
- **Being a Force Multiplier of TRUST for your Customers**





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