



CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF IMPROVING FOOD SAFETY CULTURE

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HOW CULTURE IS AN EMERGING RISK

- Culture is something that is in every organization, *has always been there*.
- Food safety culture is not something you create. *Everybody has one*. You might not like it, but you have one.
- When you think about food safety culture and the emerging risk, it's important to think about it in following *two ways*:

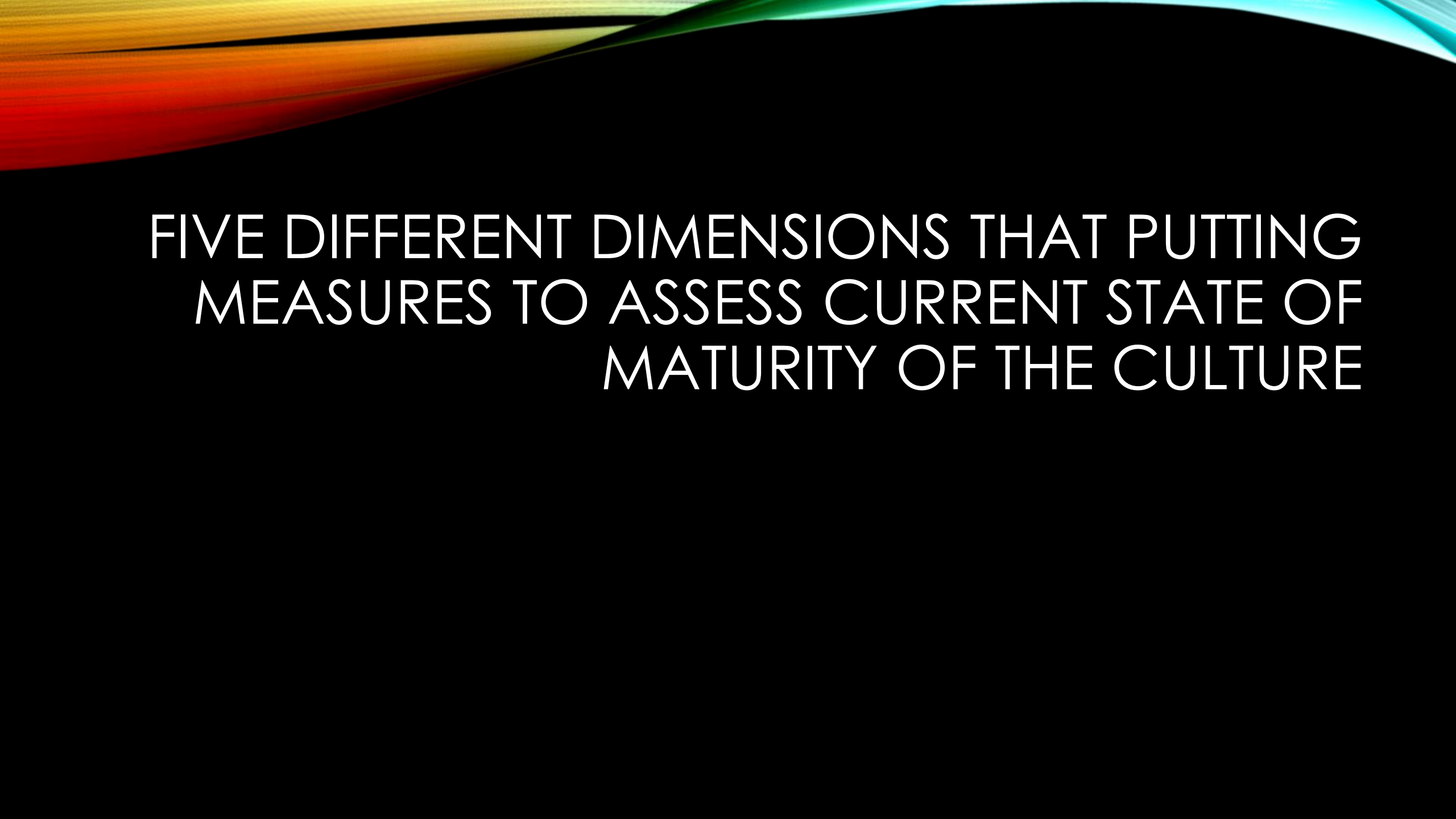
FOOD SAFETY CULTURE AND THE EMERGING RISK

- Your organization is **making assumptions** around what food safety is and how food safety is managed, and events that can eventually lead to an outbreak where people are hurt.
- You have **visionary food safety leaders** in your organization where these leaders are actually saying,
 - *"It's not about necessarily preventing somebody from getting sick, from eating or drinking our product, but it is about us getting better at being proactive, seeing the risks ahead of time, and therefore it will not cost our organization or heaven forbid our consumers any harm because we have so much foresight in what we're being proactive."*

HOW YOU THINK ABOUT CULTURE

- The culture is as something that is made of **assumptions**. Everyone make *assumptions about what is accepted within their organization*.
- Culture is **not** about **pointing fingers**, it's not about finding something to hang your hat on if something goes wrong.
- It's about understanding what you have — *strengths and weaknesses* — and going from there to make improvements. It's about how you evaluate where you have strengths and weaknesses in your culture

- If you walk into any food manufacturing plant and you're forgetting to put on a piece of garb or hairnet, does anybody actually walk up to you and make you aware that you are not following the procedures or will people let it slide?
- Nobody does either or, either to call you out for making a mistake or for not telling you if you made a mistake. But, it's the assumptions in that given culture it's just how it operates, whether the mistake is called out or not
- It's not about somebody coming to work and wanting to do something wrong, it's about being part of making the assumptions that lead to the decisions and the behaviors seen



FIVE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS THAT PUTTING
MEASURES TO ASSESS CURRENT STATE OF
MATURITY OF THE CULTURE

1. Values and mission:

1. *How does a company value the mission?*
2. *How does it **get messaged** by senior leadership?*
3. *Are there some habits around it?*
4. *Do you have regular meetings where you can demonstrate your leadership's engagement in food safety?*

2. People:

1. Culture is all about *people*. It's about *how people act in groups*, the panel.
2. This one really looks at their communication patterns and the learning, is there a *learning organization*?

3. Consistency:

1. Is it clear *who's accountable for what?*
2. How is that *accountability measured?*
3. Is it evident in the *documentation* as well?

4. Adaptability:

1. how does your *organization react to change*?
2. Is it about new regulations coming out and we must now go do something different?
3. Or is it about looking at when you do your *HACCP reassessments*, where can we continuously improve? How can we take out risk?
4. Or how can we potentially *minimize our verification activities*? Because we have so much control over what we're doing and it's so evident to everybody what we're doing.

5. Understanding and engaging in your product and process, specific hazards, and risks:

1. How do you *engage your workforce* — frontline workers to your CEO — *in your specific risks and hazards* that you're dealing with in your company?
2. We want to *get away* from having that statement said over and over again, "*Food safety is everybody's responsibility,*" because if that is the motive, then we are still stuck in that. Of course, it's everybody's responsibility. It's a given when you're in the business of making money and making food or drink.



SIX THINGS FOR CHANGING OR TRANSFORMING CULTURE

1. Starts with vision and strategy:

1. *how is your organization structured around food safety?*
2. *Does it have isolated ownership that sits within the technical services of food safety team?*
3. *Or is it very evident that everybody has a very unique role that fits underneath their specific accountabilities in the company?*

2. Look at roles

1. Are roles clearly spelled out? If you are the maintenance manager, an outsider, not knowing your company, go in and look at that person's **job description** and see a clear line statement that says, "This is my role in food safety?"
2. Is it also clear how **roles and responsibilities or rewards and recognition** are structured?
3. Is it a **handshake** to somebody or is there actually a bigger strategy around how **we're rewarding and recognizing** people's performance in food safety?

3. Examine learning and communication

- *I just had a conversation today with a client about **taking training out of the vocabulary**.*
- *Talk about **learning; create a learning organization**. Am I being trained or am I learning?*
- *Those are **two very different situations**, and learning programs mean individuals are responsible for their own learning, not just somebody that's sitting me down in an eight-hour PowerPoint presentation.*

4. Change leadership

- HR are professional people and know *change leadership*. *They know the models around managing change*.
- Tap one of them on the shoulder, "Give me a call and I'll give you a few references on what are the models for leading change".
- *Don't underestimate how all of us react when it comes to introducing change*. It has very fundamental impact on how we think and how afraid or frustrated we become and you can do a lot to minimize that.

5. Consistency

- It's about **accountability** and **how you put measurement systems in place** and actually **drive the behaviors** you're looking for.
- If you're putting a measurement in place that says, "**I must have an A++ in an external audit,**" most plans I'm familiar with will be ready for that. We are very good in food safety and food science to be audit ready, but not necessarily every day.
- Think about the **measure**; is that actually the **kind of behavior you're looking for**? While preparing for audit, or are you looking for everyday food safety activities that are being critically looked at? Are they right ones? Are they keeping our consumers safe? And constantly challenge whether you have the measures in places that are linked up with the behaviors you want to see, and if not, change them.

6. looking at specific hazards and risks

- *Make sure everybody in your organization understands that you are making products that are testable to foreign material because of the type of raw materials you work with.*
- *Everybody needs to understand — from the C-suite, to purchasing, to the frontline, and other places — how that can impact your customers and what they experience when they eat your product.*

SUMMARY

- Culture is definitely something that you can either decide to **wait and see** if it is going to be an at-risk for your company or you can engage your leaders **right now** with some facts to say, "This is what could happen."
- Use some of the stories of those of out there who have been unfortunate enough to live through when **consumers died or got very sick** from eating our products.
- Use those stories to make sure that they don't go to waste and tell your leaders about them so they understand the **connection between culture and the safety of our consumers.**

REFERENCE

- Sam Lewis. 2017. 11 Critical Components Of Improving Food Safety Culture.
<https://www.foodonline.com/doc/critical-components-of-improving-food-safety-culture-0001>