Section 1-5: Training

Training

Improperly trained food workers are a risk to the company. The effective implementation of food safety systems requires that all employees be trained in food safety practices appropriate to their roles in the facility. For example:

- All personnel should be aware of their role and responsibility in protecting food from contamination.

- Frontline food handlers should have the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to handle food hygienically.

- Persons who work with strong cleaning chemicals or other potentially hazardous chemicals should be instructed in safe handling techniques.

This section will focus on the following topics:

- Assessing training needs

- Types of training

- Teaching adult learners

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this section, the learner will be able to:

- list factors to consider when assessing training needs,
- describe the different types of training common in the food industry,
- describe factors to consider when teaching adult learners, and
- discuss appropriate teaching strategies that are effective with adult learners.

Assessing Training Needs

Prior to initiating training activities, it is important to assess the objectives of the training, the audience and its experience, and factors associated with the food operation. With regard to the food operation, factors to consider in assessing the level of training required for staff in the facility should include:

- the nature of the food, in particular its ability to sustain growth of pathogenic or spoilage micro-organisms,

- the manner in which the food is handled and packed, including the probability of contamination,

- the extent and nature of processing or further preparation before final consumption,

- the conditions under which the food will be stored, and

- the expected length of time before consumption.

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Types of Training

Induction Training – Induction training should be undertaken by **all** employees and should be carried out before the employee commences work. This is the best opportunity to provide information on company policies, working conditions, hygiene practices and expectations with regard to personal behavior.

'On the Job' Training - The trainee is placed with an experienced worker to give direct supervision and mentoring about the tasks they need to undertake. It is important to recognise that training is a skill and the person conducting the training should be competent to train and have the commensurate experience.

Face to Face Classroom Internal Training – This type of training will have a specific purpose and should be well organized and structured to meet a company requirement. The qualification and competence of the trainer should be known. It is important to ensure the objectives of the training course are achieved by evaluation of the trainees.

External Training – Where company or individual training requirements cannot be met by internal trainers then consideration should be given to specific external training courses. The course objectives and content should be assessed to ensure the individual's or company's training requirements are met.

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Characteristics of Adult Learners

Adult learners have a wealth of practical experience and tend to have different motivations compared to youth learners. The following are some key factors that a trainer should consider when working with adult learners (from Ota et al. 2006. Training and the Needs of Adult Learners. Journal of Extension, Vol. 44.):

1. The Need to Know – Adults want to know why they need to learn something before undertaking learning. Facilitators must make a case for the value of learning for adults.

2. The Learners' Self Concept – Adult learners need to be seen and treated as capable and self-directed. Facilitators should create environments where adults develop their latent self-directed learning skills.

3. The Role of the Learners' Experiences – Adults come into an educational activity with a wealth of different experiences. Tapping into their experiences through experiential techniques (discussions, simulations, problem-solving activities, or case methods) is beneficial.

4. Readiness to Learn – Adults become ready to learn things they need to know and do in order to cope effectively with real-life situations. Adults want to learn what they can apply in the present, making training focused on the future or that does not relate to their current situations, less effective.

5. Orientation to Learning – Adults are problem-centered in their orientation to learning. They want to learn what will help them perform tasks or deal with problems they confront in everyday situations.

6. Motivation – Adults are responsive to some external motivators (e.g., better job, higher salaries), but the most potent motivators are internal (e.g., desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem).

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Training

Teaching and Learning Strategies for Adult Learners

Teaching and learning strategies for adult learners should focus on experiential techniques that tap into the experience of learners, such as group discussion, problem-solving, case methods, simulation exercises, games, and role-play, instead of primarily using transmittal techniques such as lecture. Using a combination of the following teaching strategies will have the greatest impact (from Ota et al. 2006. Training and the Needs of Adult Learners. Journal of Extension, Vol. 44.):

1. <u>Lecture</u> – Lecture is the method most widely used in teaching adults and is useful for presenting up-to-date information, summarizing material from various sources, adapting material to the interests of a specific group, helping learners by providing orientation and conceptual framework, and focusing on key concepts or ideas. Lectures should be used in 15- to 20-minute sections spaced with active learning activities to reenergize participants for the next wave of information.

2. <u>Problem-Based Learning</u> – Problem-based learning encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Participants confront contextualized problems and strive to find solutions. The trainer is in the role of a facilitator to stimulate, guide, integrate, and summarize discussions. Strategies for problem solving with adults include games, simulations, and role play.

3. <u>Case Studies</u> – Case studies are narratives, situations, data samplings, or statements that present unresolved and provocative issues, situations, or questions. Cases challenge adults to analyze, critique, make judgments, speculate, and express opinions. Case studies bring real-world problems into the training. They ensure active participation and may lead to innovative solutions.

Teaching Adult Learners

Teaching and learning strategies for adult learners (continued):

4.   <u>Educational Games</u> – Educational games involve students in competition or achievement in relationship to a goal. Many games are simulations with the goal of modeling real-life problems or crisis situations. One advantage of games and simulations is they encourage participants to confront their own attitudes and values through involvement in making decisions, solving problems, and reacting to results of their decisions.

5.   <u>Role Play</u> – Role play is used to assist participants in experiencing feelings and practicing skills. Role play is defined as an experience around a specific situation that contains two or more different viewpoints or perspectives. Situations can be written as a prepared brief, and different perspectives or roles are handed out to different people who discuss the situation. The situations should be realistic and relevant. The most successful scenarios develop a skill.

6.   <u>Discussion</u> – Discussion is the prototypic teaching method for active learning. Discussion encourages students to discover solutions and develop critical thinking abilities. Discussion allows learners to be active and experience personal contact. Trainers using discussion pose a problem, monitor discussion, and summarize when completed. Discussion methods are superior to lectures in adult learners' information retention; transfer of knowledge to new situations; problem solving, thinking, or attitude change; and motivation for further learning.

Source: Ota et al. 2006.

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Additional Considerations

Periodic assessments of the effectiveness of training and instruction programs should be made, as well as routine supervision and checks to ensure that procedures are being carried out effectively.

Managers and supervisors of food processes should have the necessary knowledge of food hygiene principles and practices to be able to judge potential risks and take the necessary action to remedy deficiencies.

Training programmes should be routinely reviewed and updated where necessary. Systems should be in place to ensure that food handlers remain aware of all procedures necessary to maintain the safety and suitability of food.

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