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Brexit and the implications of food safety cultural compliance in the food manufacturing sector

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Statement of the Problem: In theory, food safety is a critical measurement, not just for an economic and legal reason but also for the moral integrity of the organization. However, in reality, the number of accidents or incidents particularly in the food manufacturing sector is a serious cause for concern. The problem is further compounded with the onset of Brexit. Given the floundering UK Government's negotiation talks and the pending conservative leadership challenge, it has resulted in a climate of uncertainty, a devaluation of currency and economic instability. Food manufacturers along with other commercial businesses are reluctant to further invest until the economic future is more transparent. In consequence, food manufacturers are seeking efficiency saving, whilst aiming not to compromise food safety compliance. Whilst there are areas of best practice, sadly there is an increasing number of examples in which failure to comply with food safety is resulting in loss of business, severe injury and in certain cases fatalities. This paper addresses Food Safety Cultural Compliance within UK Food Manufactures and identified cores issues that hinder the establishment of a proactive food manufacturing safety culture.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The research study adopts a mixed method approach in which five UK food manufacturers were consulted via a series of consultancy reflections.

Findings: The data collected clearly indicates a commitment to food safety compliance. However, the majority of organizations struggled to maintain consistent levels of food safety compliance despite implementing costly training and development initiatives. Their strategic and operational drive to both enhance and maintain a positive food safety culture was also undermined with the uncertainty of economic pressures and the quagmire of Brexit. The paper concludes with a series of commercially viable recommendations within the context of the Brexit divorce and provides a clear contribution to the community of practice.

Biography

Derek Watson is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He is the Founder of the Business Clinic within Sunderland Business School and leads the University's Doctoral Research Fridays' programme. He has extensive experience in innovation and technology transfer and mapping skills requirements in emerging food sectors. In addition, he has extensive links and networks as a result of sourcing and embedding external engagement opportunities across the curriculum, with an international portfolio of clients and contacts, such as the British Cabinet Office, Indian Government Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Dubai Police, Canon International. His research focuses on academic-industry collaboration. He has been appointed on the editorial board of several International Journals. He is also a visiting Professor at Sias Business School Academy for Open Innovation International University in China and a Senior Research Fellow at Cyprus Centre for Business Research.

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