

2018 GFSI: The Future of Food Safety, Technology, Innovation

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As we move closer to a truly global economy, industry, regulatory and consumer understanding of food safety and public health continues to increase. It is imperative that industry professionals come together to improve processes and share best practices in an effort to improve global public health. As Director of Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance for Testo Solutions USA, I traveled to Tokyo in early March to join the 2018



Opening Session at GFSC 2018

Global Food Safety Initiative/Conference(GFSI/GFSC) to play an active role in the future of food safety by exchanging international ideals and collaborating on industry standards.

The experience enabled me to share food safety ideals from North America and return home with an enhanced global perspective. Below are the top 5 most valuable and thought-provoking ideas from this year's conference:

- 1. The future of food quality and food safety will rely heavily on technology, innovation and data analytics.**

- [Home food delivery](#) is becoming more mainstream, with most major retailers and restaurant chains having some level of involvement. The importance of product temperature control in this process is essential. Instrumentation to support and facilitate the process already exists, but the technology is improving rapidly and will need to continue to improve as demand grows.
- Engineered foods that are resistant to many of today's common food pathogens and spoilage organisms are getting closer to becoming a reality (ex: lab grown beef, corn, etc.). The concept shows tremendous promise to be a viable answer to global food shortages. However, many hurdles still exist when it comes to regulation.

2. “In a world where you can’t hide anything, you better not have anything to hide.”

-Mike Roback, VP of Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Affairs at Cargill

- This is a tremendously powerful statement that illustrates how consistently doing the right thing is a fundamental ingredient that leads to sustainable success. More importantly, it is the right thing to do for customers who put their trust in our industry and depend on our products and services.



Testo's Bastian Eichler giving a Tech Talk at GFSC 2018

3. Examples of technology improving the future of Food Safety:

- The use of crowdsourcing-style data management systems (like IBM's Blockchain) will continue to grow and pose to enable better traceability and vendor management capabilities for food safety and quality professionals.
- Improvement to sensor technology and better [real-time reporting](#) capabilities are being applied throughout food preparation facilities,

production areas and food service locations to drastically improve active managerial control and improve management visibility.

- Increased opportunities to support employee and customer education related to food packaging, handling and hygiene.

4. The importance of listening to and communicating with your customers:

- Social media sources will continue to play an increasing role in consumer spending habits. Brand loyalty is also lower now than any other time in history, which is only expected to continue as younger generations become a larger part of the world's population.
- Non-celebrity social media influencers have a large impact on the consumer market, especially in the food industry.
- If/when an issue (like a product recall) occurs, it is best to be proactive, acknowledge the situation and provide direction on how it will be corrected. This method results in better outcomes than denying the situation, which can often lead to irreparable consumer mistrust.

5. Elevating Food Safety Culture:

- Employee turnover is at an all-time high and is projected to increase, with millennials making up the largest percentage of the workforce.
- A company that develops strategies to counter its own culture is destined for failure. However, a company that can leverage its culture to support strategic business goals will ensure sustainable growth.
- Cultural and behavioral goals should work toward a state of unconscious competence. This is when your employees know their job and company policies so well that they become second nature and do not require thought.