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Paola Cane

Mia Solutions, Italy

Leadership, timeliness, lucidity and responsibility: How to manage a food recall from theory to practice

Food recalls can have very serious aftermath from many points of view: starting from the outbreak consequences on public health, on company's reputation, sell-out, finance, up to putting at risk the survival of the firm itself. From a formal point of view, a product harm crisis presents similarities with other emergency situations: both of them consist in unpredictable events, often due to unknown or undervalued causes, which can significantly alter normal business and compromise the safety of the company, of its employees and customers.

Given the potential damage resulting from a dangerous product crisis, it is surprising that in the food industry alongside mere procedures (often reducible to botched manuals compiled solely because their presence reassures auditors and authorities), there is still little attention to an approach based on a method. Formal corporate procedures (manuals and crisis management plans) are important but can cause a false sense of security and preparedness, if executives do not possess an adequate crisis management culture, which depends, as well as on experience and training, also on the ability to assume the correct behavioural posture, and which involves psychological, organizational and communicational skills that cannot be undervalued. The purpose of this article is to provide a practical approach based on the experience of crisis management (applied in emergency

situations by health professionals, armed forces and civil protection) useful to support food industry during a food recall, in order to avoid the most classic errors that can undermine speed of reaction, corrective measures effectiveness and leadership, in the one most delicate moment for a company life. If it is true the way a firm manages the recall affects its impact, it is necessary to assess the fundamental factors to be observed at such times: timeliness, lucidity, responsibility, leadership.

Speaker Biography

Paola Cane has worked internationally for numerous brands, taking care of regulatory and compliance with EU regulations on food and feed, constantly collaborating as author of numerous specialized magazines and scientific journals. Her experience also includes extensive practice in responding and managing varied hazard and product crises in the food and feed area, providing best practice guidance for recall response plans. Over the course of his career, Paola has spoken at many conferences, including, in the last year: Novi Sad (RS), October 2018, FECH Congress Food and feed research: innovation matters; Bologna (IT), Sana, 30th International Exhibition of Organic and natural products, September 2018; Gijón, Oviedo (ES), September 2018, III Congreso Español de Sociología de la Alimentación; Shanghai (PRC), Pet Food Forum China, August 2018; Torino (IT), Camera di Commercio, May 2018; Torino (IT), Torre Monaci, April 2018 "New sanctionary frame over the food labelling regulation: profiles of supply chain responsibility"; Lucca (IT), April 2018 "Consumptions and regulation of the "free from" foods"; Bologna (IT), 29th International Exhibition of Organic and natural products.

e: info@miasolution.it*Notes:*