

# **The Audit of Organizational Culture Regarding Food Safety / Quality And Food Safety**

**Costel RUSU, Lelia POPP**

Societatea pentru Proiecte Morale Structurate Calitativ  
costel.rusu@srac.ro, lelia.popp@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

When non-conforming products are identified at reception, the regular/ well known measure is to additionally assess the management system, as the most likely method to identify the root causes that lead to supplying non-conforming products. The same logical approach leads to using as referential for this assessment the same standards/verification schemes implemented by the supplier or some structurally comparable referential, ignoring the fact that the supplying of nonconforming products indicates beyond any doubt the failure of the interface implemented by the supplier, known as management system. Thus, at the level of the whole food chain, a considerable number of second-party audits are performed, but they, in fact, have no capability to identify the root causes that lead to supplying non-conforming products, since these audits are outside the considered assessment criteria. The assessments (internal or third party) of the conformity with the standards/verification schemes of quality and food safety management systems promoted by ISO or recognised by GFSI, follow, for each clause (in the case of schemes which require accreditation according to ISO 17065) or for each causal chain of clauses (in the case of schemes which require accreditation according to ISO 17021, ISO 22003) a classical logic assignment as “true” or “false”, that leads to the conclusion regarding the non-conformity or the conformity. But, if the company already supplied a nonconforming product/unsafe product, that fact per se irreversibly proves the failure of the outcomes of classical logic evaluation. In this case, there is no interest to see what is true or false, but what is necessary to do or to avoid doing. This fact requests to apply a fundamental different logic that predominantly considers the human related written aspects or practices (expectations, obligations, interdictions etc.), which allow beyond any doubt the assessment of the capability or the lack of capability of the organization to continue supplying compliant products. Such behavioral assessments - as the basis of the management system, requires an assessment of what is known as organizational culture. Thus, the simple existence of non-conforming or insecure product reception creates, for reasons of effectiveness, the need to change the logic of assessment by replacing the classic second-party audit with the audit of the organizational culture of food safety or food quality and safety. The assessment of the food safety culture has as starting point the equation “Food safety = Behavior”, and the system to be evaluated taking into consideration criteria integrated within both food science and behavioral science is a “food safety management system based on behavior” [F. Yiannas, Food Safety Culture / fig 1.1]. The evaluation criteria switch from management system documentation and food safety plans and programs to the way employees think about food safety and how they actually apply it, as well as from the management reviews presented at a typical evaluation to the way the implication in food safety is reinterpreted by key business indicators, that could cause an unacceptable tolerance to the risk of producing unsafe products for consumption.

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