Social Media and its Role in Effective Food Safety

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Social Media and its Role in Effective Food Safety

- Social Media Background
- SWOT
- Role of Social Media in Food Safety
- Communication
- Risk
- Science & Social Media
- Safefood 360
- IFSQN
- Case Study Example
- Conclusion
What is Social Media?

- Allows people to
  - create, share or exchange information
  - user-generated information
  - virtual communities and networks.

- Changes to communication between
  - Businesses
  - Organizations
  - Communities
  - Individuals

“Social media has been broadly defined to refer to ‘the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships’”
74% of consumers rely on social media to make their purchasing decisions.

Number of consumers that are influenced by their friends' social media posts: 8 in 10.

Number of monthly active users on Facebook: 1.23 billion.
Opportunities with Social Media

- Reputation building, marketing and consumer advocacy
- Providing insight into consumer perceptions
- Identifying advocates and idea starters
- Disseminating warnings and benefits through food safety education
- Tracking and tracing issues more easily
- Spotting or reporting issues sooner across the supply chain
- Communicating issues effectively to consumers & regulatory authorities
Strengths using social media

- Accessible
- Speed
- Huge community
- Participation & interaction
- Escalation of a full-blown food crisis (management / minimise hysteria)
- Drastically reduced response time
- Increase engagement

- The cost of monitoring and reacting can be reduced
- Industry cooperation can be increased
- Recalls are more efficient
- Counter misinformation
- Listen and respond in real time
- Competitive advantage
- Technological possibilities
Weaknesses using social media

- No filter, few barriers
- Low Trust
- Gap between facts and perceptions
- Rapid speed off false information
- Information overload
- Traditional channels used less (i.e., training course, books)
- Security

- No quality control on the information and data
- Incorrect or misleading information
- Possibility of inconsistency
- Continuous investment of human capital and time
- Intellectual property rights, privacy and data protection
The Role of Social Media in Food safety

• Dramatic increase in use of social media

• Used by
  • Consumer
  • Regulatory body
  • Industry
  • Experts
  • Other stakeholders

• Primary use, communication on risk
Communication previously
Communication presently
Methods of Communication in Effective Food Safety
Social Media used in Food Safety
Social Media Statistics and Food Safety

- **Facebook**
  - 100,000 Facebook pages dedicated to food
  - Facebook.com/FoodSafety.gov 135K ‘Likes.’

- **Twitter**
  - nEmesis monitored 4 million tweets from 94,000 users and identified 480 reports of likely food poisoning.
Social Media Statistics and Food Safety

- @USDAFoodSafety 637K Followers
- @FDArecalls 526K Followers
- @FDAfood (4K)
- #Recall → average 1,400 tweets per week
- #FoodSafety → averages 2,500 tweets per week
- #FoodPoisoning → averages 6,000 per week
Risk Assessment, Risk Management, Risk Communication

• Risk Assessment
  • Collect Information to determine status

• Risk Management
  • Decisions to manage it

• Risk Communication
  • How to communicate the risk
Actual Risk Vs Perceived Risk

• This covers the discrepancy between expert vs lay person
• People exaggerate spectacular but rare risks and downplay common risks
• RA may involve quantitative & qualitative (subjective) components
• Subjective judgements, whether by experts or lay people, are a major component in any risk assessment.
• Experts and lay people perceive, judge, prioritise and deal with risks differently.
Challenges - Science Vs Social Media

- Deliberate Process
- Objective
- Dissemination focused
- Slow research based process
- Professional voice
- Correct Information
- Scientific terms
- Content-centric

- Spontaneous Process
- Subjective
- Interaction focused
- Fast anecdotal process
- Personal voice
- Sometimes erroneous Information
- Lay mans language
- User-centric
Bridging the gap

- Good communication practice seeks to bridge the divides between:
  - scientific experts
  - policy makers
  - health practitioners
  - industry marketer
  - Consumers

- Develop trust through direct communication and interaction with the audience.

- Language that is readily understood by the consumer and local food businesses.

- Public Health Agencies are also studying the use of social media to identify potential outbreaks of foodborne illnesses in their jurisdictions of:
  - New York City
  - Chicago
Social Media and Safefood 360

• Demo
Social Media links for Safefood 360

- https://twitter.com/safefood360
- https://www.facebook.com/safefood360
- https://www.youtube.com/user/safefood360
- https://vimeo.com/safefood360
- https://plus.google.com/+Safefood360/about
- https://www.linkedin.com/company/safefood360
• International Food Safety & Quality Management
• Founded in 2003
• **Goal:** ”Provide food safety practitioners with an online platform for sharing knowledge and information and to enable collaboration on the effective implementation, operation and continual improvement of food safety management systems.”
• Weekly complimentary educational webinars.
Stats from IFSQN

- Forums, members, news, articles, events, webinars, blogs, jobs, videos, files, store.
- 1,500 unique visitors every day
- 35,500 members
- 80,000 posts
Case Study on IFSQN

• **Glove Dip Station**

• **Main Points**
  • Question Posed
  • Peer Discussion
  • Good Resources shared
  • Regulatory Documentation
Benefits Vs Disadvantages - IFSQN

Benefits
• Quick response time to very technical questions
• Do not have to engage an expensive consultants to get solutions to these issues
• Issue can be opened up to a large number of people who can correct, refine etc previous contributions

Disadvantages:
• No formal control of the quality of the information being provided
• Need to exercise caution in the use of the information
Conclusion

- Social Media, strongest communication building trust/reaching consumers directly
- Communication approach, enforces many of the key principles of effective risk communication
- Strengths are intrinsically linked to social media and represent a possible source of competitive advantage
- If deployed effectively, make public sector organisations more responsive to the various stakeholders
- Health warning, information and data not always reputable sources or subject to sufficient peer review
- Social media may escalate a food crisis situation and create potentially unwarranted panic and hysteria.
- It is better not to have to learn about the power of social media once a crisis has arisen. Having an understanding of social media’s role in communications and of how your company can use it effectively can help improve your crisis communications efforts.
Thank you!