



### **A guide to managing food safety successfully**

**Q-Pulse: Quality and Compliance Management System**

#### **Executive Summary**

The food industry is a high-competition, low-margin market in which rising costs, exposure to risk and workload exert increasing pressure on manufacturers. In response, businesses have implemented cost-reduction and efficiency measures to minimise costs and maximise efficiency, such as consolidation and downsizing.

Within the food industry, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles are the internationally recognised tools for managing food safety and have been a legal requirement since 2006.

In addition, since the publication of the Pennington Report in the UK in 2009, the requirement to embed HACCP within a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) has received greater enforcement focus.

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Food safety tools such as HACCP ensure that food manufacturers can maintain regulatory compliance as well as satisfy customer demands for quality and safety. Implementing paper-based management systems to maintain and review food safety management systems leads to increasing costs and workload, reducing efficiency and the effectiveness of resources.

As the importance of regulatory compliance increases, food manufacturers are implementing Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) to:

- Manage FSMS maintenance and review
- Enhance resource effectiveness
- Reduce exposure to risk
- Increase system efficiency across all business disciplines, not just food quality and safety

It has never been more urgent to understand and proactively manage business risk at every level of the organisation in order to at least stay in business and to take advantage of opportunities for growth.

Reducing business risk and removing barriers to growth is achieved through internal control systems implemented and working effectively. This improves information reliability, decision making and drives competitive advantage. From a secure footing different strategies can be evaluated, new markets entered and new products brought to market.

Developed by the Food Safety and Quality professionals at Gael, the Q-Pulse solution will:

- Reduce your food safety paperwork costs with a document control system that manages all aspects of change control
- Reduce the risk of audit non-conformance by enabling the demonstration of compliance on demand
- Release key personnel from time-consuming administration and audit activities
- Provide transparency and confidence within the business and including third parties

Food Safety professionals across the globe trust and rely upon Q-Pulse to deliver business improvement and demonstrate compliance on demand.

Companies already achieving compliance and improvement with Q-Pulse include Britvic, Dairy Crest, Greggs PLC, HJ Heinz, Kate's Cakes and the enforcement division of the UK Food Standards Agency.



## Managing food safety

The global food industry is currently experiencing an unprecedented level of scrutiny as a result of changing legislation and the increasing importance of food specific quality assurance standards such as AFS, BRC and AIB.

Within the UK food industry, legislation such as the Food Safety Act 1990 states that businesses must identify any stage critical to food safety, to ensure that adequate safety procedures can be implemented, maintained and reviewed. Failure to comply with this legislation can incur an unlimited fine and/or up to 2 years' imprisonment.

In addition, the Food Hygiene Regulations came into force in the UK in 2006 and critically demand that all food businesses have in place a written food safety management system based on HACCP principles, with appropriate records.

With the introduction of similar legislation in North America and other parts of the world, members of the global food industry are now legally required to demonstrate to customers and regulators that they have a defined food safety management system, which has been independently appraised and audited.

Within the global food industry, the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system has become the internationally recognised methodology for managing food safety, as well as a key component of food industry standards such as AFS, BRC and AIB. In addition, regulators such as the UK's Food Standards Agency and Ireland's Food Safety Authority enforce the implementation of HACCP as the most effective method by which food businesses can safeguard consumers.

Amongst its 7 core principles, in implementing a HACCP system, manufacturers must establish:

- Procedures to monitor the Critical Control Points (CCP)
- Corrective actions to be taken if a CCP is not under control
- Documents and records to demonstrate the effective application of the above measures
- Procedures to verify whether the above procedures are working effectively

However, traditional food safety management systems are often very resource-intensive, requiring a great deal of time and effort to ensure that they are maintained effectively.

The harsh reality of food safety management is often:

- Management time wasted on compliance audits
- Management frustration
- Decision-making process hindered
  
- Unable to demonstrate compliance on demand and at point of need
- Frantic information collation both before and during the audit
- Loss of credibility in front of customers and/or auditors
  
- Documented processes not adhered to
- Increased waste/non-conforming product
- Loss of production time due to process failures
  
- Non-conformances not closed on time
- Business issues remain unresolved
- Increased food safety risks
- Loss of accreditation, BRC etc.

Q-Pulse is probably the closest to a one-stop solution that any business large or small could buy into for total quality and compliance management.

I've been really impressed with the speed with which we were able to configure Q-Pulse to meet our needs, from new product development critical paths to document control.

**Dr Josephine Head,  
Director, Head Consultancy**

With no alternative but to comply with Food Safety legislation, do your compliance activities always need to be so complex, time-consuming and frustrating?

## The Q-Pulse Integrated Management Framework

Based on the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT cycle, the Q-Pulse Integrated Management Framework comprises 7 simple steps:

### 1. Define and document

*Define and document the scope of your system, policies and procedures, all with appropriate Document Control.*

By automating the document control process, your business can secure greater buy-in from management and staff to radically reduce approval cycle times, and ensure that all compliance-related documents and records can be accurate, reliable and continuously updated.

And together with secure, centralised access to the policies and procedures that support your Food Safety Management System, your business can ensure that all management and staff can be aware of and acknowledge their responsibilities in complying with multiple legal and regulatory requirements.

### 2. Publish and distribute

*Publish and distribute your management system to all appropriate personnel, via secure web access, including supply chain.*

By extending its Food Safety Management System to stakeholders and participants throughout the enterprise, your business can ensure management and staff understand their role in maintaining legal and regulatory compliance and in actively participating in controlling and minimising risk.

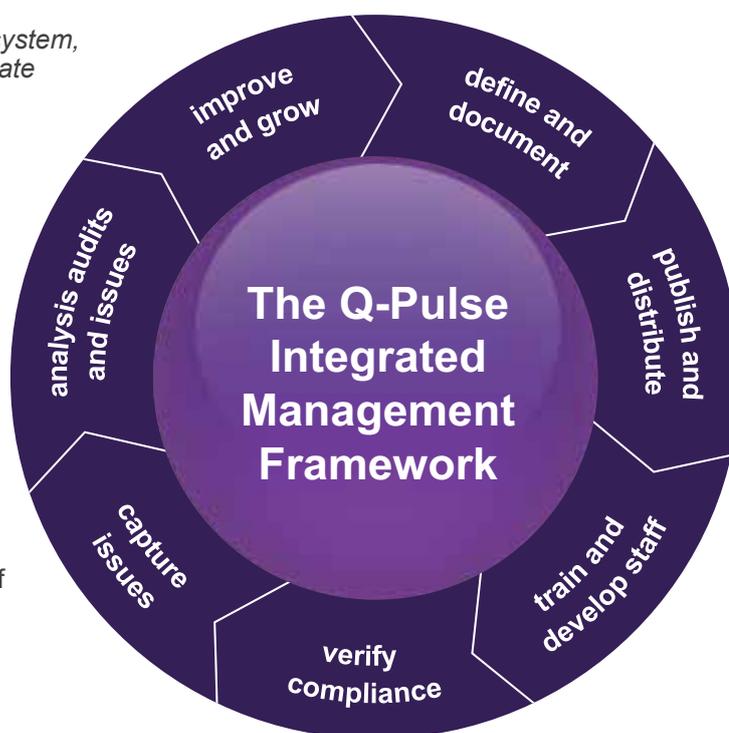
And by automatically notifying management and staff of overdue or upcoming compliance actions, your business can significantly increase the visibility and control of its FSMS and achieve greater ownership and transparency of compliance-related information.

### 3. Train and develop staff

*Create a framework to demonstrate staff competence and capability and therefore train and develop staff.*

By reviewing training needs against policy requirements and person specifications, your business can make sure that all staff have the relevant expertise and experience in order to contribute to its understanding of its operations, and to actively participate in controlling and minimising risk.

And with the ability to automatically identify all staff impacted by changes to compliance-related documents, you can schedule relevant procedure-based training, to develop and encourage adherence to best practice that is consistent with your existing business culture.



#### **4. Verify compliance**

*Verify compliance of your policies and procedures through regular internal audit and prove/demonstrate adherence to legislation.*

By integrating all audit programmes within a streamlined, standardised framework, your business can track and continuously monitor all compliance-related information across the enterprise to reduce audit cycle times and to dramatically drive down compliance costs.

And by centrally managing all external, internal and third-party audits, you can measure ongoing compliance-related performance to deliver assurance over the business' key risks and demonstrate legal and regulatory compliance to customers, regulatory authorities and certification bodies.

#### **5. Capture issues, NCs and complaints**

*Capture issues, NCs and complaints, create action plans and track through to completion all within one single, integrated system.*

By extending its reporting system to all levels and to all areas, your business can ensure that all management and staff can report compliance-related issues, non-conformances and complaints through a standardised framework that improves subsequent investigation and analysis.

And by centrally managing all corrective action plans, you can automatically notify all management and staff of upcoming and overdue compliance-related actions in order to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements, to accelerate time to completion and prevent recurrence.

#### **6. Analyse audits and issues**

*Analyse audits and issues, incidents, occurrences and audit findings and determine the root cause with detailed graphical analysis.*

By analysing all compliance-related information across the organisation, your business can identify root causes and trends to ensure that compliance-related policies and procedures meet and exceed legal and regulatory requirements through regular internal and external evaluation.

And by learning from issues, non-conformances and complaints at all levels and in all areas, your business can identify opportunities to improve its compliance systems in order to contribute to the continuous improvement of compliance, to control and minimise key risks and to create greater business value.

#### **7. Improve and grow**

*Improve and grow by identifying trends and concerns, highlighting costly repeat issues and implementing improvement projects.*

By improving the visibility and control of its compliance-related information and systems, your business can encourage all management and staff to contribute to a shared understanding of its operations, in order to reduce business risk and take advantage of growth opportunities.

And by putting a foundation in place for stability and growth, your business can build a corporate culture that encourages adherence to internationally-recognised best practice, and which contributes significantly to the continual improvement of legal and regulatory compliance throughout the

organisation.

## How can we help you?

Developed by the Food Safety and Quality professionals at Gael, the Q-Pulse solution will:

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Food Safety professionals across the globe trust and rely upon Q-Pulse to deliver business improvement and demonstrate compliance on demand. Companies already achieving compliance and improvement with Q-Pulse include Britvic, Dairy Crest, Greggs PLC, HJ Heinz, Kate's Cakes and the enforcement division of the UK Food Standards Agency.

With more than 20 years' experience and a customer base of more than 2500 organisations, Gael provide solutions that enable compliance management professionals to enhance business efficiency and effectiveness and streamline system processes.

Working closely with customers within the Food & Drink sector, Gael have used their extensive experience to develop an integrated food safety management system (FSMS) using their Q-Pulse solution.

Gael's experience in delivering integrated management solutions and their expertise with food safety management systems can significantly reduce your compliance costs, enhance your system's effectiveness and deliver the ability to demonstrate **quality and compliance on demand**.

## A guide to managing food safety successfully

Contact us now on +44 1355 593 400 or at [foodsafety@gaelquality.com](mailto:foodsafety@gaelquality.com) to discuss how our compliance management solutions can add significant value to your regulatory compliance efforts.



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