

FOOD SAFETY TRAINING IS HUGE FOR GIANTS SNACKS

ABOUT GIANT SNACKS INC. Family-owned and -operated for nearly two decades, Giants Snacks is headquartered near the edge of Wahpeton, North Dakota. Their products, sold through multiple channels such as mail order, retail stores, and MLB (major league baseball) outlets, include various flavors of roasted sunflower seeds, pistachios, cashews, pumpkin seeds, and toasted corn. Prioritizing customer-service and “the best of the best quality,” Giants works directly with hometown farmers in the selection of sunflower seeds. Giant Snacks has launched many deals with major baseball league teams such as the Colorado Rockies, Texas Rangers, Minnesota Twins, and the San Francisco Giants. With unique seed flavors like dill pickle, bacon ranch, and kettle roast, Giants Snacks focuses on bringing flavor to the next level.

THE CHALLENGE. The Preventive Controls for Human Food regulation is a law enacted to ensure safe preparation of food products for human consumption in the US in order to prevent food borne illnesses. This requires that food production facilities have a Preventive Controls Qualified Individual (PCQI) prepare their Food Safety Plan. A company that does not have a PCQI prepared food safety plan is at risk of being shut down and losing customers. Compliance dates varied depending on the size of the operation. For example, large companies with more than 500 employees were due in 2017. Very small businesses were defined by their sales thresholds; but most compliance dates were in 2018. As a company dedicated to producing the highest quality snack foods in safe manner, Giants followed the established regulations.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Giants attended a three-day PCQI training provided by Impact Dakota. Topics covered were: how to develop a Food Safety Plan; how to conduct a hazard analysis; determining preventive controls (process, allergen, sanitation, supply-chain, or other); setting and monitoring critical limits (parameters, values); implementing corrective actions or corrections; validation and verification procedures; and record-keeping requirements. The training establishes information about the Preventive Controls for Human Food Regulation, which requires that certain activities in the company's production facility need to be completed by a PCQI, and attendees become certified PCQI registered with the FDA. Giants is a company with goals of expanding markets and product variety and this training has been instrumental in not only meeting regulatory requirements but also in enhancing its plans for integrating the required food safety plans. The company believes that the PCQI certificates received can further its market giving consumers the assurance that they are enjoying a top notch product produced in a company with a culture of food safety.

"Impact Dakota has been a helpful resource for different trainings and technical assistance, some of which we have benefited from. I would recommend that other companies use Impact Dakota resources to explore improvement opportunities."

-Lucy Spiekermeier, General Manager

RESULTS



10% cost savings through voiding mishandling raw materials, packaging & stored foods



Meeting requirements to have a PCQI on staff resulted in **100%** retained sales



Training provides customer assurance of safe products.



10% increase in sales due to entering new markets

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