

Anat Bakery: A Food Safety Success Story:

Employee hand hygiene has long been dismissed by many senior managers in food processing as a “no-win” exercise. Regardless of how much time and effort is invested in equipment, chemicals and training, improved employee performance is seldom sustained. “We keep telling employees to wash their hands but they just don’t listen” is the oft heard response of management. The Baker recently talked with Erez Malamud of Anat Bakery about his company’s focus on food safety and his experiences with hand hygiene. Here is the Anat story.

Like most food processing operators ANAT BAKERY is focused on providing customers with quality products that are 100% safe for consumption. Their facilities are well equipped and they pride themselves on their safe food handling practices. When it came to employee personal hygiene ANAT had diligently followed the advice of suppliers in the selection of equipment, chemicals and employee training programs. They had invested in good hand wash stations, installed them at various points around the bakery and were persistent in insisting employees wash their hands. While it all looked good on paper, Erez was not happy. He could see that employees were not washing as often or as well as they should. “They just don’t seem to understand the risk for food contamination caused by poor hand washing” said Erez. The safety of ANAT products were potentially at risk and Erez was becoming increasingly frustrated

Fortunately, he was scheduled to attend a food safety conference run by SAFSIS and at the conference he attended a presentation by Gemma Clarke, a Hand Hygiene Specialist with the Handwashingforlife® Institute. According to Erez the presentation was the right message at the right time: “Handwashingforlife’s approach makes employee hand hygiene both simple to understand and easy to implement. Their 5 step process seemed both logical and affordable.”

A week later Erez invested an hour of his time to walk through the ANAT facility with a Handwashingforlife® Specialist. During her assessment, Gemma pointed out that his hand wash sinks were located in the wrong place, that the type of sink he had did not actually encourage hand washing, that the water flow was insufficient and that the supplies being used did not allow for an effective hand wash. Her assessment included a written report on the problems and a step by step recommendation on how to improve the hand wash stations cost effectively. And most importantly for Erez, the cost of the entire assessment was provide at “no charge” courtesy of Kimberly-Clark Professional, the paper towel supplier for ANAT and a member of the Handwashing Leadership Forum.



Figure 2: A wash up sink does not encourage good hand hygiene



Figure 1: New improved hand wash station and wash up sink

Erez reviewed the recommendations and in the space of three weeks got the ANAT bakery into shape. He replaced sinks, installed better taps, sourced better quality soap, and upgraded to a more hands free paper towel dispenser. He also tackled his employee toilets removing the bars of soap and installing better hand wash stations in each bathroom. These actions helped to ensure a clear and consistent message was being sent to employees about the importance of personal hygiene: ***“Poor hand hygiene after using the bathroom is the most likely route of transmission of bacteria to food products”.***

It took ANAT bakery just three weeks to get the conditions for success in place. Sustainable training results can only be achieved when the facility is properly equipped for success. Erez knew his facility and his employees were ready for training. Again he called on Handwashingforlife® to assist with the training programme. The employees were trained on site, for an hour before their shift started. The training utilized three important principles:

1. It visualized the problem of bacteria and its route of transmission
2. It personalized the problem with the use of UV lotion and UV lights, and
3. It internalized the message when every employee was scored using the Pro-grade system to understand where they needed to focus as an individual when washing their hands.



Figure 3: Language free music training video combined with individual UV lotion exercise

The training was fun, fully interactive and had all the employees keen to see which group was going to win the prize of best hand washing team. Erez said that the thing that impressed him most was how the training visualized the existence of bacteria and demonstrated the path of bacterial cross contamination. ***“The training visualized the problem without the need for language-amazing!”*** He was also very impressed by the competitive energy created by the team training approach commenting: ***“I have never seen my employees so enthusiastic***

after a training program”.

Erez also commented that hand washing is more than just a business skill; it is a life skill that he hopes will be taken home to families and shared so they also understand why, when and how you should wash your hands. Anat is looking forward to the return of Handwashingforlife® in six weeks time when they will do another interactive refresher session with his employees. Gemma underscored the importance of a follow up programme within 3-4 months of the initial training. “Our research has shown that after six weeks non compliance will start to creep back, but a refresher session works wonders to achieve sustainable adherence to effective hand washing”.

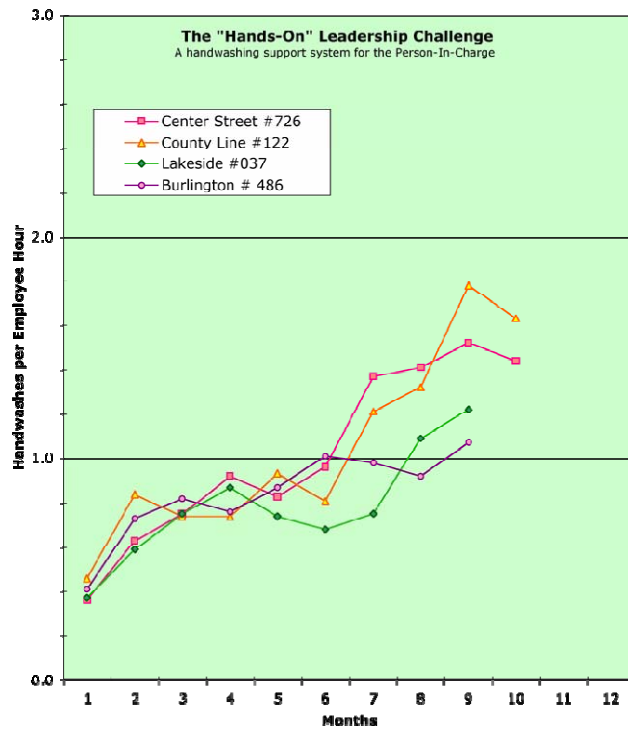


Figure 4: Documented success for Handwashingforlife® Team Rally ®