

# A return to common sense

New food hygiene regulations come into force on January 1, 2006. But they're easy to comply with, says Nicola Baylis ABII, senior food safety trainer with training and services provider Comply!



The key change is the requirement for a documented HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control points) based food safety management system. HACCP contains the following seven principles that you must consider:

1. Identifying the hazards to food safety
2. Identifying the critical control points
3. Establishing critical limits
4. Establishing monitoring procedures
5. Establishing corrective actions
6. Verifying that measures are working effectively
7. Establishing documents and records which are commensurate with the nature and size of the business

This means you must write down the steps you take to ensure all food prepared and served is safe to eat.

It sounds complicated but if you're a small business don't panic. The new legislation recognises that the majority of catering businesses are small or micro-sized operations with a handful of staff and a manager or owner with direct day-to-day involvement. This recognition has led to an amount of flexibility for small food businesses who would find a full HACCP system difficult to implement.

On a practical level this mean an end to probing

every chicken to check it has reached 75 deg<sup>C</sup> as long as you visually check it is correctly cooked as part of your safe systems and procedures. Common sense and cooking skills are back on the menu at last!

There is more good news regarding record-keeping. According to the new legislation, record-keeping 'needs to be flexible in order to avoid undue burden for very small businesses'.

The definition of a 'very small business' is not clear but in guidance for Local Authorities the Food Standards Agency (FSA) suggests the requirement for record-keeping will depend on the size and type of business – only time will tell how this is interpreted but it does show a good deal more flexibility in approach which can only be a good thing.

With fewer paper records to complete, and less time spent probing everything, you should have more time to focus on what is important to your customers – well-cooked, attractively presented, safe and hygienic food.

To help businesses comply with the new regulations the FSA has produced a new food safety management system called 'Safer Food Better Business'(Sfbb). Implementing this will ensure you are fully compliant with the new law without the need to do too much development work yourself. The pack is easy to follow, well presented and FREE. It can be adapted or enhanced to meet the needs of your food business either by yourself or with outside help if required.

Using a food safety management system such as Sfbb will demonstrate that you take food safety very seriously and businesses can expect less frequent inspections from EHO's. By contrast, poorly managed businesses will suffer frequent inspections, harsh penalties for infringement and 'blacklisting' on the Local Authority website – but more about that in a future issue.

**More information on**  
[www.complytraining.com](http://www.complytraining.com) or **01789 488000**  
**Food Standards Agency – [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)**

**Get the free Safer Food, Better Business pack from the Food Standards Agency. It's simple to use.**



## ON LEADERSHIP

**What business can learn from Lord Nelson, by Sir John Harvey-Jones, acclaimed industrialist and TV's 'Troubleshooter'**

I don't pretend Nelson was a nice man, and his personal life was a mess. But as a leader capable of inspiring trust and loyalty, he was unsurpassed.

Nelson was the founder of participative, consensual management: he realised that no leader can achieve his ends unless he can show those under him that he has the ability to listen – and has faith in their ability to do the job.

A past master of delegation, Nelson taught that the leader must provide the framework in terms of strategy and getting people to buy into the same ideal, but he must also 'give away' the leadership (in other words, delegate) when going into battle. Endlessly detailed command is enormously expensive and ineffective because it switches people off.

The art of leadership has become badly devalued: precious few bosses show a proper willingness to trust their people to do the job.

It takes a lot of courage and skill to create the condition where you may delegate properly, but loyalty is not something you can command. If you don't give it, there's no way you'll get it back.

- For professional support in being a great leader and a success in all other areas of your profession look at the 13 modules in the BII's Profitable Business Portfolio (PBP), which offers one day courses covering everything you need including **Motivating Your Staff.**

**The PBP is excellent for licensees, BDMs, key staff and key players in the industry.**  
**Weblink: [www.biiab.org](http://www.biiab.org) or email**

# I've become more professional

More and more BDMs and licencees experience greater success after gaining higher skills from taking the Profitable Business Portfolio (PBP). Tim Palmer ABII reports



**K**errie Cockerill is a young woman who's going to go places. This 24-year old is deputy manager at the Black Bottom Club in Northampton, a venue owned by the Richardsons Group, which lists clubs, restaurants and even a hairdressing salon among its interests.

Kerrie has joined the increasing number of licensees, BDMS and key staff of all ages and of all types of retail outlet who take either three or seven modules of the Profitable Business Portfolio (PBP) which give them the Certificate in Licensed Retailing or the Diploma in Licensed Retailing. These prestige symbols of professionalism are nationally acknowledged to bring immediate results to licensed retail businesses.

Kerrie says the Motivating Your Team unit of the PBP had a significant impact on the business especially helping her identify the mix of 'performers' within the club's team.

"You identify three types of 'stars' – superstars, which account for around 10-30% of the team; middle stars who generally form about 50-70% and finally 'falling stars' which represent 10-20%," says Kerrie.

"I learned that while coaching staff who are already performing well may seem unnecessary and easy to overlook, it is a really powerful tool to further improve their performance and motivation."

Kerrie says two of the Black Bottom staff in particular have benefited. Paul Jones ran one bar at the club and is now managing another Richardsons unit while Sam Charlton has been promoted from barstaff to supervisor with management responsibilities. "Basically, this PBP module taught me to be more analytical and motivational in managing people and to be aware of how people can be encouraged to work much more effectively.

"Paul was always ambitious but Sam is a quieter person and I think I tended to take him a bit for granted," says Kerrie. "I knew he was great behind the bar but I saw there was more to him than that and he's now doing brilliantly and will move up through the business."

Other motivators include:

- **Man of the match award** – a bottle of Champagne is presented every Saturday and is based on the week's overall performance, not just sales. "I notice who's been really switched-on, for example, making sure a woman wandering around on her own is ok or noticing anything going on that shouldn't be happening."
- **Bar wars** – there are four bars at the club and Kerrie and

manager Alex Black decide at the end of Saturday night which has performed the best based on sales and how they've performed as a team. "The winners get a bottle of spirits of their choice," says Kerrie. "It's surprisingly motivational."

## Profit & Loss

Kerrie admits she struggled initially with the P&L module. "Head office looks after that side of things and we get a neat package and say 'hey we did well this week' or 'that wasn't our best week' but now I've got a real grasp of where all the figures come from.

"For example, instead of looking at the wage percentage at the end of each month we monitor it regularly every few days and are controlling it a lot better," says Kerrie. "It's now running at 27% which reflects the fact that the club provides table service but Kerrie says it had been running at a 'ridiculous' 35% at one stage and the trend is definitely downwards.

"You definitely have to be open minded with this module and as I was effectively starting from scratch I went in with the attitude 'right, I'm here, teach me' and the trainers were totally brilliant and have de-mystified it for me. They could see who was struggling with certain things and wouldn't let us leave until we thoroughly understood it."

## Taking radical decisions

Learning how to interpret sales mix information led to some stark decisions such as discontinuing Bacardi Breezers. "These have obviously been huge sellers in the past but as a percentage of overall wet sales they were in decline and had to go. We're currently keeping an eye on Smirnoff Ice which is also dropping as a percentage," says Kerrie.

On the other hand deciding to swap Michelob for Corona was an

## Main benefits

- Great leadership and high staff motivation
- Tighter cost control results in higher sales yet lower costs
- Better customer service increases sales
- Great back bar merchandising boosts high GP product sales

inspired decision with the bottled beer now out-selling Bud and Kerrie says: "Before taking the P&L module I would have noticed sales either declining or rising but not had the hard information to make a decision about whether to continue selling a particular product or not."

The wet GP is up by 1.1 percentage points and reflects both a tightening of margins by Kerrie and Alex as a result of better controls. "We offer premium products in a great environment with great service," says Kerrie. "We offer a wide choice, for example, we have a great range of flavoured vodkas. We're largely catering for (though not exclusively) the 25-35 age group and our offer including entertainment reflects this. Members pay £120 per year and are allowed to bring guests in on a 'parent-child' basis which basically polices itself."

Kerrie has an English and Marketing degree from the University of Northampton but the Marketing module 'reignited the spark' and she now actively assists Richardsons' marketing

manager Melanie Wills especially in producing posters, mail-outs and the fortnightly event listing emails that are sent to members.

Kerrie also relays staff and customer ideas to head office, one of which recently led to a ban on sportswear in the club. "The door staff had been saying for a time they thought we should do this as it was associated with poor behaviour. Then some of our members mentioned it, so it became policy which we advertised on posters and by email. It has made for a better atmosphere in the club."

Through SWOT analysis Kerrie is also aware of the club's strong points such as table service which few other Northampton outlets provide. "I'm going to be pretty ruthless about this and if I see a competitor doing something we could use I will also use it." To further differentiate the club from the competition, free nibbles such as frozen grapes in martini glasses are put on the bar between 5-8pm on Fridays.

**Richardsons' PBP training was carried out by Arrochar Associates 01869 343640**

On her way to achieving the BIAB Diploma in Licensed Retailing, Kerrie has taken three other PBP modules:

- **Effective Merchandising and Selling** – Kerrie used information from this module to ensure bar staff learned techniques to maximise sales from back bar and fridge displays with high GP products prominently displayed in 'hot spots'
- **Training Design & Delivery** – "This emphasised to me that people react to training differently – some need to be shown things, others just told how to do it while some need to write things down. We now train everybody in every way so we cover all bases. It's very effective."
- **Customer Service Procedures** – "We're very customer-focused, but there's always room for improvement. Since taking this module the managers in all our businesses walk the 'Customer Service Journey' just before opening every day. We basically see what our customers are about to see, so is the lighting right, the music, are we welcoming enough, is everything clean? Doing this means nothing is left to chance."

**Jake Richardson, the Richardsons Group md, says: "Training is a very important part of our investment within the Group. It builds both individual competence and confidence and the BI's Profitable Business Portfolio is a significant part of that."**

## Entrepreneurial spirit

### Are you made of the right stuff?

Well, you're obviously better than most because a: you're a member of the BI, an acclaimed professional organisation that supports successful and responsible business and b: you're reading a magazine devoted to sharing great business ideas.

The questionnaire below identifies the behaviours and attitudes that you believe are more important when starting and growing a business.

Each question consists of a pair of statements. From each pair you must select the behaviour or attitude which you believe is the most important in the context of starting and growing a business.

You may feel that both items in a pair are important, but what the questionnaire requires is that you identify the one which you believe is relatively more important.

### Which do you believe is more important?

- A.** Being willing to work long hours and all weekend
- B.** Getting some qualifications before starting up your own business

### Which do you believe is more important?

- A.** Seeing work as an enjoyable experience
- B.** Knowing each week how your cash flow is for the next six weeks

### Which do you believe is more important?

- A.** Sticking to decisions, not changing them the next day
- B.** Being willing to sacrifice family life to move the business forward

### Which do you believe is more important?

- A.** Starting your business only when you have a clear business strategy
- B.** Spending money to make money

### Which do you believe is more important?

- A.** Believing that luck plays little part in business success
- B.** Never taking on more than you can cope with

### Take one point for each of the following choices.

1a, 2a, 3b, 4b, 5a

With a score of 4 or 5 you may well be on the way to being an entrepreneur. To take the full assessment go to [www.humanfactors.co.uk/PEP](http://www.humanfactors.co.uk/PEP)