

# Food Safety Culture and Color-Coding

How to exceed compliance  
and simplify complexity

The webinar will begin shortly.  
Thank you for your attendance!



**Remco**  
a Vikan company



# Food Safety Culture and Color-Coding

How to exceed compliance and simplify complexity

**Lone Jespersen - Cultivate SA**

Principal and Founder

**Amit M. Kheradia - Remco**

Environmental Health and Sanitation Manager,  
REHS/RS



**Remco**  
a Vikan company



# Webinar Housekeeping

- ❑ The presentation will last about 40 minutes.
- ❑ After the presentation, there will be an approximate 20-minute Q&A session. You are invited to send your questions via the Q&A box provided.
- ❑ We will reach out after the webinar to answer any questions we do not address during the session.
- ❑ This webinar is being recorded, and we will send you the recording a few days after the live event.

The Zoom logo is displayed in a bold, blue, lowercase sans-serif font.

# About our presenters



Lone Jespersen  
Principal and Founder  
Cultivate SA



Amit M. Kheradia  
Environmental Health and Sanitation  
Manager, REHS/RS  
Remco

# About Vikan and Remco



Leading provider of advanced hygiene and cleaning products and solutions for key sectors, with a global presence in over 90 countries.



Supplies color-coded sanitation and material handling tools for the food industry in North America.

Remco is Vikan's dedicated presence in North America (U.S. and Canada).

For more information, visit us at:

- <https://remcoproducts.com/us/about-remco/who-we-are>
- <https://www.vikan.com/int/about-vikan/who-we-are>





# Food Safety Culture and Color-Coding: How to exceed compliance and simplify complexity

Dr. Lone Jespersen, Cultivate SA



**Eradicate foodborne  
illness. One culture at  
a time.**

---

We are Cultivate SA



# For today's discussion

01

Why change?

02

Do you know if you have a thriving or surviving food safety culture? Take the test.

03

Three ways to create change while reducing complexity.





# Thriving or Surviving Food Safety Culture?

What is needed to get the culture change process moving?

The simple answer is *a lot*.

We are dealing with human nature and the modern organization.

Human nature easily perceives new actions as a threat to one's comfortable relationships with the boss, status with peers, and ability to meet job objectives (list is long). We are sent into a 'fight-or-flight' mode to shut change down.

Modern organizations are built for smooth operations, stability, reliability, and efficiency, all of which resist nontrivial new behaviours.



# Get the change process going and sustain your efforts



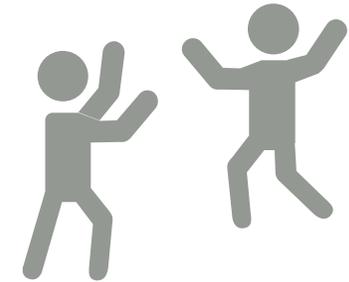
## Critical

Top leadership and  
critical business risks



## Guide

Diverse guiding  
coalition



## Rhythm

Consistently nudge  
and recognize



# Thriving or Surviving. Which one are you?

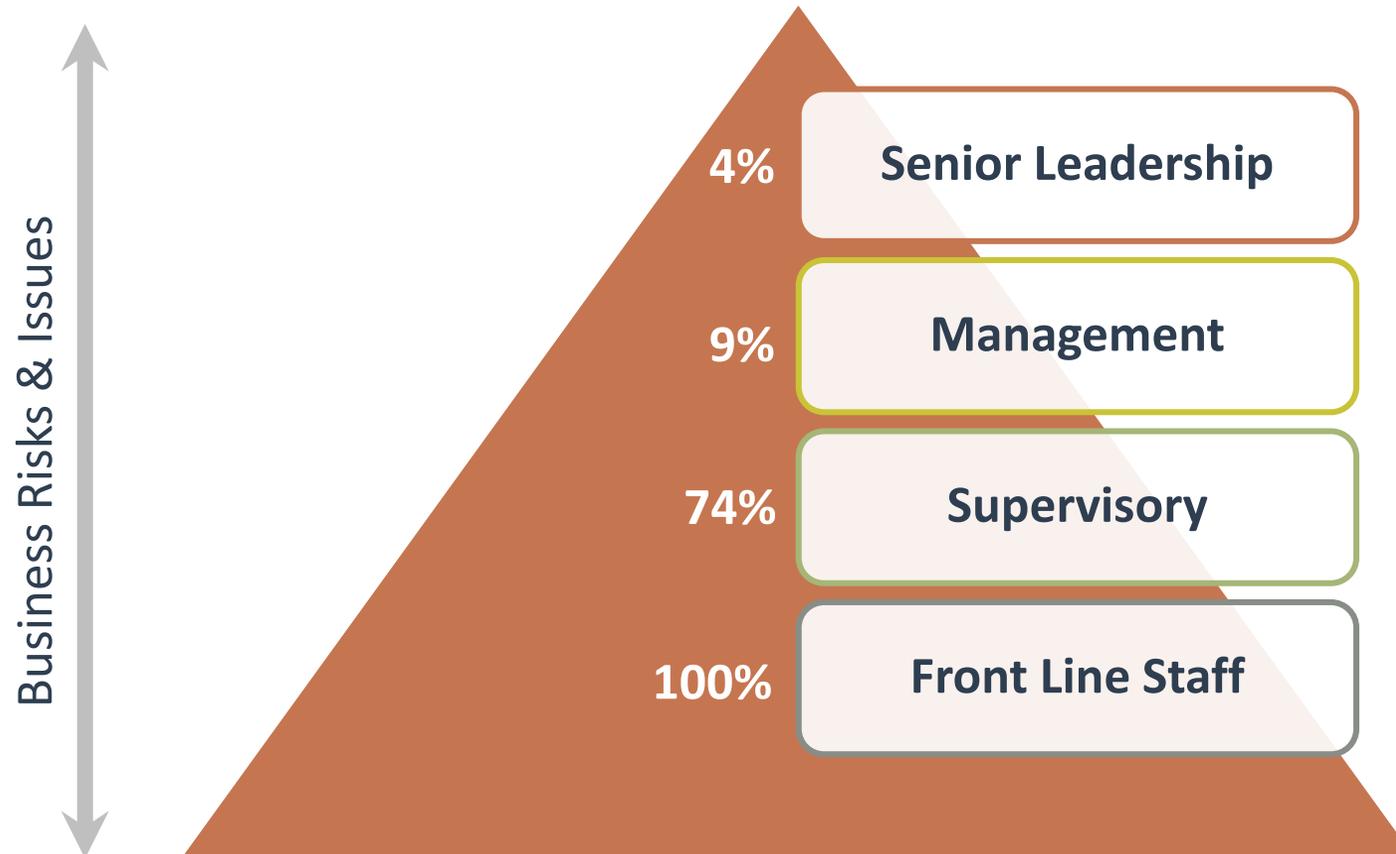
	YES	NO
Do the top 10 most senior leaders in your business understand your food safety risks and their role in the analysis of these?		
Do you have a guiding coalition for your food safety culture effort and does this coalition consist of cross-functional — and level members?		
Do you have an ongoing rhythm for communication and recognition across all members of the organization?		

Do the top 10 most senior leaders in your business understand your food safety risks and their role in the analysis of these?





# Organizational culture and risk visibility

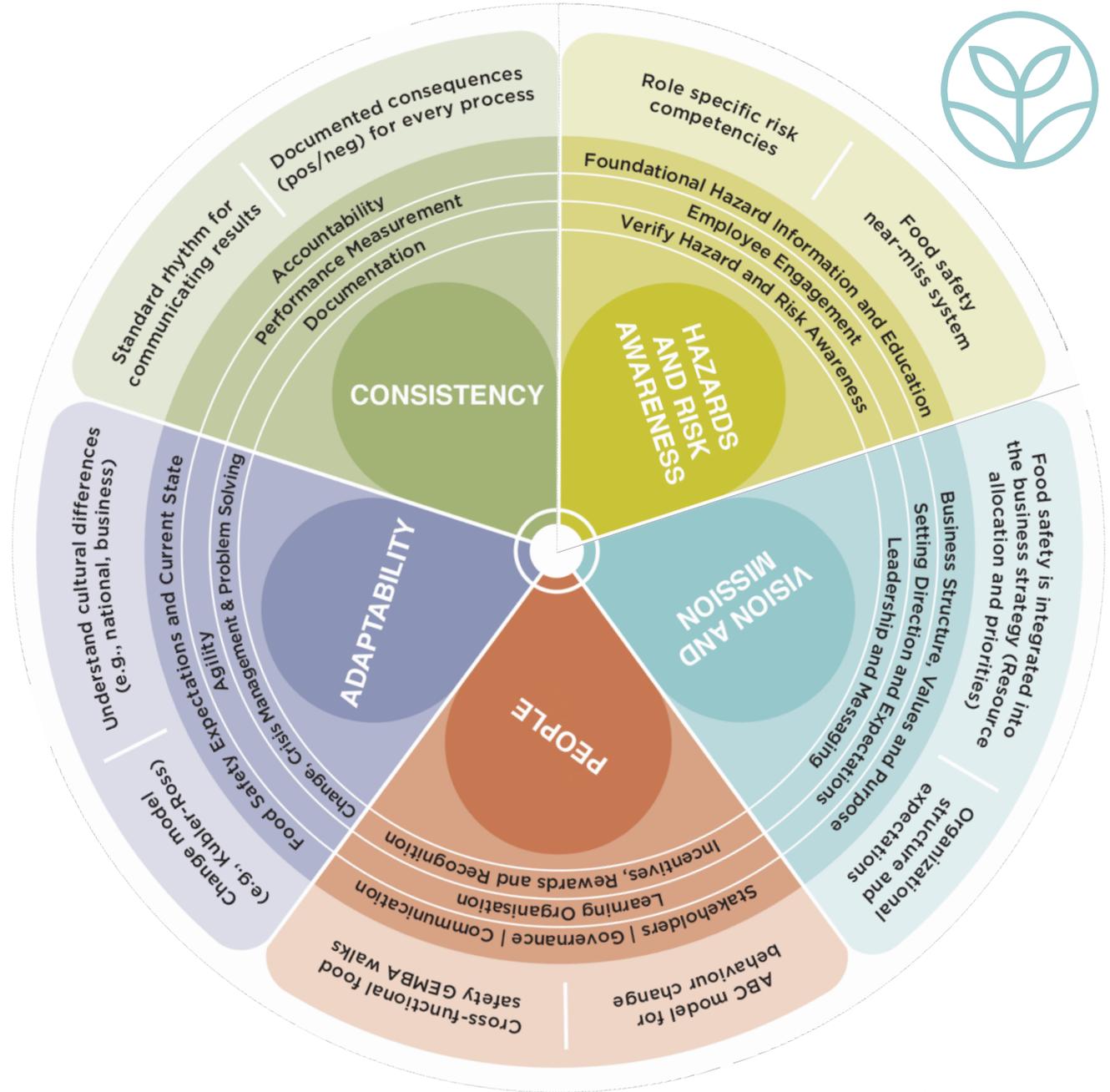




# Culture dimensions



# Hazards and risk awareness dimension





# Maturing risk and hazard awareness

## Stage 1

The organization relies mostly on external sources and inspections to understand and act on its risks and doesn't identify risks internally.

## Stage 2

Actions to manage risks are mostly taken in response to external audits or inspections and internal identification is sometimes incorrect.

## Stage 3

Risks are understood and continually challenged by a cross-functional team through planned risk management.

## Stage 4

Understanding and reducing risks are an integral part of the organization's continuous improvement efforts.

## Stage 5

The organization relies on frontline teams to manage existing risks and to identify new ones through peer observations.





Do you have a guiding coalition for your food safety culture effort and does this coalition consist of cross-functional — and level members?



# The Food Safety Guiding Coalition

## Why?

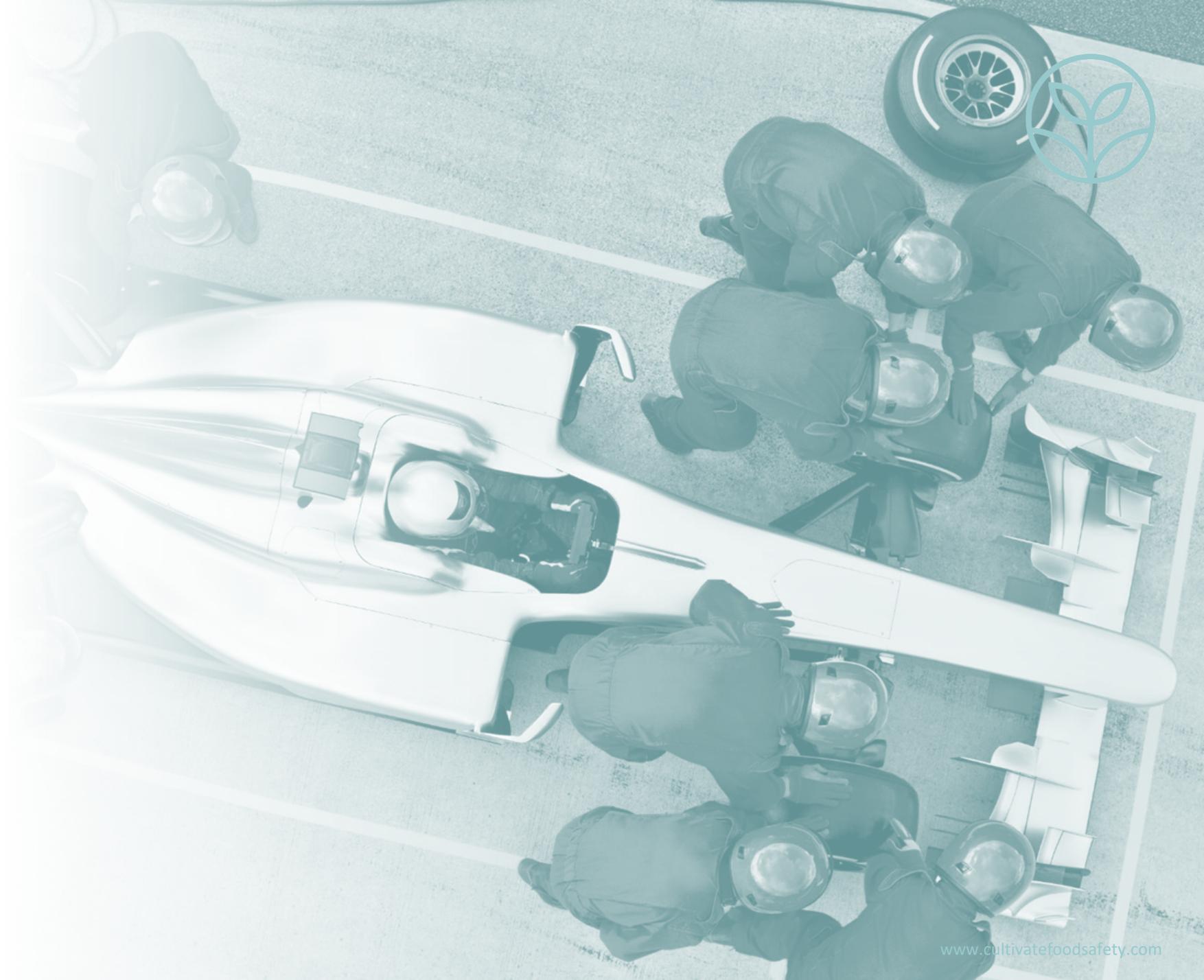
- Change is about creating a new system, and this demands leaders and managers.
- Leaders must be able to answer the questions, why change? What is the platform for change? E.g., “Business as usual is completely unacceptable.”
- Managers must be able to answer the questions, how do we get this done? E.g., “What is my role? And will my current role be impacted?”

## What?

- Critical mass in the guiding coalition is crucial. If not, then there is a high likelihood of failure.
- Come together to share commitment to change.
- Powerful in form of titles, info, experience, reputation, and relationships.
- 3–5 in small company and 20–50 in larger company before progress into communicating the relevance can begin.
- Senior leaders always form the core, maybe a board member, a key customer rep, and a union leader.

# Food Safety Culture is a team sport

- Don't look for the hero
- Find the glamour in teamwork
- Discipline and details



Do you have a process for communication and recognition across all members of the organization?



# Rhythm and nudging



## Why?

- Forming habits of incorporating food safety into organizational priorities and decisions.
- Support each other to remember and change behaviours and beliefs in line with the organization's development.

## What?

- Rhythm: predictable, reoccurring events where food safety can be discussed.
- Nudging: any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.

# Nudging

- Opt-in vs. opt-out
- COVID-19 floor markings
- Handwashing compliance monitoring





Bindi and Sue



**In closing**



34%

Succeed in effectively adapting  
to external and internal  
food safety changes

# Thank you



**Eradicate foodborne  
illness. One culture at  
a time**

---

[cultivatefoodsafety.com](http://cultivatefoodsafety.com)

# Food Safety Culture and Color-Coding

How to exceed compliance and simplify complexity

**Amit M. Kheradia - Remco**

Environmental Health and Sanitation Manager,  
REHS/RS

**Remco**  
a Vikan company



# Highlights

- ❖ History and importance of Food Safety Culture
- ❖ How color-coding simplifies complexity
- ❖ Application of ABC and Food Safety Culture Maturity Model
- ❖ Color-coding and other knowledge resources

# Why Food Safety Culture?

1950s



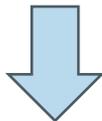
Tissue culture?  
Microbial culture?



1960s-  
1970s



- Psychology
- Human behavior



Late 1990s  
to 2000s



**GFSI**  
Global Food  
Safety Initiative

- Food safety plans
- Global Standards
- 'People element'



2008 *Listeria monocytogenes*  
outbreak in Canada



2002-2022 FDA  
seafood recalls



Retail deli handling  
practices



## Benchmarking Document 2020



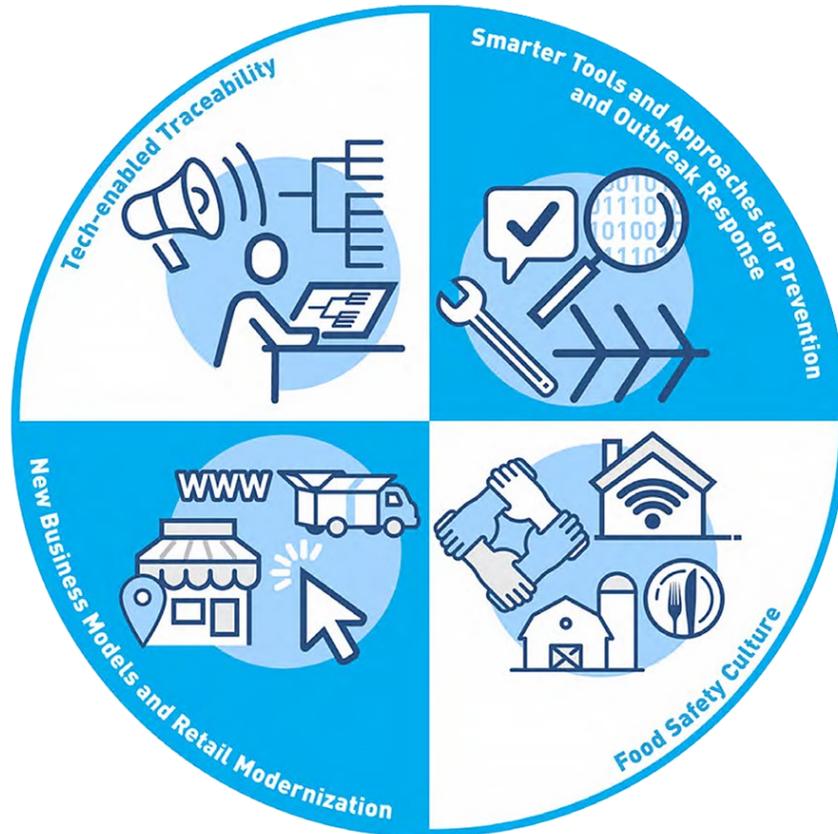
<https://mygfsi.com/>

# The global perspective

Food **safety culture elements** include, but are not limited to:

- Communication about food safety policies and responsibilities
- Training
- Employee feedback on food-safety-related issues
- Performance measurement

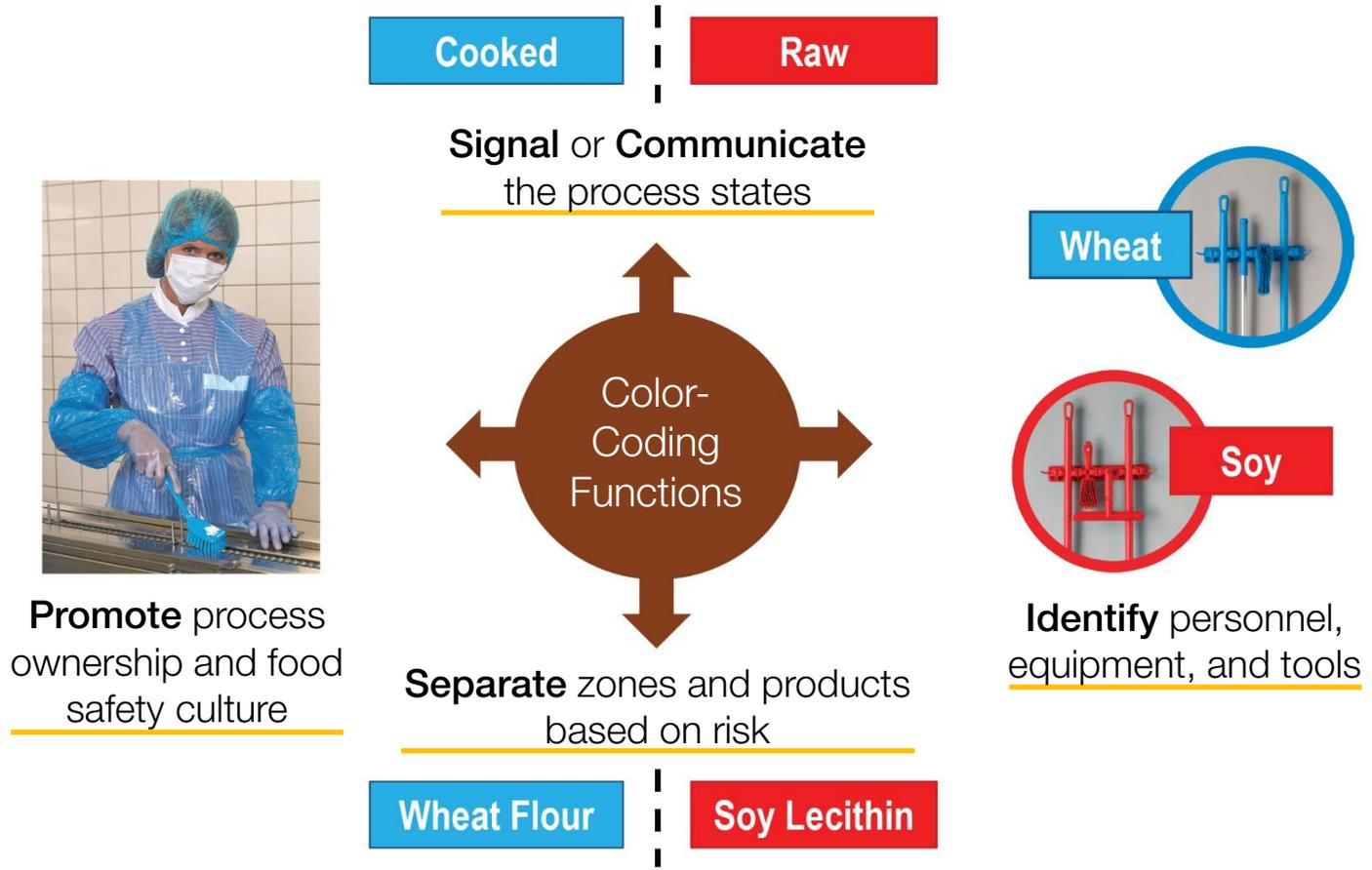
# The FDA's initiative for bending the curve of foodborne illnesses



*"The New Era of Smarter Food Safety blueprint states that dramatic improvements in reducing the burden of foodborne illness cannot be made without doing more to influence the beliefs, attitudes, and, most importantly, the behaviors of people and the actions of organizations."*

<https://www.fda.gov/food/new-era-smarter-food-safety/food-safety-culture-core-element-4-new-era-smarter-food-safety-blueprint>

# Color-coding reduces complexity in processes & systems



- Universal language
- Visual cue
- Simplifies compliance

# Applications of color-coding in food facilities and establishments



**FSPCA**

FOOD SAFETY PREVENTIVE CONTROLS ALLIANCE

**Preventive Controls  
for Human Food**

First Edition - 2016



**Participant Manual**

<https://www.ifsh.iit.edu/fspca/fspca-preventive-controls-human-food>

- Uniforms, smocks, footwear, and clothing
- Containers
- Equipment
- Tools
- Labels
- Facility maps

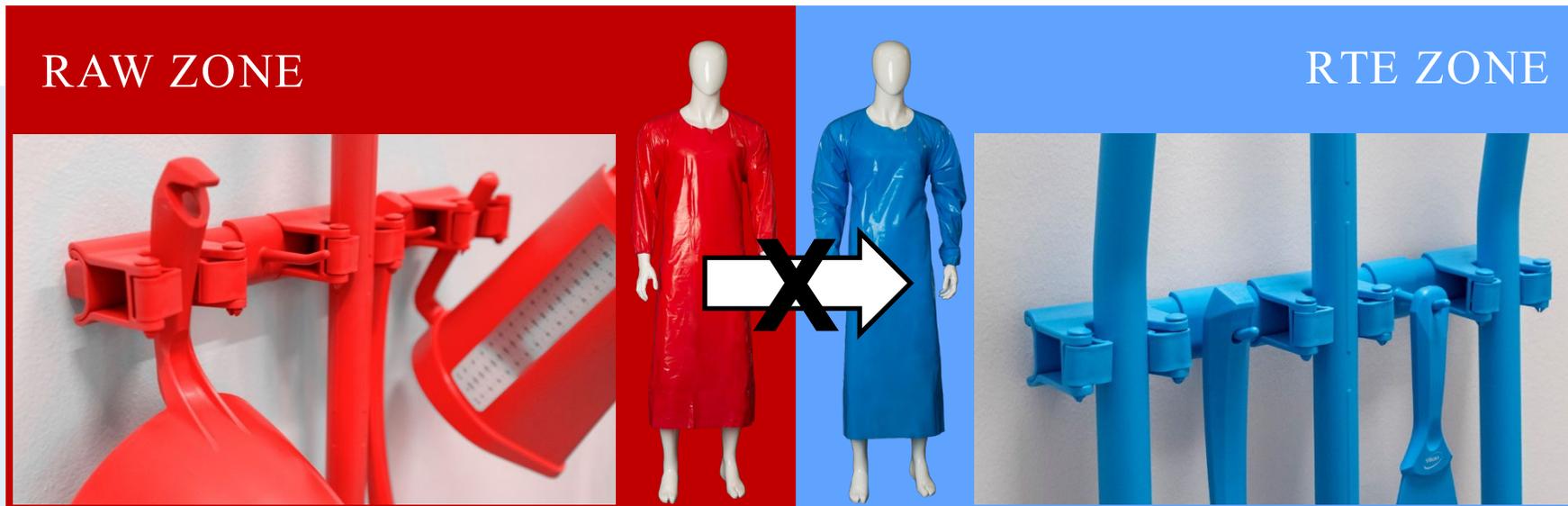
# Key points about color coding as a best practice

- There is no food safety regulatory requirement for color-coding, and there isn't a fixed standard.
- Color-coding is NOT a silver bullet for every food safety and sanitation control issue.
- A color-coding plan may be scoped, depending greatly on its purpose.



# Color-coding as a preventive control to address cross-contamination incidents

According to Meghan et. al. (2021), potential cross-contamination between raw meats and ready-to-eat foods during preparation was observed in 9.4% of the retail delis sampled in the U.S.



- **LOCATIONS**
- **ITEMS**
- **SITUATION**
- **TOTAL-COLOR**

Meghan M. Holst, Laura G. Brown, Brendalee Viveiros, Brenda W. Fav, Nicole Hedeem, Wendy McKelvey, David Nicholas, Danny Ripley, Susan R. Hammons; *Observed Potential Cross-Contamination in Retail Delicatessens*. J Food Prot 1 June 2021; 84 (6): 1055–1059.

# Color-coding as preventive control to address allergen cross-contact incidents

According to *Gendel et al (2014)*, allergen cross-contact incidents account for about 12% of allergen-related recalls.

## The Right Way



## The Wrong Way



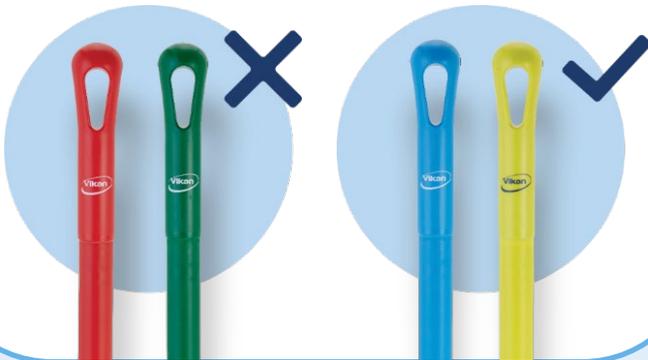
## A Change In The Program



*\*Note: Using color-coded tools is just one of the effective ways to manage allergens and prevent cross-contact.*

# Overcoming challenges with color-coding

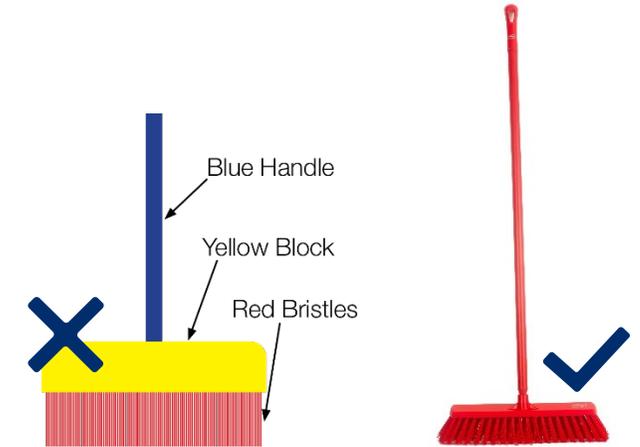
Use color-blind friendly combinations



Use contrasting color to the food product



Avoid conflicting colors, use fully colored tools



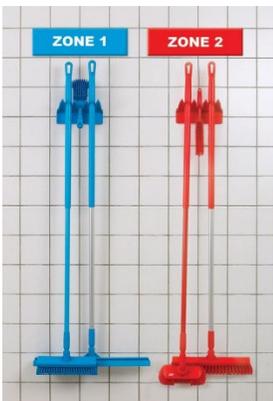
# Explaining using the ABC model



**Poor color-coded tool management program**

Hard to identify, use, clean, store, and replace tools

(-): Higher incidents of contamination issues due to poor tool management



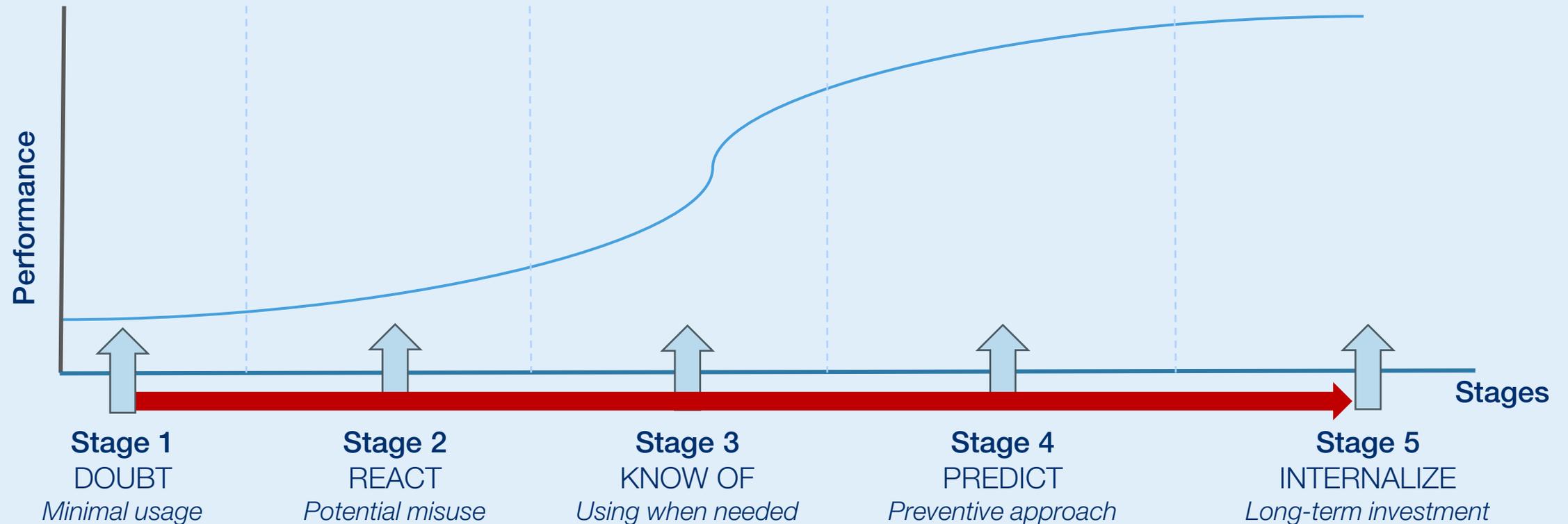
**Well-developed color-coded tool management program**

Easy to implement, improve, and review programs

(+): Low/no incidents of contamination issues due to good tool management

# Food Safety Culture Maturity Model

Based on capability area = TOOLS & INFRASTRUCTURE



# EMPLOYEES COME FIRST



**P**EOPLE = Who?

**P**LACES = Where?

**P**ROCESS = What?

**E**DUICATION/AWARENESS = Why?

**T**RAINING = How?

**R**EVIEW & **R**EFRESHER = When?

**R**ECOGNIZE & **R**EWARD



# Color-Coding Tips

Keep it simple

Be consistent

Communicate the plan

Contact us

# Summary Points

- Food Safety Culture is now an integral part of global food safety standards and is also getting embraced by food safety regulators as a necessary requirement. It is about making an impact on the social norms to bring about a positive behavioral change towards food safety.
- Color-coding can help reduce complexity in systems by providing simple options for cross-contamination prevention in a food facility. However, color-coding alone does not equal a mature food safety culture.
- Management needs to be committed and employees engaged on integrating best practices such as color-coding, along with other requirements, into the behavior-based food safety system, and there needs to be a review on this with the aim towards continuous improvement.

# Color-coding and other knowledge resources



## Color-coding resources

- [Colour-Coded Segregation - Vikan](#)
- [Colour-Coding White Paper \(ipaper.io\)](#)
- [Color-Coding as a Preventive Control \(ipaper.io\)](#)
- [Making the Decision to Apply Color-Coding \(ipaper.io\)](#)
- [Checklist: Is Color-Coding Right For Your Food Processing Facility?](#)

## Other relevant resources

- [Cleaning Tool Maintenance White Paper \(ipaper.io\)](#)



More white papers and knowledge resources are available at:

- [Vikan.com](#)
- [remcoproducts.com](#)

# Further information and support



**Lone Jespersen**  
Principal and Founder

**Cultivate S.A.**

[lone@cultivatefoodsafety.com](mailto:lone@cultivatefoodsafety.com)



**Amit M. Kheradia**  
Environmental Health and  
Sanitation Manager

**Remco, USA**

[akheradia@remcoproducts.com](mailto:akheradia@remcoproducts.com)

**Remco**  
a Vikan company



**Deb Smith**  
Global Hygiene Specialist

**Vikan, UK/Global**

[dsmith@vikan.com](mailto:dsmith@vikan.com)



# Vikan's Food Safety Webinar Series

What's next?



## Topic:

Global food safety standard requirements for hygienic design: *what it means to food and equipment manufacturers*

## Date & Time:

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
3 p.m. CEST (9 a.m. EST)

## Presenter:

Deb Smith, Vikan