

## Case Study- Gross Antics at Fast Food Outlets

Pizza Hut is hit with PR nightmare. In 2009 it was Domino's video evidence of an employee picking his nose and adding what he found to the pizza.

<https://goo.gl/WVcSO>

Now it's a Pizza Hut employee peeing in the dishwashing sink in back of the counter.

<https://goo.gl/2M99QZ>

<https://goo.gl/CWYjjz>

Burger King employee lying on a pile of buns

<https://goo.gl/asRrk0>

Taco Bell employee licking a stack of tacos

<https://goo.gl/TcmOci>

Kfc employee licking a plate of potatoes

<https://goo.gl/AWRgU>

Wendy's employee puts pubic hair in customer's food

<https://goo.gl/P5BaHQ>

1. What's going on here? Why do employees do this? Is this a hiring problem or a training problem? Or disgruntled employees?

Explore each one of these possible cases and how you, as the top PR person of each of these chains, would handle each of these issues.

What suggestions would you make to upper management if it were found to oversights in the hiring process? ( For example, at least one of the employees in the

2009 Domino's incident was found to have an extensive arrest record.) What could improve in the hiring process to prevent such incidents?

Did you know that food tampering, even if it is meant in jest, is a felony offense? If such information was a part of training, What effect might that have on employee attitudes towards such "pranks?"

What about the case of unhappy employees? How do you get to the heart of that problem? How can a company instill a sense of pride, accountability and responsibility in employees who are making minimum wage?

What other reasons for gross behavior can you suggest?

Though, of course, the company is hurt by these incidents, who else is immediately hurt? Do you think employees consider the health consequences of their actions? Do they consider the individual consumer? How could the idea be instilled during training that employees are preparing a meal for a fellow human being, a person just like themselves who wants to eat wholesome, clean, tasty food?

2. Though, of course, these acts are disgusting and the individual employees are to blame, what has the management done wrong to allow for such behavior to be a possibility in the minds of employees? What sort of work conditions would cause employees to behave in such a way? Have you ever thought of getting back at an employer by pulling a prank or causing an employer embarrassment?

3. After the 2009 incident, one of Domino's primary remedies was to make the food-handling area more visible to customers. Obviously, this was not sufficient.

Think of incidents in your own life where you have been monitored at work, at school or by your parents/ guardians. How did you feel? Then think of the incidents in which you were left to your own devices, trusted with the task you have been assigned. How did you feel? Under which conditions were the most honest, productive and willing to undertake the work?

Are you the type of person who needs direction from another and supervision or monitoring to stay on task, or are you the type who can tap into an inner sense of pride for the job you do? Which system, surveillance or trust, works better for you? Which system works better for the bulk of humanity? When would it be better to monitor workers and when would it be better to trust them to do their job? Defend your answer.

4. Regarding question 3 above, in which direction is your society going, in the direction of surveilling or trusting workers? What are your thoughts about this? What are the psychological consequences of knowing your actions are continuously being monitored? What are the psychological consequences of knowing that your boss trusts you? What are the plusses and minuses of both? Where is the middle ground?

5. Regarding the immediate PR nightmare of the Pizza Hut incident, what would you as the PR professional working for Pizza Hut do? What would you do within the first 24 hours of the learning of the incident? What would you do throughout the first week? What would be your long-term strategy for rebuilding consumer trust, restoring investor confidence, and re-establishing Pizza Hut as a trusted brand?

6. Are there trade associations for the fast-food industry? If so what might be discussed and worked on between all the major players that would benefit all the association members? Would you suggest that, since food tampering is obviously an industry-wide problem, best practices be established across the industry to avoid further crises? When is industry-wide participation and cooperation advantageous during a crisis and when is it better for each company to handle a crisis on its own?