



Quality
Assurance
is
everybody's
business



JEFF BANKS, GLOBAL HEAD OF QUALITY ASSURANCE & REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Jeff Banks is a dapper Englishman whose humor can make anyone laugh. His job at Barry Callebaut, however, is a very serious one. As Global Head of Quality Assurance & Regulatory Affairs, he is responsible for everything from the quality of the ingredients that are used to the food safety and legality of the products we make, from making sure that systems in manufacturing can produce “Right First Time” to ensuring that all of Barry Callebaut’s customers around the world get exactly what they need, in the time frame they require it – and with a smile.

“When I arrived in mid-2011, I found a company that maintained a culture of doing its best to produce quality products for its customers, and this is a never-ending process

where continuous improvement is essential,” Banks says.

There are all sorts of challenges and hazards that a food company like Barry Callebaut needs to be aware of to prevent them from turning into a crisis, he adds. These challenges start with the core ingredients of the products: cocoa beans, sugar, milk and other natural products. “The things that go into making chocolate start out as raw agricultural materials that need to be freed from natural and man-made contaminants, cleaned and heat-treated to make them safe. And safe food must be a given – no one will thank us for getting it right every day, but we will pay a heavy price if we fail, even just once.”

Prevention is always better than cure, and Barry Callebaut relies on its entire supply chain to make that concerted effort to minimize risks. Responsible suppliers, reliable logistics operators and near-perfection in the company’s manufacturing plants are all needed in order to make this happen. “Attention to detail is crucial and safeguards our quality promise to our customers,” says Banks.

Quality, he argues, is everybody’s business, not just for those who have the two letters “QA” in their titles.

“We need to exercise the same level of care when producing a batch of 20 tonnes of liquid chocolate shipped to a factory in Poznan, as when we make intricate Gourmet decorations that end up in a fine dining establishment in Paris,” says Banks. And that’s no laughing matter.

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