

Focus: **Supplier Engagement**

Supplier engagement led to 97% response rate in 4 hours

Front page news of a food contamination scandal broke in the UK press implicating a number of national retail brands and supermarket private label products. This leading national supermarket wanted to quickly understand its supply chain's exposure, enabling it to take any necessary corrective actions.

Thanks to an existing strategy of maintaining engagement with suppliers, proactive annual supplier 'emergency fire drills' and visual management dashboards to reinforce expectations and monitor corrective actions, 97% of suppliers responded within four hours of the supermarket reaching out to them.

Background

A year before the food contamination scandal, the supermarket had a more common, siloed approach to supplier communications and engagement. Each department held its own version of supplier contact details, few referencing the roles held by the contact within that particular supplier organisation.

No emergency contacts were identified, or formal expectations set with suppliers about how quickly they needed to respond in an emergency situation or what actions should be taken.



Solution

The supermarket identified Solutions for Retail Brands (S4RB) as its partner of choice to develop and deliver a strategy for successful Supplier Engagement. This included using S4RB's Affinity™ Engage platform to communicate relevant information on a frequent basis to build trust and establish expectations. Online engagement dashboards reinforced these expectations and monitored corrective actions. S4RB also facilitated annual supplier emergency fire drills to test supplier agility and identify areas of improvement in the event of a food scare.

When the actual food contamination scandal broke, S4RB worked with the supermarket to target specific suppliers with surveys to quickly map exposure and allow timely responses to media enquiries. The Engage platform's communications functionality provided real-time reporting of supplier interactions, enabling the supermarket to chase the small number of suppliers who were slow to respond.



Impact

This approach of prioritising successful supplier engagement meant that **97% of suppliers responded within four hours** of first communication on the day the news broke.

By the 3rd and 4th follow-up communications, and only days after the news broke, **over 99% of the surveys were completed.**

Key facts

- Maintained engagement strategy
- Engagement dashboards
- Annual emergency fire drills
- 97% response with 4 hours