We want to build capacities for small businesses: Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI

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ETRetail caught up with Pawan Agarwal, CEO of FSSAI to understand the role of MNCs in such initiatives and the investment by FSSAI to educate small businesses about food safety.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is actively working with big corporates like Coca-Cola, Mondelez, Jubilant Foodworks and HUL to promote various food hygiene and safety standards amongst street vendors, schools and kirana stores. It recently along with Coca-Cola India has signed a memorandum of understanding to train 50,000 street food vendors under FSSAI’s ‘Clean Street Food’ project across India over the next three years. ETRetail caught up with Pawan Agarwal, CEO of FSSAI to understand the role of MNCs in such initiatives and the investment by FSSAI to educate small businesses about food safety.

**Are big corporates forthcoming for these kind of initiatives?**

Initially I could see that they were not very sure. However, over the last few months they have seen that FSSAI is serious about this. Hence, they are now convinced that this is the way forward. As far as large food companies are concerned, they do the the right things. Our concern is more about small businesses who will cut corner on safety and hygiene issues. For the big ones, the challenges are of a different nature altogether. We want to use the technical, financial and human resources of the big corporates to handhold and build capacities of the small businesses.
Do you see a change in food safety standards among small businesses?

It is too early to say. I think it is all about creating a culture. Once we create a culture like this and take it across the country, I am sure we will see a visible impact. Many of these initiatives are social and behavioural in nature and these changes happen gradually. It takes times.

How much money do you put in these campaigns?

We want to reach all the 130-crore Indians without investing much money. We will make some investments, but we do not have big budgets. Whatever small amount of money we have, will be invested in developing good quality communication and partnerships.

What are the other initiatives FSSAI is working on with big food companies?

We have developed a framework of six areas in which we expect corporates to engage with us. We are also developing an engagement index based on the performance of the corporates on a monthly basis.