



Waste Misconceptions

- Guide No.3 -
in a series of 10 for you to collect and keep



WASTE NOT WANT NOT

Bite sized guide to help hospitality businesses to find innovative
ways to reduce waste



Are you in control of your waste, or is your waste controlling you?

In this third guide in our 10 part mini-series on waste, the BHA have collaborated with waste experts Winnow Solutions and SWR (Specialist Waste Recycling) to give you some top tips on how to solve your waste challenges.

Check out our top 10 kitchen misconceptions and find practical solutions to help your business save profit, time, resources, and waste.



1. "Food waste doesn't cost me that much money"

Challenge:

Food waste costs hospitality businesses approximately 15% of their food purchase costs. This relates solely to the upfront cost of the food, so costs relating to staff time and resources, not to mention the food waste collections, is in addition.

Solution:

The best way to reduce these costs is by tracking your food waste to understand how it can be improved. Tracking your food waste will require changes to everyday tasks, but small adjustments can bring forth considerable savings.

Try to record your waste in a logbook, app or smart meter, adding the type of food and the reason why it is being wasted. Identifying where food waste occurs in your processes can increase efficiency and have a big impact on food gross margins at the same time.



"At the end of the day food waste can be costly, in fact research suggests the cost of food waste is £2.70 per kilo. Throwing food out is like throwing out money. We need to train our teams to continually improve operational efficiency – it's better for the business, the farmer and the environment." - Anthony Kingsley, CSR and Sustainability Lead, Vacherin



2. "We don't produce food waste"

Challenge:

In a busy kitchen, staff often don't notice what's going into the bin. However, there is always waste from preparation, cooking errors or consumers' waste. Staff may not think they produce food waste because there is a lack of visibility – bins are usually tucked away and taken away at least once a week, but it does add up.

Solution:

Each kitchen has an optimal level of waste. This level of waste is derived from an upper limit which is over production, and a lower limit which is not having enough food.

The first step to reducing waste is to understand what is really meant by 'food waste' and to find out where it comes from. Food waste can include anything from inventory damage, spoilage, cooking error, prepared but not served, or customer plate waste.

Start by assessing what your food waste is and conduct an inventory of it. Do a visual check and make notes about the type of food in the bin and the possible reasons it ended up there.

Try to reduce the amount of bins you have by centralising them so staff can see the amount ending up as waste. A visual impact can be important when altering staff behaviour.



3. "Plate waste is an issue out of our hands"

Challenge:

Plate waste usually occurs either because there's more food on the plate than the customer can eat or that there are items on the plate which they aren't keen on.

Solution:

Food waste is time and resources wasted.

By analysing trends in plate waste and finding the optimal portion size, guests will still feel they are getting value for their money while the kitchen can cut down on waste at the same time.

Staff can then direct savings towards other areas of importance, such as food quality, and potentially generate greater profits in the future.



4. "Food waste is inevitable when we need to display full dishes so the buffet stations never look empty"

Challenge:

The appearance of a full restaurant display is a must have in some food businesses. Finding the right quantity of food to display whilst ensuring waste targets are met can be a huge challenge.

Solution:

If it is necessary to have certain portions or a certain amount of food displayed, consider what you are displaying.

To maintain a full offering whilst reducing your food waste, try putting higher value items in smaller bowl sizes and refilling those items more often.



5. "Food waste is unavoidable"

Challenge:

Many people think that food waste is unavoidable. In reality, waste can be categorized into 'unavoidable' and 'avoidable' waste.

Unavoidable waste is caused by necessary activities that occur when preparing dishes, and includes things such as trimmings, peelings and coffee grounds. Avoidable waste comes from overproduction and inefficient preparation, and includes counter waste, plate waste, and cooking error or spoilage.

Solution:

Focus on what you can control. Managing inventory control, stock rotation and adjusting production will help you understand what is actually happening in your business and how you can change your processes to reduce waste.



6. "Tracking food waste takes too much time"

Challenge:

When thinking about tracking food waste, it can seem time-consuming and complicated. However, with a small amount of effort, the results could be very valuable and worth your investment in time.

Solution:

Tracking your food waste is the best way to reduce it. What gets measured gets managed. Start by weighing your food waste. You can do this by using a scale and separately weighing bins. For best results use separate bins for preparation, spoilage and plate leftovers and weighing and recording these.

Alternatively, consider using a company which specialises in food waste. They will be able to help you automatically measure what food items are binned and why (e.g. spoilage, cooking error, etc.) and give you a more detailed picture of your food waste.



"It's really important to engage your staff. We conduct food waste monitoring and when it was implemented, staff said they did not realise how much food waste was produced until it was all placed in a bucket and the team could see it. Just by seeing the volume of food waste, teams have come to realise how much was being discarded and instinctively the food waste reduced." - Meggan Edwards, CSR Manager, CH&Co Group

For further information on training, see our guide on "Engaging Your Staff to Reduce Waste"



7. "Our recycling doesn't really get recycled"

Challenge:

When staff don't know what happens to recycling once it has been collected, it can lead to a lack of motivation to segregate materials on site. There is a popular misbelief that all waste ends up as general waste which is clearly not the case.

Solution:

It is worth taking the time to communicate with your staff to let them know what happens to the various waste streams once it leaves the site. Here's a quick summary of where each one goes and how it ends up back in the supply chain.

Mixed Recycling (plastic, paper, card & tin): These materials are usually taken to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) where it is sorted and separated into different types of materials by hand or machine (or both) before being sent to manufacturers who make new products from your waste. Ask your waste management company to take you on a tour of a local MRF – they are fascinating places!

Food waste: Your waste food is mostly taken to an Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plant, where it is used to produce renewable electricity. At the AD plant, waste goes through a natural process where plant and animal materials (biomass) are broken down by micro-organisms in the absence of air in a sealed tank or digester. Naturally occurring micro-organisms digest the biomass, which releases a methane-rich gas (biogas) that can be used to generate renewable heat and power. The remaining material (digestate) is rich in nutrients and can be used as fertiliser.

Glass: The most popular and environmentally favourable approach to glass recycling is to re-melt glass waste into new jars and bottles. Every 1,000 tonnes of recycled glass that is used in this way saves 345,000 kWh of energy, 314 tonnes of CO₂, 1,200 tonnes of raw material and 1,000 tonnes of landfill. Over 80% of the glass collected for recycling is used in the UK to make new glass bottles and jars.



8. "Food waste collections are expensive"

Challenge:

Historically, the unit price for the collection of food waste bins has seemed relatively high compared to the standard lift rate for general waste containers.

Solution:

There have been a couple of changes over the last few years. The price of food waste collections have fallen significantly and the price of collecting heavy general waste has increased - this trend is expected to continue in the future due to ever increasing landfill tax.

Talk with your waste management company about the food waste you are producing. They can help you to introduce food waste collections to bring your overall waste management costs down.



9. "A bin full of food waste will be smelly"

Challenge:

Commercial kitchens do not want unpleasant odours caused by food waste. Sometimes it seems that disposing food in a general bin, which gets changed more frequently, is the better option.

Solution:

Internal food waste bins are emptied on a regular basis meaning that any food waste is stored outside. Your collector will provide you with lidded bins to keep pests out and smells in. Your collection schedule should be frequent enough for the waste not to cause a problem.

If at any point you feel that odour becomes a problem then your contractor can advise you on a more frequent collection.



10. "I don't have space for another bin for food waste"

Challenge:

Commercial kitchens with space constrictions can have trouble fitting extra bins into their workspace.

Solution:

Food waste is dense and has less volume than general waste. As a result smaller bins, such as 120L or 240L bins are used. A food waste bin in the kitchen will usually replace one of the general waste bins, so space should not be a problem.

You can also find creative food bin designs; investigate bins that are stacked and take full advantage of the vertical space in kitchens.



Practical advice and expert know-how for the hospitality industry created through collaboration between Winnow, SWR and the BHA:



The BHA aims to be the single most powerful voice actively championing the interests of the whole industry and its business partnership scheme enables the best suppliers and partners to the industry to participate in developing insight and sharing best practice.

www.bha.org.uk



SWR offers a comprehensive, integrated waste management service, helping companies control costs and improve their recycling and sustainable environmental performance.

www.swrwastemanagement.co.uk



Winnow is the revolutionary smart meter that helps kitchens cut food waste in half by automatically measuring what's put in the bin.

www.winnowsolutions.com

Get in touch with us - we'd love to hear from you!

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