



Food needs YOU:

From chefs to menu development, marketing to kitchen porters,
your guide to tackling food waste - whatever your job title



- > Why care?
- > Resources
- > CEO and Senior Leadership Team
- > Exec Chef, Head Chef and Sous Chef
- > Facilities Management

- > Sustainability Team
- > Menu Planning
- > Procurement
- > Restaurant/Site/Catering Managers
- > Marketing

- > Health and Safety
- > HR/Learning & Development
- > Chef de Partie/Commis Chef/
Kitchen Porter
- > Front of House

about footprint intelligence

The ever-shifting sustainability debate makes it vital for businesses to have accurate intelligence to make informed decisions. Footprint Intelligence is Footprint Media Group’s research and analysis division, helping companies develop successful strategies in the context of responsible business practices.

Footprint Intelligence aims to drive, promote and share best practice by helping industry resolve pressing sustainability issues. It asks tough questions and finds answers. It uses research and industry insight to bring businesses together to identify solutions, opportunities, trends and challenges.

about Fourth

Fourth provides end-to-end, best-in-class technology and services for the restaurant and hospitality industries. Their inventory and workforce management solutions, coupled with the industry’s most complete data and analytics suite, give operators the actionable insights they need to control costs, scale profitability, improve employee engagement, and maintain compliance. Since its merger with US-based HotSchedules, Fourth serves more than 7,000 customers across 120,000 locations globally. For more information, please visit www.fourth.com.

about this research

Footprint Intelligence was commissioned by Fourth to create a guide outlining how different job roles could tackle food waste. The results are a mix of desk-based research and semi-structured interviews with industry experts. The sample includes operators, waste reduction/management solutions providers, and environmental consultants.

Footprint Intelligence is indebted to the industry experts who generously gave their time and insights as part of the research process.

report authors

Amy Fetzter is Head of Research and Analysis for Footprint Media Group. A journalist, author and consultant, Amy is passionate about helping individuals and organisations become more sustainable and more successful. She is the co-author of *Climb the Green Ladder: Make Your Company and Career More Sustainable*. Current and past clients include EY, WRAP, Canvas8, Sodexo and Hewlett-Packard. Amy has an MSc with Distinction in Sustainable Development from the University of Surrey, winning the Roland Clift Award for Environment and Sustainability Research.

Siobhan O’Neill is a Research Analyst for Footprint Intelligence. With a background in journalism and communications, Siobhan specialises in contract catering, particularly in the public sector. She has worked with the world’s leading hotels on their sustainability and corporate responsibility programmes and has a particular interest in the many ways that the hospitality sector can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, improving the lives and wellbeing of customers and employees around the world.

Contents

Why care?	4
Resources	5
CEO and Senior Leadership Team	6
Exec Chef, Head Chef and Sous Chef	10
Facilities Management	20
Sustainability Team	24
Menu Planning	28
Procurement	32
Restaurant/Site/Catering Managers	36
Marketing	42
Health and Safety	50
HR/Learning & Development	52
Chef de Partie/Commis Chef/Kitchen Porter	56
Front of House	60

Why care?

If you work in restaurants or food outlets: food needs YOU!

This is a call out to the raft of untapped food waste heroes: the menu planners, marketers and directors. The HR team organising employee training and the health and safety team whose combined knowledge can help keep food edible for longer, so it can feed people and not bins. Whatever your position, it should be covered by one (or more) of the job roles listed.

This guide is designed to explain:

- *why you need to act on food waste*
- *how it impacts on your job role*
- *what you need to do in a targeted to do list.*

You only need to read the job roles that apply to you, and as some jobs cross over, there will be some advice and food saving resources that apply to several roles, but there will still be plenty of other juicy new titbits in each role. And do surf around to read the boxed tips, case studies and quotes peppered throughout.

But before you get started, here is a quick reminder of why everyone in foodservice needs to act, and some of the resources you can use to support you on your journey.

- It's the right thing to do: stopping perfectly good food from ending up in the bin is a moral imperative, especially when an increasing number of Britons are using food banks and going hungry.
- For every two tonnes of food we eat, another tonne is [wasted](#).
- If food loss and waste were a country, it would be the [third](#) largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world (behind China and the USA), so tackling food waste is a concrete way to tackle the climate crisis.
- The UK's restaurant and hospitality sector throws away 1.1 million tonnes of food each year, [75%](#) of which could have been eaten. That waste equates to one in every six meals served being wasted.
- Each year, wasted food costs our industry [£3.2 billion](#). On average, that equates to [£10,000](#) per outlet per year.
- Food production is also very thirsty – it uses [69%](#) of all fresh water extracted for human needs globally. Wasting food, therefore, means wasting water, at a time when shortages are becoming more serious.
- It can help your local community. Helping to ensure food surpluses are redistributed to charity can help those in need.

Resources

Resources are peppered throughout this document, but to make finding what you need easier, a selection of seriously useful reports, tools and other resources are listed to inspire and help you get started.



In this document:

- [Top food saving tips from the front line](#)
- [Ideas for unavoidable food waste](#)
- [Food safety tips](#)

From elsewhere:

- The [Hospitality and Food Service Action Plan](#) defines the actions the sector needs to take to deliver the UK Food Waste Reduction Roadmap and meet overarching [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 12.3 targets](#) of halving food waste.
- [Courtauld 2025](#) is an ambitious voluntary agreement which brings together organisations across the food system to make food and drink production and consumption more sustainable.
- Part of Courtauld, WRAP's free [Guardians of Grub](#) campaign is designed to help foodservice workers tackle food waste. The campaign provides resources from case studies to posters and measurement tools for businesses to engage staff and to measure, monitor and reduce food waste.
- [Target, measure, act](#) is a roadmap which helps foodservice companies to map out their approach to food waste in order to meet SDG 12.3 targets and Courtauld 2025.
- [Champions 12.3](#) is a network dedicated to inspiring ambition, mobilising action, and accelerating progress toward achieving SDG Target 12.3 by 2030.
- WRI's [Food Loss and Waste Standard](#) is an internationally accepted accounting and reporting standard. It's worth ensuring waste tracking figures are aligned with this.
- Footprint's [Designed with health in mind](#) outlines nudges and other psychological approaches to tackling waste.
- These sustainable procurement [video tutorials](#) require free log in.
- WRAP's [food waste hierarchy](#) sets out legal responsibilities and the importance of prevention.
- [Love Food Hate Waste](#) is a consumer-facing food campaign with eye-catching stats, facts and imagery.
- This menu planning [podcast](#) also has a downloadable presentation with speaker notes. [Leanpath](#) also has a variety of menu planning and inventory strategy guides.
- Case studies to inspire are plentiful, but these are a good place to start: [Guardians of Grub](#), and food waste technology providers [Leanpath](#) and [Winnow](#).

CEO and senior leadership team

Why act?

To tackle food waste, the mandate needs to come from the top to empower and drive action throughout your organisation. And with the issue rapidly rising up the public agenda as awareness of the levels and impacts of food waste become widely known, businesses need to demonstrate that they are taking strong and serious action.

For the CEO and senior leadership team, there is a cast iron business case for action:

- **Preventing food waste is a business and competitive imperative.** Food waste hurts the bottom line: food waste costs the average outlet [£10,000 per year](#). Reducing food waste improves profit and reduces operating costs, such as food and waste disposal costs, and improves stock management.
- **Customers and clients expect it** and wider media coverage means stakeholders will hold operators to account on the action they're taking.
- **It engages staff.** Involving staff can boost morale and retention by enabling them to tackle an issue that many care about.
- **It builds brand loyalty by being a responsible business trying to save its customers money.** It can also help to introduce a brand to a slightly different demographic, for example by selling surpluses to new markets through redistribution partners such as Too Good To Go.
- **It contributes to the SDGs.** As the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) take hold and gain more attention from corporations, there's greater pressure to embrace them with concrete efforts to reduce hunger or to help tackle water scarcity. Food is at the centre of the SDGs, so cutting food waste supports many of the other development goals. For example, tackling food waste helps to save water, biodiversity, reduce deforestation, reduce plastic packaging and so on.
- **It demonstrates industry leadership.** High on the public agenda, failing to tackle food waste can be a significant reputational risk. A public commitment shows the company is taking food waste seriously. It's an opportunity to be seen as progressive, a leader. "If we're not focused on food waste," notes Matt Drew, Head of Food & Beverage, National Trust, "then we're not doing the right thing as a conservation charity. That pricked the ears of the executive team, demonstrating that tackling food waste is an expectation of our membership and our wider supporters. It highlighted how important it is that we should be leading the way, rather than playing catch up."



Make changes happen: CEO and senior leadership to do list:

Build tackling food waste into your core strategy.

This is increasingly noted as a source of competitive advantage. The key driver for many operators may remain the financial savings, but organisations are looking more and more at the triple bottom line CSR benefits and realising that tackling food waste supports their organisation's key objectives. It saves money, helps the environment and appeals to customers.

Embed food saving throughout the organisation.

- [Discuss with employees why food waste is an issue](#) for the organisation: highlight the costs to the business, the environment, the reputational risk and the moral imperative to act.
- Make it part of the organisational ethos - embedded in every department - as part of caring about the environment and protecting it for future generations.
- Place it at every touch point. It should be part of the recruitment process, job descriptions, ongoing training and something that staff are encouraged to help prevent. It needs to be constantly reinforced.
- Make tackling food waste part of your brand and a part of internal and external messaging.
- Install ways to help people spot food waste and act to reduce it.

Create an action plan.

Adopt a [Target, Measure, Act](#) approach which sets clear timelines, targets and measures to show impact. The approach has a short-term aim of reducing food waste by 20% by 2025, and is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 target of halving food waste by 2030 and reducing food losses across the supply chain.

Do a food waste audit.

Measuring is managing and this is the best way to find out what is being wasted and why. Separating food waste into spoilage, plate waste, prep waste and any other relevant category, for example functions, helps to identify where and when the waste is created.

There are many tracking tools available from free WRAP resources including a [calculator](#), to high tech food measuring systems such as those offered by [Leanpath](#), [Winnow](#) and [Chef's Eye Tech](#). Just ensure the system you are using supports the [Food Loss and Waste Standard](#) - an internationally accepted accounting and reporting standard - so figures and targets can be used in corporate reporting.

Once you've done an audit to understand what you're wasting where, set a food waste reduction **target**, keep **measuring** your food waste in a consistent way and share what you've learned, and take **action** to reduce waste.

Create a taskforce/champions team.

Top down mandates need buy-in from everyone in the organisation, so bring a coalition of people together: the CEO, the chef and the food service team, the facilities people and the sustainability team who do outward communications on the CSR work, because each piece of the organisation will see the benefits.


"There is going to be a financial benefit that the CFO is going to see," notes Steven Finn, Vice President Food Waste Prevention, Leanpath. "The chef may see what it is achieving and connect it with his menu items. It is important to have that coalition so everybody understands the benefits are financial, environmental and social, and uses them to their advantage internally to get people excited and engaged about being a responsible business, and to message outwards to external stakeholders and to shareholders to say 'we're saving anywhere between 2% and 8% on our food purchases here.'"

Investigate redistribution options.

Look for opportunities to redistribute surplus food within the community. Investigate more environmentally friendly options for waste disposal - they could even be an income stream. (See [Find a distribution partner](#) for more.)

Keep food waste top of mind with staff.

Include food waste as a standing agenda item for weekly senior leadership team meetings so the message keeps getting pushed through the organisation and to kitchen teams to ensure they constantly looking for ways to eliminate waste.

 ***Tracking food thrown away by using tools such as Guardians of Grub helps businesses to find the hotspots in their operations and then to take simple steps that will ultimately improve profits by cutting down on edible food that ends up in the bin."***

Eleanor Morris,
Special Advisor Hospitality and Food Service,
WRAP

Saving millions

By measuring wasted food, contract caterer [BaxterStorey](#) managed to save its clients a massive £3 million in disposal costs and £300,000 in energy costs. The project has reduced food waste by 42% since it launched in 2014. This has been achieved by segregating food waste into plate, production and spoilage, and differentiating between avoidable food waste (such as over-production, spoiled ingredients) and unavoidable food waste (bones, peelings, shells).

Overall, BaxterStorey's food waste reduction equates to saving 59,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions – the equivalent of removing over 16,000 cars off the road for a year or planting nearly 3 million trees. One of its sites is now using the leftover peel from freshly squeezed oranges to make marmalade, which is sold on site to raise money for charity. The secret of BaxterStorey's success? The enthusiasm and willingness of onsite staff to prevent good food from being wasted.

Keep communicating and sharing impact to keep staff engaged.

Staff and customers will be more engaged if they understand what exactly happens to the food waste collected, and the positive impact of ensuring it goes into the right waste stream from redistribution to energy recovery, composting, and incineration to creating an income stream for the business. It's important to:

- Listen to their ideas.
- Use comms channels and meetings to highlight the campaign.
- Set goals and targets and reward staff when they are achieved.
- Introduce a little healthy competition between sites or departments.

Be a role model.

CEOs and senior leaders have a responsibility to role model the behaviour they want to see. "It's really important that the CEO leads the way," notes Isabel Bradbury, Food Donations Co-ordinator, Pret A Manger: "If change comes from the top, it can filter down through the business. Our CEO is forward thinking and encourages us to focus on what we can do to make a difference."

Consider becoming a B Corp.

B Corps balance purpose and profit by incorporating their social and environmental objectives into their articles of association. They are required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment. Alternatively, charitable foundations can demonstrate that a business is doing the right thing in a very tangible way, and those businesses - such as Pret A Manger - which have a charitable foundation, report that it is a significant reason why employees say they like working for the company.

Consider the impact of HQ directives at site level.

Are they leading to food waste that could be avoided if the directive was re-assessed with a mind to its impact on food waste?

Collaborate with business partners and competitors for greater impact.

Collaborating with other business partners is really important. "Of course, businesses compete in certain areas but sustainability and reducing food waste shouldn't be one of them," notes Isabel Bradbury, Food Donations Co-ordinator, Pret. "We are really happy to share our learnings with the wider industry. We also like working with other businesses to learn and share best practice. Influence goes up and down our supply chain - it's possible for anyone to have an impact on changing the way someone thinks about food waste."

Exec Chef, Head Chef and Sous Chef

Why act?

Exec chefs have the power to influence culture and practice across multiple sites. And, even if you aren't at the front line of cooking for customers every day, your background in the kitchen and your understanding of the challenges your teams face, gives you an edge in influencing and engaging them.

Meanwhile, the **head chefs and sous chefs** set the tone in their kitchens where food waste touches every area of their control. If you are creative and passionate about ensuring that good food is saved from the bin, this positive attitude flows through kitchen culture. From food savvy preparation techniques to correct portioning, cooking off and ordering, acting to prevent food waste has multiple benefits.

For chefs, the case for tackling food waste includes:

- **Reduced food costs.** Less wasted food = lower food bills. Food waste costs the average outlet £10,000 per year, and food purchase costs account for over 50% of food waste [costs](#).
- **Reduced labour costs.** Labour – including ordering, storing, prepping, plating and disposing of food that ends up in the bin – accounts for 37% of food waste [costs](#).
- **Customers and clients expect it.** Wider media coverage means customers and clients expect operators to be taking action.
- **It engages staff.** Involving staff can boost morale and retention by enabling them to tackle an issue that many care about. Giving staff the ability to come up with ideas for keeping food from being wasted also allows them to be creative, which in turn improves motivation and job satisfaction.



The chefs are encouraged to come up with different dishes and different ideas which allow them to be creative and have a bit of fun."

William Buckman,
Category Manager,
Sodexo



Make changes happen: chef to do list:

Do a food waste audit.

Measuring is managing and this is the best way to find out what is being wasted and why. Separating food waste into spoilage, plate waste, prep waste and any other relevant category, for example functions, helps to identify where and when the waste is created.

There are many tracking tools available from a free WRAP [calculator](#) to high tech food measuring systems such as those offered by [Leanpath](#), [Winnow](#) and [Chef's Eye Tech](#).

A one-off audit is a great place to start, but regularly measuring food waste to track what's being thrown away and finding new methods to tackle it is the most effective way to reduce food waste. On-going audits also keep food-saving behaviours front of mind.

Adopt Target, Measure Act as your mantra.

Once you've done an audit to understand what you're wasting where, set a food waste reduction **target**, keep **measuring** your food waste in a consistent way, share what you've learned and take **action** to reduce waste.

Assess your menu.

Revisit your menu to reduce waste. Consider spoilage, food preparation and what's on the plate. Too many choices on the menu can overwhelm customers, raise ingredients costs and lead to more prep waste and increased risk of spoilage, so assess what sells and consider streamlining.

Ingredients used in only one dish can tend to be wasted – how can dishes be tweaked to tackle this? Consider offering garnishes and side orders on request to give customers choice of what and how much they eat.

“Where we can, if an events company has got several events on the same night, we try to use similar ingredients across the events so we can minimise waste.”

Lynne Waite,
Sustainability Consultant,
Events Catering

Plan menus holistically.

Think nose to tail and root to shoot so that every part of the animal, vegetable or ingredient is used and not wasted. Bring the whole team on board so that everyone from food developers, technical, procurement and the supply chain are framing the menu to ensure good food gets eaten.

It takes a village

"At Pret, we have a Food Team which includes food developers, food technicians and supply chain experts and they all work together on the recipes," shares Isabel Bradbury, Food Donations Co-ordinator, Pret A Manger.

"We want to create products which are low waste, so the Food Team tries to ensure that where possible, an ingredient can be used in multiple products. This makes it more sustainable and prevents us from having loads of lines of different ingredients which may result in increased food waste."

Be flexible to find the right solutions.

If the first attempt to utilise a particular food doesn't work, don't give up. Was it the way it was prepped or the recipe? How could these be improved or what might work better?

Create goals and targets and reinforce the message regularly.

Incorporate food waste into your team's key performance indicators to make them accountable. Alongside this, set targets and goals, find ways of rewarding staff who deliver them, and provide feedback on results to keep staff motivated and engaged. Fun challenges and competitions can be particularly effective. Keep a notice board for ideas and updates; highlight the best staff ideas; and create league tables to boost engagement.

Include tracking and solutions in daily briefings.

Ideally this should be at the start of every day or service. This allows people to share ideas on what has been going on and how to tackle any issues. It also means everyone knows their role, and what to do with the food waste that is generated. If the chef, during her weekly briefing with the team can say "right guys we're killing this goal, keep it up", that constant flow of information and feedback will help maintain engagement.

Offer tips and training.

Ensure your teams are taught how to prep and cook food in the most waste efficient ways, from using the best trimming techniques to ensuring portions are the right sizes. Also train the team to know how to analyse their sales in order to respond to demand and avoid over production or too much cooking off after busy periods have subsided. If you're an exec chef, hold master classes for head chefs.

Hands on training is also really important as chefs typically respond to the practical rather than the academic, advises chef Tom Bradley and TRASHED ambassador from contract caterer Lexington. "So if I'm going to make bread or pancakes out of leftover porridge, or turn cucumber ends into a pickle, I'll call the team over and show them what I'm doing so they know for next time."

Broccomoli by Lexington Chef and TRASHED ambassador Tom Bradley

Take your broccoli stalks and dice them down into rough 1/2cm cubes. Then steam or boil them until they are soft enough to break away to touch. Use them as a direct replacement for avocado or combine them with the avocado when making your regular guacamole recipe.

Make it part of the conversation.

Harness social media to get chefs talking about food saving tips. Bartlett Mitchell recently introduced a workplace messaging app called Yapster – a blend of WhatsApp and Instagram. Employees can post up pictures and direct message to share ideas and reinforce internal messages. "It's a great way to get access to everyone in the business at the same time," says Pete Redman, Chef Director. "It is very visual and helps us massively get the message out there."

Brief front of house.

Get front-of-house staff to chat to customers about your food waste efforts, in particular, any efforts to reduce leftovers. They are a valuable route to finding out what customers think about portion sizes, garnishes and sides.



“Give yourself the ability to utilise produce for a second dish. Hot quiche at lunch can become cold quiche and salad for dinner. Leftover roast vegetables become a cold vegetable salad the following day.”

Julie Barker,
Non-exec director of CUBO,
former chair and director,
TUCO, former catering director
University Brighton

Support doggy bags.

Order in food-safe containers, and brief staff to encourage customers to take uneaten food home with them. Offer reheating or re-use recipes as a marketing technique.

Be creative and flexible.

Use leftover ingredients and offcuts, and try to keep menus/recipes with some built-in element of creativity and flexibility. This enables you to use surpluses; whether these come from your supplier or originate in your own kitchen. Specials can be a great way to use up excess ingredients, whilst menus that highlight your work on food waste - perhaps by highlighting a nose to tail approach to ingredients - can create interest and excitement whilst highlighting efforts being made to tackle food waste.

Check kit, storage and stock, and manage shift handovers.

Check your heating and cooling equipment is keeping to temperature and working efficiently to ensure they're not leading to food losses. Have clear communication around handovers regarding what is in stock and ensure that staff on the next shift know what does and doesn't need prepping, saving work and preventing waste through duplication.

Utilise the whole ingredient to reduce prep waste.

From keeping the skin on vegetables like potatoes, to using the stalks of herbs, using everything from root to shoot and nose to tail not only helps reduce waste but also often reduces preparation time and adds to flavour.

Tasty titbits

“Here at Tibits we try to keep everything as natural as they come, potatoes, parsnips, parsley root: we sell them all skin on as we believe it enhances the flavours of the vegetables,” says Brian Mesmain, Executive Chef of vegetarian and vegan restaurant Tibits. “Every vegetable that arrives into us with a skin we will use in our dishes. As long as it tastes good we will sell it. With pineapples, we take the skin off and cut into triangles. We don’t take the core out, because I believe that the fibre in the core helps to keep your digestive tract healthy and in tune.”

Repurpose offcuts and trimmings.

There are so many ways that offcuts can be utilised and enjoyed. Use salmon trimmings in fish cakes, cucumber ends to make pickles, steam or stir-fry cauliflower leaves or stalks, whilst vegetable offcuts can go with meat carcasses in the stock pot for soup, stocks and sauces.

Think twice

"A big trend I'm noticing is chefs reusing and repurposing offcuts and trimmings," observes Katie Flanagan, World Resources Institute (WRI). "Google published some food waste data for the first time and described chefs using the ends of kale leaves for salads or putting them in smoothies."

Involve everyone in finding solutions.

Staff have amazing insight into what is being wasted and where. They can spot where waste comes from and come up with effective suggestions; from identifying the dishes and garnishes that get left the most, to what has been forgotten in the fridge and why. Front-of-house staff can get direct customer feedback about portion sizes, what's on the plate and attitudes to food waste.

Create a culture of openness.

It is important to ensure there is a culture of openness and that people are not afraid to log food waste but feel free to share and discuss what has happened when things go wrong, and how it could be prevented in future.

Be a role model.

The senior chef team have a responsibility to role model the behaviour they want to see. "You're looking to change a corporate culture especially in the kitchen where we're facing some highly entrenched and deeply baked-in behaviours," notes Tom Mansel-Pleydell, Business Development Director, Leanpath. "So ensure your colleagues understand their role and see waste-saving behaviours modelled by others."

Adopt the Chef's Manifesto.

This asks chefs to lead by example with a list of eight things relating to nutrition, food waste and how to value natural resources. It highlights some simple things chefs can do in the kitchen to help meet SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Tips include using the whole ingredient and popularising offal.

Check your portion sizes.

Check your plate waste and nutritional guidelines to ensure portion sizes are appropriate and in line with what people are actually eating. It is also worth offering reduced portion sizes. Labelling these carefully with input from marketing can insure the terms used, such as ‘lighter portions’, can help to increase their appeal without putting [diners off](#). Additionally, consider offering side dishes, sauces and other accompaniments as optional extras or by request.

Ensure staff serve the right amount.

Staff often serve by eye or are unaware of how many portions are expected from a tray. Ensuring that all staff understand the correct portion size and introducing regular portion size tests at the start of every shift for popular items like chips can dramatically reduce waste.

Smart serving

“Ensuring all team members understand the correct portion is vital,” observes Mike Hanson, Head of Sustainable Business BaxterStorey. “A catering assistant might serve 12 portions out of a tray prepared to make 16 – that’s costing too much, giving the customer too much and leading to food waste.”

Find other ways to create plate fill.

Thoughtful presentation can help maintain the value proposition without encouraging food waste. Assessing plate and serving dish size can be a key factor in this and can often reduce volume without impacting plate fill or perceived value.

Top tricks include reducing the serving bowl size for buffets to unconsciously encourage diners to take less, putting chips in buckets and reducing the depth of single portion items such as gratin or salad dishes. The same can go for preparation, especially when staff are batch cooking because when they use large cookware, they tend to fill them. A great resource which includes more tips on using psychology and nudges to reduce waste and improve health is the Footprint/Compass UK&I report: [Designed with Health in Mind](#).

Souped up

“We worked with one site that was making 40kg of soup a day because they were filling a large cooking pot,” shares Stuart Coetzee, Business Development Manager, Winnow. “Yet only around 10kg was eaten and around 30kg was thrown away. Using a smaller cooking pot to make the soup led to a huge reduction in food waste. It also prompted them to start using several smaller pots to make a range of different soups, which lead to increased sales.”

Track food volumes for buffet dishes in real time.

Keeping communication flowing between front and back of house can help kitchens to cook exactly the dishes that are needed, and to slow down when necessary, so that food isn’t wasted. Buffet cameras can also be a quick and easy way to do this.

Target over production and where possible, cook to order.

Kitchens can get in the habit of putting everything in the oven so they are ready for the start of service, or cooking off popular staples like chips and accompaniments for too long after busy periods when the orders have slowed down.

“This can be tackled in two main ways,” advises non-exec director of CUBO, former chair and director, TUCO, former catering director University Brighton, Julie Barker. “Use till receipts to do daily analysis of customer numbers and sales, and compare this to the stock used. This can then be used to guide production timings and amounts.”

Staggering timings and investing in more “on-demand” style equipment can also ensure the kitchen can cook to order more easily. Combi ovens/microwave ovens that can cook individual and bulk portions very quickly mean you can be much more reactive to demand. Cooking single portion sizes to order can dramatically reduce waste, though it can be more staff intensive depending on the volumes coming through.

Link purchasing with stock checks and order numbers.

Track past sales and stock levels to identify patterns and influences on purchasing behaviours such as holidays and weather. Use this insight as well as booking numbers to influence your ordering, stock management and how much is prepped to reduce waste, and costs.

“The biggest food waste issue in kitchens is overproduction.”

Julie Barker
Non-exec director of CUBO,
former chair and director,
TUCO, former catering director
University Brighton,

Focus on fresh and a “when it’s gone, it’s gone” mentality.

Where it works within the offering, cooking fresh for the day and designing a menu that is set to run out is an effective way to manage food waste. This has the added advantage that it creates a “limited edition” element to the menu with dishes perceived as fresh, special and sought after.

Alongside this, creating some menu items that can be cooked from frozen can help keep menus flexible. Items, such as salt fish croquettes or home-made veggie burgers, can be time-consuming to make and can benefit from being cooked from frozen. Having a frozen stock will prevent them from running out, allowing other dishes to be more flexible.

This is the approach taken at the Roebuck, Southwark

“Our menu is set and it can run out,” explains Clare Clark, Sustainability Co-ordinator. “Ideally, we would run out of everything by the end of the day. But that’s better for the customer because they know they are getting something that is cooked fresh every day.”

Manage freelance/agency chefs to ensure they’re following the rules.

Ensure that agency staff are briefed on the waste policy, correct disposal and any waste monitoring that needs to be done. It can be a challenge but it is important to maintain the ethos of the kitchen environment.

Check your storage systems are working.

Well organised storage increases efficiency and avoids unnecessary food waste.

- Store new items at the back to ensure older items are used first.
- Store food as soon as it is delivered. Avoid overloading the fridge or freezer.
- Use airtight containers or vacuum packing to keep already prepared food fresh for longer.
- Check your stock and purchase only what you need.
- Order less but more often to save on storage space and keep food fresh.

Factor in food allergies and intolerances. Creating dishes with allergens and intolerances in mind can reduce waste because it negates the need for multiple versions of the same dish. It can also prevent stressful and wasteful situations where dishes need to be redesigned for specific customers.

Creative ways with waste

One new snack food is based on the concept of preventing waste. Tyson Foods derived inspiration from the Central American concept of yapa, (where a merchant gives a valued customer something extra to make sure nothing is wasted) to introduce a new range of snacks. Made from a variety of different products, Yapa snacks use chicken breast trim, spent barley and other products, such as juices near their expiration date that would go to waste, to make protein snacks.

Top food saving tips from the front line

With thanks to BaxterStorey, Bartlett Mitchell, Public Sector Catering 100, The Roebuck, The Smart Group, Sodexo, Tibits and Westminster Kingsway College for sharing their tips. Incorporate cauliflower leaves in coleslaw, or steam as a side, add to a stir-fry or pickle.

- Use the pomace from carrot juice to make vegetable tartare, or the pulp from apples and pear juices in cakes.
- Make chutney from trimmings such as melon skins, cucumber and tomato ends and more.
- Have an orange juicer? Make marmalade from orange rinds, BaxterStorey style. It is even sold to raise money for charity.
- Use ham, salmon and other meat trimmings to make croquettes.
- Desiccate vegetable trim waste and use to thicken and add fibre to soups and sauces.
- Use pineapple rinds to make pineapple stock for marinades.
- Incorporate potato peelings into the mash for dishes like croquettes and fish cakes.
- Turn surplus breakfast foods into other dishes such as smashing bacon and hash browns into an enchilada or using items as part of canapes.
- Turn left over rice into arancini or risotto balls.
- Make pizza sauces from leftover salad bar ingredients.
- Use bread offcuts and surplus for breadcrumbs.
- Ferment offcuts of cabbage leaf for kimchi.
- When filleting a whole salmon, scrape the bones to create salmon tartar.
- Infuse cream with smoked fish offcuts.
- Blend coffee grounds into oils or cream to infuse, or lay grounds on a tray and bake carrots on it to impart amazing flavour and then as a last resort, use them as fertiliser.
- Make banana ice using blackened peel.
- Infuse oils with parmesan rinds or tomato ends.
- Boil and blend tomato seeds down to make an amazing ketchup.
- Turn surplus cooked potatoes into sauté potatoes or potato salad.

Facilities Management

Why act?

As a facilities manager you are responsible for waste, and are one of the few people with access to data for the whole site. You are the gatekeeper to a treasure trove of information and a major influencer who can ask the kitchen team why food waste levels are so high.

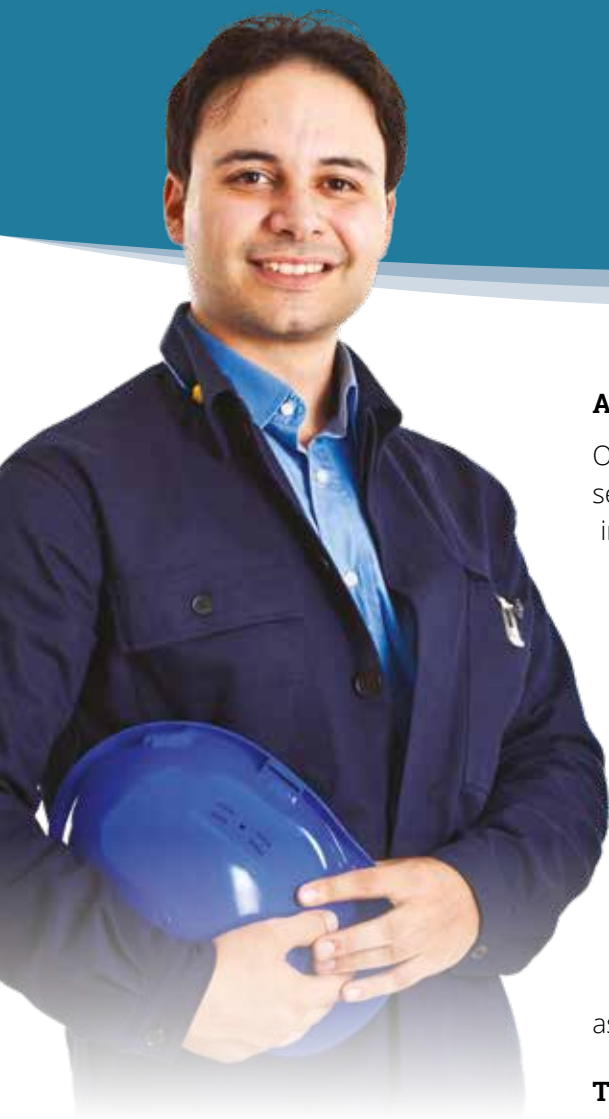
- **You hold the budgets.** From food waste disposal costs to the spend on items like technological food waste trackers, you hold the budget, so reducing food waste will help you meet your targets.
- **You manage the client relationship.** In contract catering, facilities managers usually manage the client relationship. Highlighting how efforts to tackle food waste will help them meet their sustainability commitments is a great way to demonstrate added value and strengthen the relationship. Plus, increased media coverage means customers and clients expect operators to be taking action.
- **It keeps staff happy.** Involving staff can boost morale and retention by enabling them to tackle an issue that many care about. Letting staff come up with food saving ideas also allows them to be creative. This in turn improves engagement and job satisfaction.

Make change happen: facilities management to do list:

Do a food waste audit.

Measuring is managing and this is the best way to find out what is being wasted and why, so work with the kitchen team to ensure food waste is segregated and measured. Separate food waste into spoilage, plate waste, prep waste and any other relevant category, for example functions, to identify where and when the waste is created.

There are tools available from a free WRAP [calculator](#) to high tech food measuring systems such as those offered by [Leanpath](#), [Winnow](#) and [Chef's Eye Tech](#). Regularly measuring food waste to track what's being thrown away and being able to find ways to tackle it is the most effective way to reduce food waste. On-going audits also keep food-saving behaviours front of mind.



Adopt Target, Measure, Act as your mantra.

Once you’ve done an audit to understand what you’re wasting where, set a food waste reduction **target**, keep **measuring** your food waste in a consistent way, share what you’ve learned and take **action** to reduce waste.

Share the data.

You are often the gatekeepers to food waste data – so share the volumes, the savings and the financial costs associated with food waste with the wider team so colleagues understand the impact of their efforts and actions. Give this in as much detail as you can. Technical measurement systems like Leanpath, for example, provide trends over time as well as granular data. So they can highlight what is going on with individual products, such as chips wasted due to spoilage, as well as providing data on annualised financial impact as well as environmental impacts such as water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and more.

Tie food waste figures to accounts.

Online platforms, such as those offered by Fourth, can show food waste data and costs alongside sales and purchases. This makes it clear how food waste is impacting profit and loss. The systems also often allow senior managers to view site or aggregated data month by month to identify issues and successes.

Tying it all together

“We are getting towards having that complete end to end view,” says William Buckman, Category Manager, Sodexo. “Our system tells you what you buy, what you’ve sold and what you’ve wasted, and it will tell you where it’s gone.”

“Being able to see how much is being sent to our waste contractors, and how much that costs provides an incentive to drive that cost down”, agrees Catherine Hinchcliff, Head of Corporate Marketing, Marketing & Insights, Bidfood.

Partner with your suppliers and waste contractors.

Choose suppliers and waste partners that can help you manage your waste responsibly and provide you with good data and visibility, tracking waste from end to end. They should be proactive in helping you prevent waste from occurring in the first place.

Research technical solutions.

What you do with food waste - from composting or digesting it on site, to having it removed for anaerobic digestion – is necessarily site specific, but do some research to work out which is the optimum solution for your site and business.

Explore potential savings and income streams.

Whilst it is obvious that reducing waste cuts disposal costs, there is also the potential for tax reductions for food donation streams, whilst isolating fats, oils and grease and sending them to energy recovery can provide a small income.

Make sure sites are correctly sorting waste.

Work closely with sites to ensure staff are putting waste in the right bins and weighing those bins to track waste. Monitoring the weight of bins helps you check food isn't mixed in with the general rubbish.

Rainbow rubbish

Greene King has introduced different coloured waste bins to make it really simple, easy and visual for staff to understand where each kind of waste should go. Posters explain what the bins are and what goes in them, what success for managing waste in the yard looks like, what you can recycle, and where it goes once it's collected. This is key in an industry with a high staff turnover where signage needs to be easy and visual to help staff know what to do. "The younger generation is really keen to understand waste and recycling – they care," says Daniel Stretton, Senior Supply Chain Manager, Greene King.

Benchmark.

See how your business compares with others to help identify areas of weakness. Nando's brought in consultants to run a waste modelling exercise to help understand what proportion of the restaurant chain's waste should be food waste, recycling and general waste if people were segregating properly. This data is given to restaurants to demonstrate how bins should be set up and how to design restaurants to make space for bins.

Ensure equipment is working.

Storage facilities and white goods need to be checked regularly to ensure they are energy efficient and storing food properly to reduce the chance of spoilage. Make sure staff working with the equipment understand how to use it correctly to maximise its efficiency.

Ensure storage is efficient.


Well-organised storage increases efficiency and avoids unnecessary food waste. Tips include:

- Storing new items at the back to ensure older items are used first.
- Storing food as soon as it is delivered. Avoid overloading the fridge or freezer.
- Using airtight containers or vacuum packing to keep prepared food fresh for longer.

Track end of life.

Some food waste measurement systems, such as Leanpath, can track not only where the waste originates, but also where it is going; from being donated to going to compost. Understanding what is actually happening to your waste enables the site to talk confidently about its food waste actions and impacts, and helps the business to identify what would be the most desirable waste pathways.

Sustainability Team



Why act?

When sustainability is your bread and butter, the clear cost savings plus environmental and social benefits, make tackling food waste an easier sell that can deliver deeply satisfying results. Nonetheless, here are three more reasons why its central to your job role.

- **It's a tangible way to demonstrate your role's value.** There are plenty of stats and figures to enable you to put together a strong business case which demonstrates cost savings and clear environmental benefits.
- **Customers and clients expect it.** Increasing media coverage means customers and clients expect operators to be taking action. "If we are using out of date equipment that isn't using the least amount of energy," notes Matt Drew, Head of Food & Beverage, National Trust, "or we're not focused on food waste, then we're not doing the right thing as a conservation charity. It is an expectation of our membership and our wider supporters that we should be seen as leading the way rather than catching up with the rest."
- **It contributes to the SDGs.** As the SDGs take hold and gain more attention from corporations, there's greater pressure to embrace them with concrete efforts to reduce hunger or to help tackle water scarcity. Food is at the centre of the SDGs, so cutting food waste supports many of the other development goals. For example, tackling food waste helps to save water, biodiversity, reduce deforestation, reduce plastic packaging and so on.



Make change happen: sustainability team to do list:

Get buy-in from the leadership team.

Make the business case to the senior leadership team so they are supportive of food waste efforts and communicate their support to every person in the business. This is massively helpful in getting all staff members from head chefs to kitchen porters to take food waste seriously.

Share data with the board.

Regularly – ideally monthly – present the board with food spend and food wastage figures. This will keep it on their radar and help them to see the impacts of food waste on the business.

Engage everyone at all levels.

To successfully tackle food waste, it takes buy-in at all levels. Senior buy-in is needed to get things moving, but the staff on the ground need to understand what they are doing and why.

Include food waste in corporate reporting.

This shows the company's commitment and maintains the focus on meeting targets. Use figures gained from food waste measurement, and ideally report them using the [Food Loss and Waste Standard](#) - an internationally accepted accounting and reporting standard.

“I share WRAP case studies at national account manager meetings, showing the commercial savings being made by tackling food waste. It’s really powerful.”

Julie Owst, Head of Sustainability and Change, Bidfood

Keep attention focussed on the top of the [hierarchy](#).

Keep the focus on the prevention of waste, not better disposal. This is important as a common reply to ‘What are you doing about food waste?’ is ‘I don’t have any – it’s segregated and taken away by my waste contractor.’ The assumption is that as something useful is being done with it – i.e. anaerobic digestion – it doesn’t count as waste. “A lot of the focus in food waste is on downstream solutions,” observes Steven Finn, Vice President Food Waste Prevention, Leanpath. “It’s on recovery, composting and anaerobic digestion, and yet at the top level of that hierarchy, at the prevention and source reduction, that is the point of maximum impact.”

Harness the power of marketing to inspire customers and staff.

Make it eye catching and easily understandable. “Do something fun,” advises Saasha Celestial-One, the COO from OLIO. “So if you want to engage staff, you could have a day where everyone brings in their favourite dish which uses up leftover ingredients. Or have a Friday afternoon cocktail masterclass where everyone has to bring an ingredient that they never get round to using and make delicious things. Because it needs to be inspiring not just about targets and tick boxes.”

Use case studies.

These immediately bring food waste measurement and management to life and can be a valuable tool in getting everyone from senior management to front of house staff on side.

Create a ripple effect.

“At Bidfood, we’ve gone a step further, recognising that our people can also make a big positive impact in their personal lives, so sharing hints and tips on how to reduce their food waste at home can create a powerful ripple effect,” says Catherine Hinchcliff, Head of Corporate Marketing, Bidfood. “This creates a virtuous circle as they’ll remember to be more careful about food waste in their work role too.”

Ideas for tackling unavoidable food waste

- Redistribute surplus food via local charity partners, or via OLIO, Too Good To Go, FareShare, Company Shop or Plan Zheroes.
- Divert FOG (fats, oils, grease) for biofuel, or plant matter to animal feed, coffee grounds to logs.
- Offer surplus food to staff.
- Send it to anaerobic digestion.
- Turn it into compost

Create goals and targets and reinforce the message regularly.

Push to incorporate food waste into staff's key performance indicators to make them accountable. Alongside this, set targets and goals, find ways of rewarding staff who deliver them, and provide feedback on results to keep staff motivated and engaged. Fun challenges and competitions can be particularly effective. Keep a noticeboard for ideas and updates; highlight the best staff ideas and create league tables to boost engagement.

Have champions.

Everyone needs to be on board, but having champions throughout the business can help drive the process and keep everyone on track.

Menu Planning

Why act?

The way a menu is designed and implemented can dramatically influence food waste – from the number of items on offer, to how often the same ingredients are used. But when your job is to create food that draws the customer in, why should you prioritise food waste?

- Sustainability is on trend. Increasing media coverage means customers and clients expect operators to be taking action – factoring food saving into the menu is a simple way to show this.
- It's a point of difference. Creative menus that can showcase food saving create a unique selling point, and can build brand loyalty with customers.

It saves you money. Smart menu design reduces the amount of food thrown away, creating better menus that cost less, helping you meet targets.

Make change happen: menu planning to do list

Continually review and assess menu options.

This is to reduce the cost implications of ingredient choices when procuring, processing, storing and disposing of food. Ask: what items are most popular, which are regularly causing waste, and how can this be addressed?

Assess condiments and sides.

One pub chain which did a food waste audit found that sides, such as coleslaw and sauces, were some of the most common food waste items. Use food waste tracking to learn from teams on the ground what is being wasted, and why, and change the menu to reduce it, for example by making sauces or sides optional. This could be accompanied by a price reduction if people choose not to have them.

Use ingredients across dishes.

Storing a large number of different ingredients invariably leads to food waste – for example where a particular salad variety is used in only one dish. Look at ways to use ingredients across multiple dishes, but provide variety in the preparation and presentation.



Saucy ideas

When Nando's wanted to use spinach leaves in salad, they created a new side: saucy spinach. This provided further opportunities to sell that ingredient, helping to create additional demand so the spinach did not end up as waste.

Streamline the menu.

Large menu ranges can bamboozle consumers and cause stock management headaches. Streamline the menu to focus on the most popular dishes, but include easy-to-implement variations to help maintain choice and keep things fresh.

Think simply.

Complicated dishes can lead to lots of waste. Where possible, keep recipes simple, and instead focus on ingredient quality and cooking.

Get the right pack sizes.

Use sales data and consumer insight to gauge appropriate pack sizes for different sites, and work with suppliers to match this to demand.

Consider shelf life.

For some ingredients, see what options there are for longer shelf lives. Consider temperature, storage, and packaging, and work with suppliers to ask them for solutions for products with a tendency to end up as spoilage.

Enlist the supply chain.

From pack sizes to packaging solutions which protect food and have re-closable lids for easier, more hygienic and longer lasting storage, ask how your suppliers can help.

Build repurposing into your menu.

From contract caterers having ‘eat it all up days’ for sites that shut for the weekend, to leaving flexibility in the menu for specials that use up surpluses, be loud and proud about food saving menu planning. “Give yourself the ability to utilise produce for a second dish,” advises Julie Barker, Non-exec director of CUBO, former chair and director, TUCO, former catering director University Brighton. “Hot quiche at lunch can become cold quiche and salad for dinner. Leftover roast vegetables become a cold vegetable salad the following day. There are lots of creative ways to ensure good food is not wasted.”

Cake ... and eating it

The National Trust lemon drizzle cake uses leftover jacket potatoes and has the bonus of being gluten free. It also features in the Trust’s cook book, providing a great story about how the organisation is working to reduce its food waste by reusing things that haven’t sold.

Get feedback on new menu items.

Constantly ask for feedback on new products. Pilot, and check in with trial restaurants on what is being left. Is it on the plate, is it spoilage from unopened packets, or ingredients not being used up once opened? This, advises Martina Jensen at Nando’s, allows you to understand sales figures and see how they marry up with the volumes being ordered.

Factor in seasonality and sales trends into procurement.

Link purchasing strategy to the menu and feedback on actual sales and waste figures so that they loop round in a circular system which can be managed and streamlined. Seasonality keeps the menu fresh and encourages purchasing from local producers who are more likely to be flexible in their deliveries and packaging; helping to reduce food waste and single use plastic.

Build nose to tail and root to shoot menus.

Be creative by using leftover ingredients and offcuts. Specials can be a great way to use up excess ingredients and menus can create interest and excitement whilst highlighting efforts being made to tackle food waste.

Offer a variety of sizes of popular dishes.

Make options flexible, for example by allowing dishes to be served in a variety of portion sizes, or where you can reduce what’s on the plate, perhaps by removing the bun from the burger. This can be made to work with a bit of creativity. For example, the Roebuck serves its

popular fish and chips in two size options. A small portion is one piece of fish, whilst a large is two pieces and each is priced accordingly. They also have snacks, starters, small plates, large plates and a bar menu.

Reimagine upselling strategies.

When staff are incentivised to upsell, reimagine the menu architecture and harness marketing’s creativity to find other ways to add value that are less likely to lead to increased waste, or over consumption. Could bundle deals apply to different visits, or result in discounts on another day?

“We need to ask the question: what are we doing around menu architecture to drive better behaviour in consumers?”

Julie Owst, Head of Sustainability and Change, Bidfood

Check supersizing actually supersizes profit

When items can be bundled into a promotion or supersized for a nominal amount, such as £1, check costings to see if extra food costs – and associated staffing and waste costs – actually stack up, especially if it is likely that these offers will increase plate waste.

Play around with presentation.

Thoughtful presentation and recipe design can still create that all important plate fill and value for money, whilst helping ensure portion sizes do not lead to overeating or waste.

Low waste by design

The Garden – a pop up restaurant which featured at events venue Olympia, London – managed to cut waste dramatically by carefully designing its menu. 53% of the dishes on its menu were categorised as zero waste because they brought no waste on site by using skinned and boned chicken and portion control pieces, as well as being made from items that would otherwise be binned, such as wonky veg from local suppliers. Most dishes were also plant based (typically with longer shelf lives), with the option to add proteins if desired. Careful portioning and staff training brought plate waste down to virtually nothing – with the few items thrown away being typically bread or bun crusts.

Procurement

Why act?

Procurement has a massive impact on food waste behind the scenes, and saving food from the bin has huge benefits if you are in procurement.

- **Reduced food costs.** Less wasted food = lower food bills. Food purchase costs account for over 50% of food waste [expense](#) and directly impact your profit and loss.
- **It keeps your teams happy.** When teams get what they want and need, they will be happier and make your life easier.

Make change happen: procurement to do list

Check stock and standing orders.

Many sites have standing orders for common items like bread, and milk. These tend to arrive every day whether they are needed or not. Make sure that the site manager knows to check stock levels and to cancel these when they're not needed.

Adopt imperfect produce.

Work out which menu items – such as soups, stews, and composite dishes – could use wonky veg and other tasty but oft-overlooked ingredients, then talk to suppliers about how you can create demand for these items.

Saved by the flavour

Sodexo has a 'Wasteful to Tasteful veg box' each week that changes with the seasons and whatever surpluses the farmers have. "The retailers would never touch it, because it doesn't look perfect," explains William Buckman, Category Manager, Sodexo. "But it doesn't impact the taste, and if you're just going to dice it, looks really do not matter."

Work closely with chefs and kitchen teams.

Kitchen teams see it all happen, so harness their insight to find out what is being wasted, and why.



Involve the whole food team.

Bring menu planners, food technicals, the supply chain and kitchen teams together to develop recipes and tweak them for portion sizing and ingredients when they are in development, and in the restaurant.

Prepare suppliers for new menu items.

When launching a new menu or a new concept, give suppliers a heads up over the ingredients and the volumes so they can start planning accordingly.

Assess prepped on site versus pre-prepped.

Waste earlier in the supply chain is still waste – so find out how this is being created. Can you do better, and find a way that's higher up the waste hierarchy to use the whole product?

Check pack sizes.

What is the most appropriate pack size: for shelf life and, for storage, and does this work across all sites? Can packs be split? Work with suppliers to find the pack size options that lead to the least waste – both for them and for you. This is also a key area to work with menu development to find ways for ingredients to be used across more than one menu item so they are fully utilised.

Give sites flexible options.

BaxterStorey gives its sites a large range of supplier options – every location has several fruit and veg suppliers, fish mongers, butchers etc., so they can choose what they want to suit their site turnover.

Look at local producers.

They can often be more flexible, and where menus allow, can work with you to find routes to get surpluses, less common cuts, and offcuts to diners.

Share with suppliers.

Suppliers do not often get visibility of what happens in their clients’ kitchens, notes Matt Drew from the National Trust. They appreciate understanding the issues, and it allows them to find solutions that work for other customers as well.

Work experience

The National Trust has built a great relationship with its national distributor and wholesaler Creed Food Service. “This includes familiarisation days with them,” shares Matt Drew, Food & Beverage Manager. “We sit in a Creed van and go on a driver route and do deliveries, and they come into our facilities and work with our teams.

“*There are myriad examples where a supplier has come to us with great solutions to problems we didn’t know existed.*”

William Buckman,
Category Manager, Sodexo

Talk to suppliers about waste.

Work collaboratively with core suppliers to ensure recycling and waste facilities are up to scratch, and educate staff on correct food and other waste practices. Make sure that they understand what you need for your specification, and how they can deliver this for your business.

Train staff to work with the ordering system.

Ensure new staff members understand your ordering ethos and are properly trained on the systems used.

Make someone responsible for the tender process.

Look at the contracts you already have in place and check they offer the best solution. Is there a different format you can get the product in? You may need to retender, but challenge what you are doing and take the time to do it properly.

Restaurant/site/catering managers

Why act?

From ordering the food to interacting with customers and training staff, you are the bridge between front and back of house, and in some cases, multiple sites. This means you influence the food culture everywhere. But what are the cast iron reasons for caring?

- **It reduces food costs.** Less wasted food = lower food bills. Food purchase costs account for over 50% of food waste [costs](#), and cost around £10,000 per site. So food waste directly impacts your profit and loss.
- **It reduces labour costs.** Labour – including ordering, storing, prepping, plating and disposing of food that ends up in the bin – accounts for 37% of food waste costs, according to [WRAP](#).
- **It strengthens relationships with staff.** Involving staff in reducing food waste can boost morale, motivation and retention by enabling your team to tackle an issue that many will care about.
- **It will make customers happy.** Being able to talk to customers about what the business is doing to address food waste, from offering doggy bags to sending surplus to charities and designing planet-friendly menus should lead to happier customers.

Make change happen: management to do list

Check stock and standing orders.

Many sites have standing orders for common items like bread, and milk. These tend to arrive every day whether they are needed or not. Make sure that the person responsible knows to check stock levels and to cancel these when they're not needed.

Adopt imperfect produce.

Work out which menu items – such as soups, stews, and composite dishes – could use wonky veg and other tasty but oft-overlooked ingredients, then talk to suppliers about how you can create demand for these items.

Get the team on side.

Discuss with employees why they should care about food waste. Highlight the environmental and social impacts, as well as the costs to the business.



Involve everyone.

Staff have amazing insight into what is being wasted and where. They can spot the dishes and garnishes that get left the most, and front-of-house staff can get direct customer feedback about portion sizes, what's on the plate and attitudes to food waste.

Create a culture of openness.

It is important to ensure there is a culture of openness and that people are not afraid to log food waste but feel free to share and discuss what has happened when things go wrong, and how it could be prevented in future.

Be a role model.

Managers have a responsibility to role model the behaviour they want to see. "You're looking to change a corporate culture, especially in the kitchen where we're facing some highly entrenched and deeply baked in behaviours," notes Tom Mansel-Pleydell, Business Development Director, Leanpath. "So ensure your colleagues understand their role and see waste saving behaviours modelled by others."

Do a food waste audit.

Measuring is managing: this is the best way to find out what is being wasted and why. Separating food waste into spoilage, plate waste, prep waste and any other relevant category, for example functions, helps to identify where and when the waste is created.

There are many tracking tools available, from a free WRAP [calculator](#), to high tech food measuring systems such as those offered by [Leanpath](#), [Winnow](#) and [Chef's Eye Tech](#).

A one-off audit is a great place to start, but regularly measuring food waste to track what's being thrown away and being able to find methods to tackle it is the most effective way to reduce food waste. On-going audits also keep food-saving behaviours front of mind.

Adopt Target, Measure, Act as your mantra.

Once you've done an audit to understand what you're wasting where, set a food waste reduction **target**, keep **measuring** your food waste in a consistent way, share what you've learned; and take **action** to reduce waste.

Tie food waste figures to accounts.

Online platforms, such as those offered by Fourth, can show food waste data and costs alongside sales and purchases. This makes it clear how food waste is impacting profit and loss. The systems also often allow senior managers to view site or aggregated data month by month to identify issues and successes.

Create goals and targets and reinforce the message regularly.

Incorporate food waste into your team's key performance indicators to make them accountable. Alongside this, set targets and goals, find ways of rewarding staff who deliver them, and provide feedback on results to keep staff motivated and engaged. Fun challenges and competitions can be particularly effective. Keep a noticeboard for ideas and updates, highlight best staff ideas, and create league tables to boost engagement.

Include tracking and solutions in daily briefings and meetings.

Ideally this should be at the start of every day or service. This allows people to share ideas around what has been going on and how to tackle any issues. It also means everyone understands their role in tackling food waste, what they are expected to do to reduce it, and where to put the waste that is generated. If the chef, during her weekly briefing with the team can say 'right guys we're killing this goal, keep it up', that constant flow of information and feedback is vital to maintain engagement.

Appoint a champion.

Everyone needs to be on board, but a champion can help drive the process and keep everyone on track.

Brief front of house.

Get front-of-house staff to chat to customers about your food waste efforts, in particular any efforts to reduce leftovers. They are a valuable route to finding out what customers think about portion sizes, garnishes and side dishes.

Tackle plate waste.

Review plate and portion sizes to see what’s being left and if that can be reduced. For waste you are unable to tackle, order in food safe doggy bags, and then brief staff to encourage customers to take uneaten food home with them. Use a sticker on the container to remind customers about food safety, ways to enjoy the food again and to promote your business. Find out more from the [Food Standards Agency](#) and [CIEH](#).

Roast dinner to go

Greene King is tackling buffet waste via a trial partnering with Too Good To Go. When the carvery finishes, the app lists leftover meals of meat, potatoes, veg and gravy for local people to collect for just £3.29. This keeps the scheme roughly cost neutral for the business. “It reduces food waste from the carvery dramatically and even though we’ve only rolled it out across half – about 110 – of the carveries, it’s already saving 1,200 meals each week.” says Daniel Stretton, Senior Supply Chain Manager. “And as it happens after the carvery has closed, it has not impacted on regular customers. It’s something we’re proud of – the value of food is still there and it is not wasted. And it is a good option for people who want some food. So it is win-win both ways.”

Link purchasing with stock checks and order numbers.

Track past sales and stock levels to identify patterns and influences on purchasing behaviours such as holidays and weather. Use this insight as well as booking numbers to influence your ordering, stock management and how much is prepped to reduce waste, and costs.

Get to grips with storage.

Well organised storage increases efficiency and avoids unnecessary food waste.

- Store new items at the back to ensure older items are used first.
- Store food as soon as it is delivered. Avoid overloading the fridge or freezer.
- Always include date labels so the rest of the team knows the use-by date of items.
- Use airtight containers or vacuum packing to keep prepared food fresh for longer.

Check your waste is going to the best place. Research local waste management contractors for better solutions to food waste. Investigate more environmentally friendly options for waste disposal – they could even be an income stream.

Tips for finding redistribution partners

Local groups can sometimes make use of specific items/ ingredients, and are often excellent partners

[City Harvest](#) redistributes food to local charities for distribution

[Company Shop](#) sells or gives away surpluses, so can help generate income

[FareShare](#) can help take surplus stock going out of date for charities

[OLIO](#) can redistribute surplus food to local people

[Too Good To Go](#) can find a market for surplus food and exposure to different customers

Kitchen dried tomatoes by Lexington Head Chef and TRASHED ambassador Tom Bradley

This is a perfect way to use up your salad bar tomatoes that look a little past their best. Place them into a mixing bowl, add a little salt and woody herbs like thyme or rosemary, place them onto a lined tray and leave them in a medium heat hot cupboard or in a low but dry oven overnight. The next day mix them into a good quality oil and add a smashed garlic clove or two. In a few days they will be the perfect replacement for expensive shop bought sundried tomatoes.

Find a redistribution partner.

Look for opportunities to redistribute surplus food within the community. You may need to mix ‘n’ match to find the redistribution system that works for you, and some even bring their logistics team on board to help with issues like freezing. “FareShare has transit vans so can pop in ad hoc and ask if we’ve got any stock,” explains James Jeffries from Bidfood. “We also manage it in reverse where we can contact them and deliver it into their units. We also use Company Shop, and have created further local partnerships, such as donating broken sugar bags to local beekeepers who feed it to their bees.”

Share impacts with staff to keep them motivated.

- Make time at staff meetings to share progress.
- Have space on a noticeboard for ideas and updates.
- Highlight top staff ideas.
- Set goals and targets.
- Create league tables to help staff stay interested and involved.
- Recognise and reward staff for their results.

Consider logistics and behaviours that might contribute to food waste.

From tracking buffet footfall alongside what is being wasted, to changing shift patterns so that items like [sushi](#) are made to order instead of prepared ahead which can lead to massive wastage. Assess what is going on in your site and how it is impacting food waste.

Offer excess food to staff.

Being able to take genuine surplus home can be a big perk for staff. Make it clear how and when staff are able to take food home so that everyone knows what is allowed.

Let customers serve their accompaniments.

In canteen style environments, allowing customers to serve themselves gives that person ownership over how hungry they are, rather than being tied to a standard portion. This approach was adopted at the University of Brighton, and contrary to expectations of customers overloading their plates, instead it helped to reduce waste.

Consider removing trays.

In canteen style environments, customers can be tempted to overload their trays with multiple items which can end up in the bin. The University of Brighton removed trays to combat this. But the messaging around the change was positioned positively. Instead of focussing on taking away the trays, it focussed on allowing customers to come back to the buffet to help themselves if they were still hungry. Again, rather than leading to people taking advantage of unlimited food, it actually reduced food costs and waste.

Put food waste savings on view.

Many of the technological food waste systems have running count displays which can be displayed for customers. But even without this, posters or chalkboards can be a great way to share the latest figures, and are particularly effective in canteen environments where customers tend to eat regularly.

Marketing

Why act?

Marketing influences the customer experience from before they've even walked through the door. This ranges from the offers and promotions which steer them to choose certain dishes and number of items, to the messaging that communicates the brand's culture and values. So, for the marketing team, there is a clear cut business case for action:

- **It keeps customers happy.** High profile media events like the climate strikes, Extinction Rebellion demonstrations and Hugh's War on Waste means customers expect food outlets to be taking action. Being able to communicate to customers what the business is doing to tackle food waste, from offering doggy bags to sending surplus food to charities and designing planet-friendly menus should lead to happier customers.
- **Build brand loyalty by being a responsible business that's trying to save its customers money.** Some initiatives can also help to introduce a brand to a slightly different demographic broadening your reach, according to Hayley Conick, UK MD from food redistribution app, Too Good To Go.
- **It contributes to the SDGs.** As the SDGs take hold and gain more attention from corporations, there's greater pressure to embrace them, with concrete efforts to reduce hunger or to help tackle water scarcity. Food is at the centre of the SDGs, so cutting food waste supports many of the other development goals. For example, tackling food waste helps to save water, biodiversity, reduce deforestation, reduce plastic packaging and so on.

Make change happen: marketing to do list

Harness your creativity.

"We need a new language to talk about food waste," observes Katie Flanagan, Associate, Food Programme, World Resources Institute. "We need to find new and inspiring ways to talk about food waste that will engage and motivate. So unleash your imagination and find engaging ways to communicate what happens to food waste and the impact of the organisation's efforts to tackle it."

Keep messaging simple.

As with any complex issue, it is most effective to focus on one key message at a time – for example meals or litres of water saved. Visual representations - of food waste or positive impacts – can also be really effective.



Stay simple

"A lot of people still don't understand why food waste is a problem," observes Catherine Hinchcliff, Head of Corporate Marketing, Bidfood. "There's more from a marketing point of view that business can do to highlight the issue of food waste and the impact it has on the environment, specifically that the methane created by food when it rots, if isn't diverted to the right waste streams, has a much higher global warming potential than carbon. Why should you care and how is your role able to have an impact on it? I think those are basic messages which often get missed."

Focus on the positives.

Use messaging which makes people feel good – for example by focussing on the people fed or crops saved from being left in the field – for better traction.

Hook messaging into existing campaigns.

Campaigns that already have good customer recognition and proven effectiveness, such as WRAP's consumer-facing [Love Food Hate Waste](#) campaign, provide a shorthand, and enable the transmission of complex messages more simply.

Make it part of the conversation.

Harness social media to get staff talking about food saving tips. Bartlett Mitchell recently introduced a workplace messaging app called Yapster – a blend of WhatsApp and Instagram. Employees can post pictures and direct message. "It's a great way to get access to everyone in the business at the same time," says Pete Redman, Chef Director. "It is very visual and helps us massively get the message out there."

Consider becoming a B Corp – or set up a charitable foundation.

B Corps incorporate your social and environmental objectives into your articles of association, whilst charitable foundations can demonstrate that a business is doing the right thing in a very tangible way. And those businesses, such as Pret A Manger, who have a charitable foundation, report that it is a significant reason why employees report that they like working for the company.

Collaborate with business partners and competitors for greater impact.

Collaborating with other business partners is really important. "Of course, businesses compete in certain areas but sustainability and reducing food waste shouldn't be one of them," notes Isabel Bradbury, Food Donations Co-ordinator, Pret. "We are really happy to share

our learnings with the wider industry. We also like working with other businesses to learn and share best practice. Influence goes up and down our supply chain – it’s possible for anyone to have an impact on changing the way someone thinks about food waste.”

**Coffee grounds panna cotta by Lexington
Head Chef and TRASHED ambassador, Tom
Bradley**

Take a trip to your coffee bar and collect the used grounds. Add a few handfuls to your cream when you’re heating it for your panna cotta recipe. Leave to infuse for a little while, then drain off and continue with your regular method for a coffee infused flavour.

Use your chefs to sell sustainability.

From pop ups with free samples and demonstrating food saving techniques, bringing the kitchen to the customer can really engage them in food waste efforts. Lexington have found that open plan kitchens and pop ups provide a direct opportunity for chefs to share their food waste efforts directly with customers, with great results.

Focus on a “when it’s gone, it’s gone” mentality.

Where it works within the offering, cooking fresh for the day and designing a menu that is set to run out is an effective way to manage food waste. This has the added advantage that it creates a “limited edition” element to the menu with dishes perceived as special and sought after.

Use nudges and norms to promote food savings.

From signs on the buffet that encourage people to only take what they need, to choosing serving bowls, plates sizes and utensils which unconsciously encourage diners to take and therefore waste less, find the nudges and tools suitable for your venue to drive food saving behaviours.

Offer doggy bags.

Make it easy and un-embarrassing for diners to take leftovers away to be enjoyed later, with messaging about why and how to reuse/reheat leftovers. Staff should be trained to offer bags as they collect plates at the end of a meal. Marketing collateral such as table talkers and beer mats can highlight the wins of taking leftovers home, without alienating customers.

Use a sticker on the container to remind customers about food safety, ways to enjoy the food again and as an additional branding opportunity once they have left your business. Find out more about how to give food away safely from the [Food Standards Agency](#) and [CIEH](#).

In the bag

Scotland's [Good To Go](#) doggy bag campaign was warmly welcomed by customers and led to average food waste reductions of 42%.

... and tell them how much money they'll save them.

Highlight how much money people would save by eating their leftovers and how much food waste in the home costs people.

We don't want to waste your money

"I think you need to follow the money," says Tom Mansel-Pleydell, Leanpath, "and say to the consumer 'you work hard for your money, we're delighted that you're spending it in our restaurant, we're really happy that you've enjoyed the food, if there's any left over we're not happy about that because you've paid for these great ingredients; we have a collective responsibility to make sure that the food we eat is high quality and it's valued'."

Sell on sustainable menus.

Customers are increasingly demanding more sustainable options, including more vegan and plant-based items, and dishes that can tell a sustainability story. Food waste can be part of this sell. From highlighting menus that create demand for overlooked cuts or crops, or which repurpose items from other areas of the business – for example, by using leftover porridge to make naan bread – are a great way to make sustainability tangible.

Offer a range of portion sizes.

Many people find large portions off-putting, and they can encourage people to overeat, so reframe reduced portions to focus on the positives. "When it comes to wellbeing, it's about reframing some of these changes as health-focused, so giving you smaller portions to

help you make better decisions,” says Katie Flanagan, Associate, Food Programme, World Resources Institute. “And if you’re still hungry you can come back for more. This may translate as marketing more variety and tasters rather than one massive portion.”

Serving up what customers want

“The latest Food Standards Agency research shows that consumer interest in food waste has never been so high,” observes Eleanor Morris, Special Advisor Hospitality and Food Service, WRAP.

“The Ship Inn in Cumbria is one business that has seen great improvements by tracking food waste using [Guardians of Grub](#) resources. It reduced plate waste by nearly 70% by simply offering optional portion sizes, particularly for chips. The kitchen also stopped putting garnishes on sandwiches, burgers and other meals as these were often returned untouched.”

Get customer feedback.

Front-of-house staff can chat to customers about the work going on to reduce leftovers as well as smaller portion sizes, garnishes and side dishes.

Create engaging campaigns to hook waste efforts onto.

From [Stand Up for Food Month](#), to the Zero Waste, Climate Action and [Food Conversation](#) weeks, campaigns can provide the hook to engage staff and consumers alike.

Flip your messaging.

Approaches, such as The Roebuck’s One Planet Plate menus which focus on one particular area of sustainability and one particular dish on the menu, turn making a dish out of leftovers or surplus into something empowering and positive. The pub also found that highlighting a special dish on the menu rather than trying to promote that everything is sustainable allowed them to focus on some great sustainability stories related to that menu, and made it easier to tie it in to social media as well.

Create a ripple effect.

Share tips and tricks around saving food, such as storage or repurposing, to inspire customers and employees when at home. Contract caterers in particular, have an opportunity to talk to their audience. “Customers can learn good habits and replicate them at

home. It has that downstream opportunity,” says Saasha Celestial-One, from OLIO.

Work with charitable partners to promote and engage.

Such partnerships can help operators to gain traction, and create excellent messaging opportunities. The National Trust found this with their partnership with the Food for Life scheme, which gave them the hook to include sustainability messaging on story boards and table talkers, and even included adding carbon impacts to some menus which became a great talking point with diners.

Bidfood found that working with WRAP and hosting the charity's food waste [tools](#) on their [Plate to Planet](#) portal was a good way to help Bidfood’s customers tackle a pressing problem whilst strengthening the client relationship. Pret A Manger has also found that getting data on its food redistribution partnership with OLIO provides valuable material for marketing messaging.

Create compelling case studies.

There are plenty of [case studies](#) out there to provide inspiration, and insiders consistently report that case studies are an effective way to tell stories and create buy in. So get your business committed to [target, measure, act](#) and measuring food waste, then share the results in case studies with your customers/clients to really gain traction.

“When operators use the [Your Business is Food](#) or [Guardians of Grub](#) resources, it’s the case studies that are compelling in our sustainability messaging,” notes Catherine Hinchcliff, Head of Corporate Marketing, Bidfood.

Focus on food waste in marketing and sales.

With questions about provenance and food waste increasingly common, ensuring the sales team is briefed and have communications ready to share can be invaluable and even a deal clincher. Contract caterers, wholesalers and suppliers all admit that being able to demonstrate food waste action – for example through partnerships with redistribution charities such as FareShare – and having marketing materials to share has helped them to win tenders, especially in the public sector.

Factor food waste into the sales offering for events.

“The whole industry is pushing more now for sustainable events,” notes Lynne Waite, Sustainability Consultant, Events Catering. “But the packages sold can vastly impact how much food waste is created.”

2 in 2,500

Olympia London managed to reduce buffet waste from a catered event for 2,500 people to only two portions, just by changing the nature of the offer from a standard buffet to lunch stations with Bento-style boxes where extra portions could be moved between locations or made up as required.

The lunches – which had a 47% uptake on plant based options – were served to delegates split across the hall with four food stations in each half.

“Half an hour before lunch service finished, we counted how many people were left in the queues at each station,” explains Abbey Short, Olympia’s Catering Manager. “Then Ben and his team started to reduce stock levels to only service what was left in the queue. He took 75 portions upstairs where we were due to serve crew an hour later and the portions were held hot and then served. Out of the 80 crew booked for lunch, only 72 ate so we were left with three portions - one of which my boss ate! And I’m sure the two remaining did not go in the bin.”

Perfectly under-ordered

15Hatfield, billed as London’s most sustainable venue, also routinely advises clients to under order by 10% to reflect the 10% attrition associated with events and say it has never had an issue with running out of food.

Clients are also given up to 6pm the night before to confirm numbers so that the kitchens can cater for the most accurate attendee numbers possible. The company has also found that increasing the plant-based offer can also dramatically reduce food waste as these items can be held for longer, and prepped to order more readily as they have quicker turnarounds. Offering small but perfectly-tailored to the audience menus is also helps to keep waste at a minimum.

Sell what is actually needed

"I'm having to educate sales teams," says Lynne Waite, "not just the kitchen team. When they are selling a package to a customer, they had a tendency to sell a huge range of meals, all of which could be adapted to suit specific dietary requirements. This could mean we end up having 70 different options. This causes us real problems in terms of what we are buying in and how we are producing it, and dramatically increases wastage." Instead, menus can be focussed on a few excellent dishes that incorporate dietary requirements as standard without the need for two versions of the same item.

Consider the customer journey.

Marketing touches every point in the customer journey so at each point – from deciding to eat at your outlet, to what is included in the offer, and how it's packaged and viewed once the diner is full – there are opportunities to influence exactly how much food is bought, consumed, and wasted.

Use every influence.

From menus, signage, emails, apps, push notifications, packaging, bags, social media: all channels along the customer journey provide the opportunity to nudge people to address food waste, notes Saasha Celestial-One, COO, OLIO. "So ask the question: 'who is the audience, what is the desired behaviour, how am I going to measure that behaviour, and where do I have an opportunity to influence them?'"

This includes influences outside of the restaurant site too. For example, contract caterers who have customers on-site can map out the actual user journey and identify hot spots for messaging – such as the stairs that potential customers will walk down when deciding where to eat for lunch. "So think," continues Saasha, "I will communicate our efforts on the stairs so when clients ask themselves: 'How am I going to choose where or what to eat?' they think, 'I'm going to get the in-house catering because I know they're ethical and responsible and are doing a great job.'"

Rotate messages.

Keep messages simple and rotate them using a range of tones – factual, inspirational and funny - and themes – such as food waste, health and nutrition, climate impact. These four or five different themes and tones can be mapped out to create a content calendar by channel.

Tailor your message to your audience.

Different motivators appeal to different audiences, so understand your demographic and use different messages for each target group.

Talk to the sustainability team.

Help with their messaging to ensure it will capture attention and change behaviour using slide decks and communication materials. The closer the relationship, the more messages will be aligned. The side benefit is that marketing will fully understand sustainability efforts, ensuring that your messaging is able to shout about sustainability.

Health and Safety

Why act?

If you work in health and safety, you can make a massive impact on food waste. Concerns over food safety can lead to good food being binned.

So what is your business case for tackling food waste?

- **You are the key to keeping edible food out of the bin.** So making sure the team genuinely understands health and safety and looking at the ways your systems can be tweaked to keep food safe and edible for longer can have a massive impact.
- **It helps to support your community.** Sending surplus to redistribution turns a waste headache into meals that people need.
- **Customers and clients expect it.** Wider media coverage means customers and clients expect operators to be taking action.

Make change happen: health and safety to do list

Prioritise food waste segregation.

Work with your waste contractor to enable thorough food waste segregation. Find out exactly what will happen to your food waste, then check that this is the most sustainable solution for it. Make sure that the process you decide on for food waste separation is consistent with your food safety management system.

Talk to teams on site.

Check whether head office regulations - for example stipulating food can be left on a buffet for only an hour - are leading to unnecessary food waste. Then review the guidelines to see if they can be tweaked to continue to ensure food safety and quality without causing so much waste.

Monitor and maintain food temperatures.

When food goes below the safety zone temperature it has to be discarded. Maintain regular monitoring of equipment to ensure it is keeping to temperature correctly, and check that staff know exactly when and why they have to monitor temperatures.

Make sure labelling is correct.

This is especially important with allergens. Ensure staff also include time and date labels on prepared food so the rest of the team knows when items can be eaten safely.



Find a food distribution partner.

Different distribution organisations can take different types of food, so find the ones that are most suited to your needs, from taking fresh produce to hot foods. Most can advise on food safety and work with you to discover the best system for taking items away safely. See Tips for finding redistribution partners.

Work with suppliers on packaging.

How an item is packaged has a big impact on its freshness, quality, shelf life and safety. Nando's has worked closely with its suppliers to find packaging which maintains the quality of product throughout delivery and transport. They also incorporated resealable lids which are easy for staff to use whilst allowing unused product to be stored in a safe hygienic way.

A few key food safety tips:

Bins should have close fitting lids to deter pests.

- Keep raw meat and egg waste away from ready to eat food preparation areas.
- Waste food should be removed as often as possible; ensure that hands are washed after handling waste food or waste bins.
- A risk assessment should be carried out in relation to waste handling as bags and bins can be heavy and bulky.
- Prevent leaks and ensure rapid clean up of splashes and spills: they are a significant cause of injuries in the kitchen.
- Factor in neighbours and odours into waste collections to minimise impact.
- You have a [duty of care](#) to ensure that waste is taken by an authorised collector and goes to a legitimate treatment/disposal site.

HR/Learning and Development

Why act?

Human Resources and learning and development help set the culture of an organisation by setting out roles and expectations and ensuring staff have the skills to do what is asked of them. This means you can reinforce a culture of valuing food whilst setting out people's roles and responsibilities.

For the HR and learning and development team, there is a cast iron business case for action:

- **Staff expect it.** High profile media events like the climate strikes, Extinction Rebellion demonstrations and Hugh's War on Waste means employees expect food outlets to be taking action. Being able to talk about what the business is doing to tackle food waste from offering doggy bags to sending surplus to charities and designing planet-friendly menus should lead to happier staff.
- **It helps to recruit staff.** With employees – particularly millennials and Generation Z and Y, increasingly looking to work for a responsible business, taking action on reducing food waste demonstrates a really tangible way the business is tackling issues such as the climate crisis and food inequality.
- **It boosts morale.** Involving staff can boost morale and retention by enabling them to tackle an issue that many care about. Giving staff the ability to come up with ideas for keeping food from being wasted also allows them to be creative, which in turn improves engagement and job satisfaction.
- **It supports the business.** With the majority of consumers expecting business to be [responsible](#), adding sustainability into job descriptions and training demonstrates genuine commitment.

Make change happen: HR/Learning and Development to do list

Build food saving targets into job descriptions.

Including food-saving behaviours, waste separation and the measurement of food waste into role responsibility and KPIs demonstrates that these activities are non-negotiable. It also shows staff the business's commitment to fostering a food saving culture. For example, the Smart Group has a sustainability statement built into new job descriptions for any permanent staff, which details a responsibility to manage and monitor their food waste.

Of course, this does not have to end at food waste. BaxterStorey have written requirements to be waste, energy and water efficient into all its job descriptions.



Make food waste management part of freelance contracts.

With many operators relying on large numbers of freelancers or agency staff, it can be challenging for a senior chef to watch an agency chef or monitor all the freelancers whilst they are in the business. Writing food waste expectations into job briefs and contracts means that staff should arrive with a better understanding of what is expected of them.

Make sustainability part of inductions.

Include food waste reduction and food saving behaviours routinely in inductions so that new staff understand what they need to do with food waste and why, and how helping to prevent food waste in the first place is a key responsibility for them.

Quick and easy induction

The Roebuck have a 15-minute sustainability presentation for new joiners that is completed online with plenty of opportunity to reach out to the CSR to ask questions. "It explains what we are passionate about and explains that these are some of the practices that will affect your day to day." says Clare Clark, Sustainability Co-ordinator. "We talk about some of the projects that we are involved in, about some of the suppliers that we use, recycling and food waste."

Get the team on side.

Discuss with employees why they should care about food waste. [Highlight](#) the environmental and social impacts, as well as the costs to the business.

Make it part of ongoing training and pitch it at the right level.

Make sure that the reduction of food waste and food saving behaviours are routinely included in inductions, staff development and training. Some operators include food waste into more general sustainability induction segments, but the key is that new staff

understand what they need to do with food waste and why, and how helping to prevent food waste in the first place is also a key responsibility for them.

Some operators, such as Sodexo and Greene King, have modules on sustainability topics such as food waste in their internal intranet which staff are expected to complete. “Increasingly we are having modules about CSR and about our footprint,” says William Buckman, Category Manager, Sodexo. “And HR own that process from induction and ongoing into employment with an online learning tool. You have to have completed the training by the year end or you don’t get the requisite score for the end of year review. It is a very blunt tool which is not always invoked, but it is an approach that people could mirror.”

Flash of inspiration

One of the challenges is finding the time and space to incorporate sustainability discussions in hectic kitchen environments. BaxterStorey have capitalised on coffee breaks by creating Green Flash: peer-led training modules on topics such as food waste and water. These provide facts, figures and prompts that can facilitate a green-themed discussion of working practices, challenges and solutions over a 20-minute break. The relaxed, informal and, importantly, staff-led nature of this approach has helped inspire staff to find and implement solutions.

Ensure staff know what to do.

Engage staff with the urgent need to act by highlighting facts and ensure they understand exactly what needs to happen with food waste.

“We train our teams to use everything they can. It’s important for us as we buy by the kilo and sell by the kilo!” explains Brian Mesmain, Executive Chef, Tibits. “Like including the stalks from herbs if they are still tender enough, or the trimmings from asparagus for soup. Some of our newer chefs look at us strangely to begin with, but then they get into the routine.”

Consider creating a specific job role which tackles food waste.

This can help to really embed activity into company strategy and ensures someone keeps the focus on food-saving behaviour. For example, The National Trust have introduced a new environmental practice manager role to spearhead work around energy use and equipment, food waste, packaging and reduction of pollutants like FOG (fats, oils and grease).

Inspiring staff

Saacha Celestial-One, COO, OLIO: "Research shows that Millennials want to work for companies that are making a difference. They want to work for companies that they feel have a social mission or take their social issues seriously." "People get really emotional about food waste and we have become very numb to it, but most companies completely underestimate the positive response they're going to get from their customers and from their staff when they make these positive changes. And you can't measure that in terms of money saved. There is an intangible 'I work for a company that is doing the right thing' or 'I work for a company that contracts a company to serve me food that is doing the right thing'. That has a ripple effect on productivity, on morale, on brand which is hard to quantify."

Create engaging campaigns to hook waste efforts onto.

From [Stand Up for Food Month](#), to [Zero Waste Week](#), campaigns can provide the hook that engages staff and consumers alike.

Flip your messaging.

Approaches, such as The Roebuck's One Planet Plate menus which focus on one particular area of sustainability and one particular dish on the menu, turn making a dish out of leftovers or surplus, into something empowering and positive. The pub also found that highlighting a special dish on the menu rather than trying to promote that everything is sustainable, allowed them to focus on some great sustainability stories related to that menu, and made it easier to tie it into social media as well.

Rotate messages.

Keep messages simple and rotate them using a range of tones – factual, inspirational and funny - and themes – such as food waste, health and nutrition, climate impact. These four or five different themes and tones can be mapped out to create a content calendar by channel.

Tailor your message to your audience.

Different motivators appeal to different audiences, so understand your demographic and use different messages for each target group.

Create goals and targets and reinforce the message regularly.

Incorporate food waste into your team's key performance indicators to make them accountable. Alongside this, set targets and goals, find ways of rewarding staff who deliver them, and provide feedback on results to keep staff motivated and engaged. Fun challenges and competitions can be particularly effective. Keep a noticeboard for ideas and updates, highlight best staff ideas and create league tables to boost engagement.

HR Resources:

- Guide to setting KPIs: <https://www.kpi.com/blog/2016/01/20/ultimate-guide-to-key-performance-indicators-in-hr>
- McKinsey Guide to Change Management: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-four-building-blocks--of-change>
- Guide to setting performance targets: <https://www.bernardmarr.com/default.asp?contentID=1013>

Chef de partie/commis chef/kitchen porter

Why act?

Whether you are the chef de partie or kitchen porter, your direct contact with the food served puts you at the coal face of food waste. From preparation to correct storage and portion sizes, you can help save food every time you touch it.

- **Save time and effort.** Time spent prepping, cooking and plating up food that ends up in the bin is time and effort wasted. From peeling potatoes – one of foodservice’s most commonly wasted items, and [75%](#) of which will end up in the bin – to ensuring the right portion size goes on the plate, your influence can make a massive difference.
- **It’s a concrete way to help address the climate crisis.** It takes an enormous amount of time, resources and energy to produce our food. And then the hospitality and foodservice industry alone wastes a million tonnes of it every year – [75%](#) of which could be eaten. When this waste goes to landfill it produces greenhouse gases, which in turn causes global temperatures to rise. Helping to prevent food waste means you can help reduce these impacts.
- **It saves money which could instead be spent on staff.** Food waste costs the average outlet [£10,000](#) a year. Saving that could mean money for more shifts or staff members.

Make change happen: chef de partie/ commis chef/kitchen porter to do list

Give the correct portion size.

Especially in busy periods, it’s common to portion by eye and, often it is a case of all hands on deck being called to plate up, even if this is not your primary job role. But this often leads to over-portioning. So make sure you know what is the right portion size.

Pre-portioning popular items such as sides or mixes, such as a fajita mix, so they can be easily and accurately served up during busy periods of service, is an efficient way to tackle this. Doing a regular portion test at the start of every service - where everyone measures out a portion of popular items such as chips - is a visual reminder of exactly what that portion looks like and helps keeps portions on track. Know how many portions should result from each recipe, and weigh items like burger patties to check they are correct.



See it, sorted

One pub site managed to reduce their spoilage waste by over 60% in just two weeks after a food waste audit alerted them to two main waste culprits. They were over-portioning and cooking off for too long at the end of busy periods leading to spoilage. The dramatic savings came just from introducing a portion test at the start of every service, and adjusting the amount they were cooking off.

Trim with care.

Trimming can be a major source of food waste so do it with care to prevent unnecessary trim waste. Be creative and ask for training – not only will this help you reduce food waste but it will increase your skill set too. Some trimmings – like salmon – can be utilised in other dishes, so get creative and share ideas with the team.

Cut with care.

Kitchens are pressured environments which can lead to things being done quickly rather than accurately and see good food going to waste. Try to ensure you're only cutting off whatever is not needed, and see how it can help food to go further. It's also good to question whether a job needs doing – many places have found keeping the skins on vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, adds flavour whilst dramatically reducing waste and prep effort.

Saved skins

KFCs skin-on fries saved the equivalent of [35 million potatoes](#) in the year they were launched. But keeping the skins also had other [benefits](#). The fries are taller and wider, so are better for dipping, have improved taste, and contain less calories and less fat per serving. The added chunkiness also means they keep their heat for longer.

Question everything.

Ask yourself: can it be eaten? From including the stalks of herbs, using asparagus trimming for soup, shredding cauliflower leaves into coleslaw or stir fries, freezing broken pie portions with leftover soft scoop ice cream to make “smushed-pie-sundaes”, to using cucumber or tomato ends in pickles and chutneys, or scraping fish bones to create a fish tartar, there are so many ways to reduce trim waste and to find imaginative ways to use waste that cannot be avoided. So ask questions as to why things are being discarded, and share your food saving suggestions with the rest of the team.

You’re at the frontline of food, so you are perfectly placed to see what is being wasted and to come up with ideas of how it could be used instead.

Porridge anyone?

Steven Finn, Vice President Food Waste Prevention, Leanpath, shares the anecdote of a worker at a college he met who told him he made 10lbs of oatmeal for breakfast every morning, and threw away 5lbs of oatmeal at the end. “For 30 years he said he never questioned that behaviour, until they started to do a food waste audit,” explains Steve. “Once food waste data gets shared, people start to question, change behaviours, change operations and change their thinking. It’s powerful.”

Take pride.

You’ve put time and effort into creating the food that’s served, so efforts to log and reduce waste or redistribute surplus food is preserving your hard work. Pret A Manger has found that this approach can be really motivating.

“At Pret our food is freshly made every day and we don’t keep anything overnight.” says Isabel Bradbury, Food Donations Co-ordinator, Pret. “But we also think throwing leftovers in the bin at the end of the day is madness. Knowing it is going to a charity who needs it is satisfying as it means none of the food, or the time and effort taken in preparing the food, is wasted.”

Match production with need.

From cooking off for too long at the tail end of busy periods, to over producing or taking too many items out of the freezer which end up not being used, see what keeps being wasted and think how you can tweak your actions, or make suggestions to the rest of the team to reduce it.

Get to grips with storage.

Clearly communicated handovers and well organised storage increases efficiency and avoids unnecessary food waste.

- Store new items at the back to ensure older items are used first.
- Store food as soon as it is delivered. Avoid overloading the fridge or freezer.
- Always include date labels so the rest of the team knows the use-by date of items.
- Use airtight containers or vacuum packing to keep already prepared food fresh for longer.

Front of house

Why act?

Front of house staff - from waiting staff to servers and concierge - are the door to the customer and play an important role in tackling food waste. This ranges from influencing food choices, two-way information on portion sizes and whether people take doggy bags, to telling customers about the business' food waste efforts.

For the front of house staff there are many great reasons to tackle food waste:

- **It's a concrete way to help address the climate crisis.** It takes an enormous amount of time, resources and energy to produce our food, and then the hospitality and foodservice industry alone wastes a million tonnes of it every year – [75%](#) of which could be eaten. When this waste goes to landfill it produces greenhouse gases, which in turn causes global temperatures to rise. Helping to prevent food waste means you can help reduce these impacts.
- **It will make customers happy.** High profile media events like the climate strikes, Extinction Rebellion demonstrations and Hugh's War on Waste means customers expect food outlets to be taking action. Being able to talk to customers about what the business is doing to tackle food waste; from offering doggy bags to sending surplus to charities and designing planet-friendly menus should lead to happier customers (and potentially bigger tips!).

Make change happen: front of house to do list

Feedback what you see and hear to the kitchen and menu designers.

Pass on, and ideally log, the most common leftovers and least popular garnishes and side dishes so the kitchen and menu designers know what is working and what is being wasted. Also make sure you share any customer feedback about what they like and what they leave, and their opinions on portion sizes and accompaniments.

Keep the kitchen up-to-date on customer numbers.

The better the kitchen understands the customer flow, the easier it is to prepare exactly the right amount of food, and to slow down when things are not busy.



Talk about food waste with customers.


Share with them the work that is going on behind the scenes to reduce food waste and help them to choose options that match their appetite. Plus, offer doggy bags when they have leftovers they could eat later.

You can also:

- Draw their attention to any posters or similar materials which talk about food waste efforts or speak to your team leader about creating some.
- Describe the culture of the restaurant around waste and explain how the guest can play their part.
- Talk about portion sizes – point out the range of choices when dishes have more than one size option, and ask how hungry people are when they request advice on what to order.
- Draw attention to items like skin-on chips and why they're better – in this case, keeping the skin on reduces waste whilst adding taste and increasing fibre to make them healthier.
- Highlight options that help reduce food waste. For example, by sharing how a dish which uses less common cuts of meat or a wonky/unused veg helps provide a market for that product, ensuring good food is not wasted.
- Build customer loyalty by highlighting how your organisation values its ingredients and is invested in creative dining experiences which aim to keep food feeding people not bins – see Trashed case study box.
- Offer doggy bags with re-heating/re-using tips.

TRASHED

Lexington's TRASHED brand focuses on creating delicious dishes which utilise sustainable breeds and cuts of underused meats and vegetables that generally end up being thrown away. The concept is being rolled out across client sites to raise awareness around food waste.

 *A great leading question for front of house is: ‘How hungry are you today?’*

Tom Mansell-Pleydell,
Leanpath

Bring up food waste in team meetings.

Ask managers to share food waste figures so you can see how you’re doing, and get everyone talking about what’s been going on and what can be done to tackle it.

Lobby to have food waste savings on view.

Many of the technological food waste systems have running count displays which can be put up for customers. But posters or chalkboards can be just as effective at sharing the latest figures.

Find leftovers a good home.

From clearing it with management to allow staff to take home leftovers, to posting surplus food on food sharing apps such as OLIO or Too Good To Go, there are lots of ways front of house staff can stop good food from ending up in the bin.

about footprint intelligence

The ever-shifting sustainability debate makes it vital for businesses to have accurate intelligence to make informed decisions. Footprint Intelligence is Footprint Media Group’s research and analysis division, helping companies develop successful strategies in the context of responsible business practices.

Footprint Intelligence aims to drive, promote and share best practice by helping industry resolve pressing sustainability issues. It asks tough questions and finds answers. It uses research and industry insight to bring businesses together to identify solutions, opportunities, trends and challenges.

about Fourth

Fourth provides end-to-end, best-in-class technology and services for the restaurant and hospitality industries. Their inventory and workforce management solutions, coupled with the industry’s most complete data and analytics suite, give operators the actionable insights they need to control costs, scale profitability, improve employee engagement, and maintain compliance. Since its merger with US-based HotSchedules, Fourth serves more than 7,000 customers across 120,000 locations globally. For more information, please visit www.fourth.com.

about this research

Footprint Intelligence was commissioned by Fourth to create a guide outlining how different job roles could tackle food waste. The results are a mix of desk-based research and semi-structured interviews with industry experts. The sample includes operators, waste reduction/management solutions providers, and environmental consultants.

Footprint Intelligence is indebted to the industry experts who generously gave their time and insights as part of the research process.

report authors

Amy Fetzer is Head of Research and Analysis for Footprint Media Group. A journalist, author and consultant, Amy is passionate about helping individuals and organisations become more sustainable and more successful. She is the co-author of *Climb the Green Ladder: Make Your Company and Career More Sustainable*. Current and past clients include EY, WRAP, Canvas8, Sodexo and Hewlett-Packard. Amy has an MSc with Distinction in Sustainable Development from the University of Surrey, winning the Roland Clift Award for Environment and Sustainability Research.

Siobhan O'Neill is a Research Analyst for Footprint Intelligence. With a background in journalism and communications, Siobhan specialises in contract catering, particularly in the public sector. She has worked with the world’s leading hotels on their sustainability and corporate responsibility programmes and has a particular interest in the many ways that the hospitality sector can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, improving the lives and wellbeing of customers and employees around the world.

