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ASSOCIATION



FOOD WASTE



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#86FOODWASTE

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How
SMALL STEPS
can have a
BIG IMPACT
on reducing
waste and
**PROTECTING
THE PLANET**

01. Menu Redesign Concepts
02. Donation Guidance
03. Customer Messaging
- 04. Procurement Best Practices**
05. Employee Engagement
06. Diversion Resources
07. Food Waste Self Audit

WHITE PAPER
INFO SERIES

04

A combined effort with



FIGHTING FOOD WASTE IN RESTAURANTS

PROCUREMENT BEST PRACTICES

The following guidance highlights best practices for ordering, receiving, and storing food to reduce food waste.

The guidance is pulled from interviews with chefs, industry professionals, and leading nonprofits who have published guidance for restaurants.

STEP 1: ORDERING

 **Vendor relationships are essential.**

Managing the relationship between your business and your vendor is the first step in managing your food waste. Work with suppliers that limit waste and ensure quality; ask for samples from vendors to ensure the product will meet your needs. Ensure there is full transparency regarding price and relationships with other vendors.



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 **Change your aesthetic expectations.**

Order from suppliers who stock second-harvest or imperfect produce. It's often cheaper, just as fresh, and provides a good opportunity to engage with guests on new and creative food ideas. By using imperfect produce, restaurants across the country could save \$132 million per year according to a [ReFED study](#).

 **Order with care.**

Determining how much you need per day and per week can be challenging but using historical cover-count trends and sales can provide a very accurate forecast of what you will need. This is likely common practice for your restaurant, but periodically reviewing your cover-counts may uncover some additional savings potential.

 **Consider all your options.**

Evaluating ingredients to determine what needs to be sourced fresh and what is just as good frozen or pre-prepped can significantly reduce spoilage and prep waste. Remember to ask your pre-prepped-food supplier what they are doing with their scraps to make sure they're giving it a second life or composting it if re-using it is not possible.

 **Know your needs.**

Adjust your standing orders based on business volume, pack sizes, or minimum-order quantities to reduce possibility of spoilage. Explore different supplier packaging options that can keep food fresher longer.

 **STEP 2:
RECEIVING**

 **Check orders for quality.**

Discuss quality controls with your vendor, as some items go bad quickly (e.g., herbs, which often expire due to the way they're packaged).

 **Check orders for accuracy.**

Even though it may be a busy time at the restaurant, double-checking your orders with the delivery rep at the time of the delivery can lead to less waste (and frustration) when you notice the order is wrong hours after the delivery.

 **STEP 3:
STORING**

 **You can never be too organized.**

Adopt and use a simple organization arrangement that allows chefs and procurement managers to easily identify items that are running low and need to be reordered. This can significantly cut down on spoilage and is an easy way to passively communicate across staff.

 **Maintain and reinforce storage best practices.**

Ensure all inventory best practices are followed including FIFO and labeling prepared food by name, use-by date, food safety information, and temperature standards.

 **Donate.**

Review food stores monthly and donate under-used food. Remember to track this information since any food you donate is food you over-ordered. Refer to the donation guide for more information on how to set up a program and the potential for tax deductions.

 **Understand your waste.**

Dedicate food-waste bins to the storage area, track the cost of waste, and conduct monthly audits to uncover and resolve challenges.





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COMMON PITFALLS

✓ **OVER-ORDERING**

Over-ordering can occur when decisions are based on intuition instead of data. Carefully determining your Periodic Automatic Replacements (PARs) is extremely useful when planning and calculating how popular a dish will be against your forecasted guest count that day.

✓ **FEAR OF RUNNING OUT**

Track “high use” items that you use daily, such as bread or other complimentary starters, to better understand how much you use and how much you throw out. You may find you can reduce your volumes. Keep backups of these items in the freezer to have on hand for unusually busy days.

✓ **LACK OF COMMUNICATION**

Ensure there is frequent communication between the front- and back-of-house, and between chefs and the purchasing manager.

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Sources: First Principle Group; ReFED Restaurant Food Waste Action Guide & Consumer Education Campaigns; The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste: Restaurants - Champions 12.3