

Putting the Brakes on Waste



Summary

The Brakes Group supplies grocery, fresh and frozen food supplies and catering equipment to a wide range of customers, from pubs, restaurants and coffee shops, to schools, colleges, care homes and many more businesses with a food service requirement, in the UK, Ireland, France and Sweden.

In 2012, Brakes was one of the founding members of the Hospitality and Food Service Agreement (HaFSA). As well as its commitment to the HaFSA targets, Brakes is striving towards achieving a zero waste to landfill target by the end of 2015. The company's own figures show that it has made excellent progress towards its target, and in 2014 was successful in diverting 98% of all waste away from landfill. Having achieved this, Brakes was keen to focus its efforts further up the waste hierarchy and look at ways to prevent food and packaging waste that is still produced each year.

Supported by WRAP, Brakes embarked on a project to analyse the annual waste arisings from its ambient, chilled and frozen depots in order to identify waste prevention opportunities.

Key Facts

- By analysing waste arisings, more opportunities can be identified for preventing waste being produced and/or for managing it away from landfill or energy recovery.
- Cross-site sharing of good practice and experience is key to waste prevention in complex food service operations.
- Improving the measuring and monitoring of waste is integral to taking action on waste.
- By implementing a range of measures, including making changes to stock handling to reduce damages, rolling out a consistent approach to the management of surplus stock and increasing the segregation of food waste, savings of approximately £100,000 per year could be made by Brakes.

Project background

In 2014, Brakes segregated approximately 3,000 tonnes of food and associated packaging waste from across all its UK sites. Approximately 2,000 tonnes of this waste was food waste.

The majority of food waste was de-packaged and sent to anaerobic digestion by Brakes' waste contractor. Food waste prevention was identified as a key area where Brakes could make savings and contribute to the HaFSA targets.

Also, some food and associated packaging waste was still being disposed of as residual waste with this stream sent for energy from waste (EfW), or landfill, if EfW facilities were not available.

Project aims

Brakes has in the region of 50 depots in the UK and Ireland. There are three key areas where waste occurs:

- Product damage on lorries and returns from customers;
- Products supplied too close to their sell by date; and
- Damage within depots from mishandling products.

The project explored the root causes of waste and identified opportunities to prevent waste arising. The aim was to develop an action plan to implement waste prevention across the group.

Site visits

In order to fulfil long and sometimes complex supply chains across thousands of fresh, frozen and ambient product lines, Brakes operates across a range of different sites, including national and regional distribution centres, and satellite depots and warehouses.

The project involved working with local staff to carry out a review of waste arisings at a number of sites. The site reviews

focused on a selection of site types, including National Distribution Centres, Regional Distribution Centres, Depots and Satellite depots. The aim was to identify opportunities and solutions for waste prevention that could be rolled out across other similar sites within the Group.

Data analysis

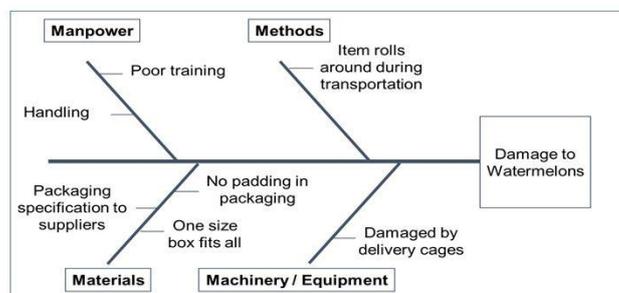
A review was undertaken of current waste management practices by analysing waste management data for all Brakes' sites, using data provided by their waste contractor. The aim of undertaking this review was to compare how waste was managed at different sites, how comprehensive recycling services were, and the types of waste disposed of at each site.

Root cause analysis

An important component of the project was the delivery of a waste prevention workshop, attended by key personnel from across different Brakes' depots.

Building on the opportunities identified during the site reviews, the workshop facilitated a discussion of these opportunities, and further reasons for waste were explored.

Using a Root Cause Analysis tool used in the manufacturing sector, "Ishikawa diagrams" were produced by Brakes employees to determine the root cause of certain waste streams.



Above: example Ishikawa diagram

In addition to the root cause analysis, the workshop facilitated the sharing of good practice and enabled colleagues from different Brakes sites to learn from the experience and achievements of employees at other sites in reducing waste.

Opportunities and action plan

The site visits and workshop identified opportunities in 7 main areas:

1. Data collection:

Adopting a consistent approach to recording reasons for waste arisings is vital so that rates of damage and areas of concerns such as product quality are identified. Importantly, sufficient detail on waste must be captured for analysis.

2. Monitoring and benchmarking:

Benchmarking data against an appropriate metric is key in order to enable sites to be compared (where appropriate) and to compare these with historical data. This approach in itself does not lead to waste prevention savings; however, it can identify sites that are performing well, and practices from those sites can be reviewed for adoption in sites that are not performing as well.

3. Stock handling:

Reviewing guidance that is issued on how to palletise goods for delivery and the training that is delivered to staff on this. Reducing instances of stock mis-rotation through the sharing of good practice should also be considered.

4. Packaging:

Exploring the use of returnable trays (particularly where there is an established supply chain in place) may lead to a reduction in packaging waste. There is also the potential to review the palletisation guidance provided to suppliers, and to conduct periodic packaging audits to ensure

that items delivered are packaged appropriately to minimise damage within the Brakes network.

5. Stock control:

Reviewing the system used for forecasting and ordering stock to evaluate whether it, or another software solution, could provide a 'smarter' system to account for stock already onsite. There is also the potential to trial stocking of fresh produce at depot level to reduce waste.

6. Redistribution of surplus food:

Opportunities exist in regard to the use of staff sales arrangements and surplus food redistribution. Some systems are in place at some of the depots, however there is potential for further roll out across the Brakes network.

7. Waste management:

Increasing waste segregation at various depots. This includes more effective use of existing systems as well as the introduction of new collections for food waste and dry recycling streams.

Outcomes and lessons learned

Food service logistics operations are complex, and in many instances preventing waste will rely on collaboration and cooperation between different sites throughout Brakes' own network. Commitment from senior management is also vital.

As well as specific waste prevention relating to how products are physically managed within the depots, there are opportunities to prevent waste by introducing more robust systems for measuring and monitoring waste, by increasing the redistribution of food at individual sites and by encouraging personnel to share their knowledge and experience across the company.

Following the site visits and workshop, all opportunities were evaluated in terms of potential savings and ease of implementation. A waste prevention action plan, consisting of over 40 actions was developed to take forward to implementation. The action plan identified potential waste prevention opportunities of 770 tonnes out of the 3,000 tonnes produced each year, and an opportunity to recycle a further 1100 tonnes per year.

The Hospitality and Food Service Agreement

In June 2012, WRAP launched the Hospitality and Food Service Agreement, a voluntary agreement to support the sector in reducing waste and increasing recycling rates.

For more information, as well as tools and guidance, on WRAP's work with the hospitality and food service sector, visit www.wrap.org.uk/hospitality or email hafs@wrap.org.uk

"This study gives an invaluable insight into the causes of food and packaging waste. We intend to use the detail of the report to implement a number of the preventative measures identified taking into account the practical and commercial considerations."

**Ken Mulholland, Brakes Group
Environment Manager**

This project is covered in more detail in a **webinar on YouTube:**

[Putting the Brakes on Waste \(webinar\)](#)

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