

Food waste prevention at Andras Hotels

Summary

Andras House operate the Days Hotel in Belfast and took part in a nine week trial to actively monitor and reduce food waste. By using a smart meter to measure food waste, the hotel was able to identify savings and reduce the amount of food being thrown away through:

- Use of smaller buffet plates to encourage people to take only what they need, whilst allowing return visits to the buffet;
- Cooking smaller amounts at a time to improve food freshness and reduce the risk of over production; and
- Offering just one tailored menu for tour groups per day.

Following the implementation of these measures **the hotel is now saving over £400 per week, approximately £21,000 per year**. Replicating these measures across all hotels in Belfast would save **around £59,000 per year for the whole group**.

Background

Andras House hotels now has 700 beds in Belfast under the Days Hotel, Ramada, Ibis, Holiday Inn Express and Cordia brands. The Days Hotel has 250 bedrooms and a 150 seat restaurant.



"Working with WRAP enabled us to target our resources on specific areas of food service to realise the greatest savings and benefits for our guests."

Syed Ejaz, General Manager

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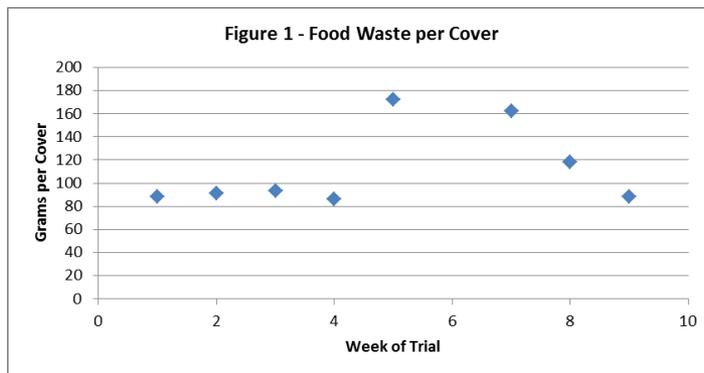
Food waste monitoring system

A smart meter to measure food waste, from Winnow Solutions, was installed in the hotel's kitchen to track kitchen waste and customer plate waste. The system linked digital floor scales, for the food waste bin, to a tablet computer. This allowed food waste to be quickly weighed and categorised by selecting icons on the tablet touch screen. This weight data was linked to cost information to calculate the 'true cost of waste' for the hotel. Data was transmitted to a remote server and analysis undertaken to produce daily and weekly reports for the hotel.

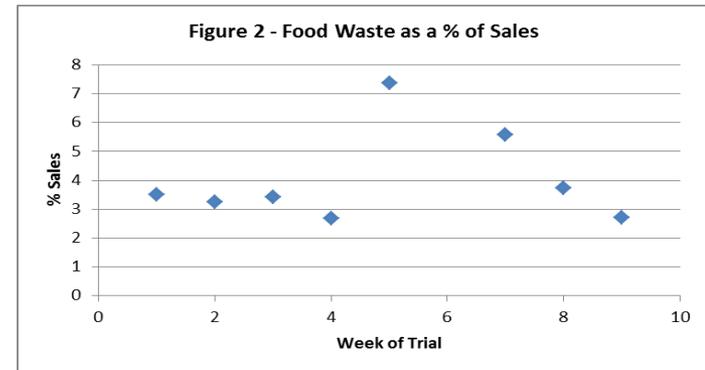
Raising awareness and taking action

While the head chef was already proactive in trying to minimise food waste, the system highlighted the fact that the hotel had higher levels of food waste from evening buffets than from the breakfast buffet. Telephone calls and meetings about the weekly reports helped the staff to consider the causes of buffet waste, with progress being driven by the hotel's general manager.

Some progress was made in the first four weeks of the trials. However, the general manager was on leave during Weeks 5 and 6 and the resulting lack of scrutiny led to an increase in food waste. On his return, tighter controls were re-established and food waste was driven down (Figure 1).



While the weight reduction per cover was not that apparent (Figure 1), savings were made in cost terms (Figure 2) due to the reduced wastage of higher value items in the buffet, such as eggs and meat. During the trial itself, food waste per week dropped from approximately 3.5% to around 2.7%, an increase in profit of around £120 per week.



Since the trial ended, further measures have been taken:

- Reduced plate sizes for the buffet (down from 9" to 6" diameter), to help customers with portion control choices but also allowing customers to come back for more if they wish;
- Cooking smaller amounts at a time to improve food freshness and reduce the risk of over production; and
- Offering just one menu for tour groups per day.

Overall food waste savings at the hotel are now over £400 per week, equivalent to around £21,000 per year.

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Further improvements

Good progress has been made at the Days Hotel and the company now wants to extend this good practice to the other hotels in the group. This is being done through:

- Developing new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and an associated action plan;
- Developing a waste procedure that captures food waste prevention and use of leftovers to ensure consistency across the group; and
- Regular meetings of Green Team Champions from each hotel to share good practice.

If the lessons from the trial can be replicated across each of the hotels on a 'per bed' basis, total annual potential savings are in the region of **£59,000 in reduced food purchase costs.**

Top tips

- ✓ Actively track what food is being thrown away.
- ✓ Check your specifications (e.g. meal element portions and preparation procedures) and make sure these are met consistently.
- ✓ Prepare and cook in small batches to respond to demand 'on the go'.
- ✓ Make the most of meat, fruit and vegetables through careful trimming (e.g. reducing the end waste on carrots).
- ✓ Where possible use pre-portioned meal elements.
- ✓ Take particular care over portioning of chips, vegetables and salad garnish.
- ✓ Maximise use of leftovers (i.e. prepared not served), e.g. in daily 'specials'.
- ✓ Offer 'lite' bite versions of main courses.
- ✓ Ask customers if there are meal items they don't want that are included in a meal, such as tomatoes with their cooked breakfast.
- ✓ Reduce side dish and buffet plate and bowl sizes, but allow top ups.

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 on WRAP's work with the Hospitality and Food Service Sector, visit www.wrap.org.uk/hospitality or email hafs@wrap.org.uk



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