

Food waste prevention at City Hotel, Derry

Summary

City Hotel Derry undertook an eleven week trial using a smart food waste monitoring system in its restaurant kitchen to help understand the true cost of the food waste being generated.

The smart food waste monitoring system provided the hotel with the opportunity to identify and then investigate the quantities and sources of the food waste. Building on a solid foundation of good practice and staff training the use of the system resulted in an increase in awareness for kitchen staff of the amount of food being thrown away. This increased awareness, supported by an increased management focus, led to a steady decrease in food waste over the trial of over 30% per cover.

During the smart food waste monitoring system trial, the Hotel also saw improved food waste segregation and increased rates of recycling.

Background

City Hotel, Derry is a 4 star hotel offering 158 guestrooms, a conference and events floor, with nine meeting and event rooms, and a health and fitness club. There are two restaurants in the hotel, Thompson's restaurant which offers an a La Carte menu and Coppin's Bar which offers a snack menu.



“Using the smart food waste measurement system has really helped us to understand the composition of our waste, which in turn has led to a reduction in food waste. The hotel is keen to build on this and explore ways that food waste can be reduced further.”

Blathnaid McCole, Food and Beverage Manager

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Smart Food Waste Monitoring System

Prior to the installation of the smart food waste monitoring system, City Hotel had been separating food waste to ensure that as many recycled materials as possible could be removed from their waste stream even though at the time there was no local food waste collection available. Recently City Hotel have procured a food waste collection, which has diverted their food waste from landfill to recycling.

To raise awareness amongst staff of where the food waste was coming from and why, the hotel decided to participate in the smart food waste monitoring system trial. One smart food waste monitoring system, from Winnow Solutions, was installed in the restaurant kitchen. This allowed food waste to be weighed and categorised by selecting icons on the tablet touch screen. This data was linked to food purchase 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.

Building on Staff Awareness

The Hotel had already put in place a number of practices to reduce waste going to landfill. By using the system it was hoped that there would be a particular focus on food waste prevention and identification of food waste that was avoidable and unavoidable. During installation of the smart food waste monitoring system, training was undertaken by the HaFSA project team in the use of the system and how to categorise the food waste.

The system was used by all kitchen staff, which provided a collective focus on the food waste, from chefs to porters. The system gave instant feedback on weight and food costs to staff members as food was placed in the bin.

In addition weekly reports were issued to the General Manager, the Food and Beverage Manager, Hospitality Manager and the Head Chef. These reports were also discussed with the kitchen staff.

Food Waste Reduction and Segregation Outcomes

The effects of this raised awareness and scrutiny were that:

- Food waste quantities reduced; and
- Recycling rates increased as staff used the food waste bin more effectively.

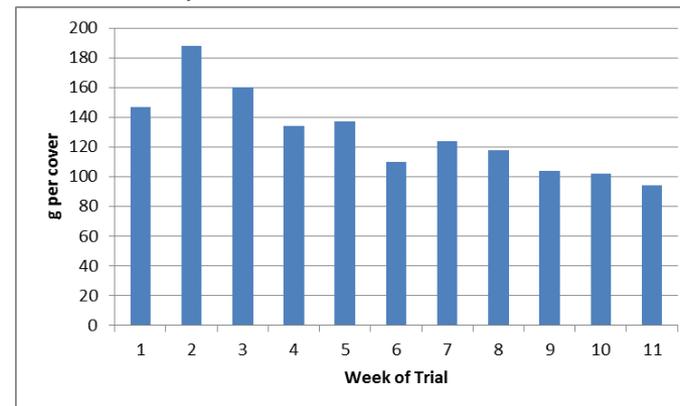


Figure 1: Recorded food waste per cover over trial

As a result of the raised awareness and scrutiny around food waste, a 32% reduction in waste per cover was achieved (from 147g in Week 1 to an average of 100g over the last three weeks).

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Further Improvements

The next steps for the City Hotel are to identify what other measures could be undertaken to reduce food waste further. The trial has demonstrated that providing a focus on food waste across all staff involved in the preparation and serving of food can lead to a sizeable reduction in food being wasted and increased levels of recycling.

Based on the results of the trial the hotel are going to focus their efforts on:

- Listening to customers to match their expectations of portion size to ensure suitable choices of menu options are available.
- Support customers in identifying appropriate portion sizes as part of the breakfast and other buffet options.

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 the use of prepared and not served food 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 breakfast and steaks.
- ✓ 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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