

Tips, ideas and suggestions for reducing packaging waste, disposables and plastics in your location

I am sure every day you are being asked by your clients and customers about plastics and the waste that arises from your service delivery. Everything from coffee cups to bottled water and straws is right at the top of the news at the moment. We work in an incredibly diverse business with every location being a different business type, different structures, client and customer needs, available waste streams, and facilities and so on.

Due to this diversity there is unfortunately no magic bullet so you need to review your location and what will work for you, your budget, your client, your customers and the available waste streams wherever you are.

Below is a list to get you started in the drive to reduce plastics, packaging and waste in your business; the list is certainly not exhaustive, so if you have any great ideas please make sure you share them with your colleagues (and me!)

1. Available waste streams

Communicate with the various waste carriers and cleaners on your site to ensure that the packaging and waste arising used on site can be processed/recycled. What is a good product for one site may not be to another dependent on the facilities available for dealing with that waste. If the waste carrier cannot deal with the item you are using change to something they can, if that is possible.

2. Straws

Do you need straws? Are you sure? If you do make sure they are behind the counter so the customer has to ask for one. Straws do not litter themselves, there is nothing wrong intrinsically with a plastic straw if they are disposed of correctly. Plastic straws can be recycled as they have generally only had liquid through them - please check with your waste carrier. Paper straws cannot be recycled.

3. Sachets & portions of sauce, butter, jam etc.

From a waste point of view these guys are bad news individual portions have a very high ratio of packaging to product and the packaging cannot be recycled.

4. Reusable trays and delivery crates

Could our suppliers deliver using reusable packaging such as crates, bread trays etc. to reduce packaging such as card board boxes etc.?

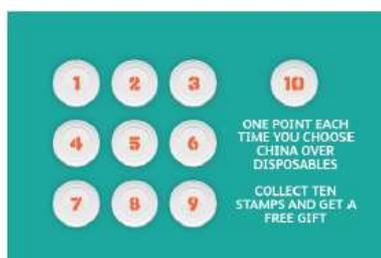
5. Napkins & serviettes

Single-ply Kraft paper napkins through a dispenser is a no-brainer - they are cheap, they reduce waste as customers only take one out of a dispenser, kraft is unbleached and less refined paper so better for the environment. If you need something more than keep them behind the counter or have them handed out at the till.

6. We Don't Do Rubbish!

It is a common sight in our locations to see customers sitting in the café or restaurant area using disposables when they could be using crockery and cutlery. This costs your business 10-20p in disposable costs per person, it costs the client to dispose of it and it costs the environment in raw materials, embodied energy and water from production, transportation and the impacts of disposal. We have created a programme to encourage customers not to use disposables. A loyalty card is used to encourage your customers NOT to use disposables; particularly when eating in the restaurant/dining area. As you would expect with a loyalty card simply stamp the customers card every time they do NOT use disposables; when they have ten they get a reward - maybe a home-made cookie, a coffee or a piece of fruit?

These loyalty cards, pop ups and posters are available from IRFC studio, although it is likely the loyalty card could be added to your EPOS system?



7. Coffee cups

Coffee cups as you know cannot be recycled through normal recycling, they either need to be recycled using a separate collection scheme such as www.simplycups.co.uk or disposed of into general waste. There are currently no better more sustainable options than the traditional hot paper cup you already use.

You should encourage the use of reusables for drinking in and takeaway with discounts or extra loyalty points for using a reusable sport type cup. Teresa Doukir in supply chain can help you with sourcing the best cup for you.

8. Lids

If possible coffee cup lids should be available only for customers to help themselves and not put on the drinks automatically, this will reduce uptake.

9. Stirrers

Use wooden stirrers instead of plastic. Wooden stirrers are renewable but cannot be recycled. Plastic stirrers are too small to be sorted at a materials recovery facility and will likely be general waste.

10. Coffee cup trays

We should encourage that cup holder trays should be returned to the café - e.g. 'return 10 get a free coffee or brownie' 'return two and get a stamp on your loyalty card' etc. You will save money and impact

11. Staff drinks

All staff should be issued with a reusable cup **NO** staff should use disposables **EVER**

12. Biodegradables & compostables

DO NOT think that moving to compostables will solve your problems - it won't unless you have **COMMERCIAL COMPOSTING** as a waste stream.

Please note that Anaerobic Digestion is different to composting, compostables CANNOT go through AD.

13. Reusables for drinking water & soft drinks

Have glasses available for use 'whilst sitting in' instead of plastic cups

14. Free drinking water top ups

If you can have free tap water available and sell reusable sport bottles free to fill up

15. Reusable salad boxes

Could you allow your customers to use their own 'tupperware' style food boxes for the salad bar, you could even sell the boxes - Lockhart have a good range for a low price <https://www.lockhart.co.uk/Kitchen-Equipment/Food-Storage-and-Labelling/Food-Storage-Containers/Sealfresh-Container-Polypropylene-13cm-0-5ltr~p~E3108> I would think you would need to have weigh and pay system in operation for this to work for your bottom line!

16. Charge for disposables!

Can you charge for disposables? We charge £x for a main meal for eat in and the same for eat out even though we have to use a box that costs 15-20p - if ever there was a time to be able to this it is NOW!

17. No bags or charge for bags

In line with the UK government line don't offer bags for takeout or sell bags or even bags for life like the jute bags.

18. Bulk cereals

Don't use individual packets of cereals use bulk and serve in a bowl for self-serve at breakfast.

19. Milk pergals

Can you use a milk pergal rather than plastic bottles both behind the café and in hospitality - you could also put a pergal in the kitchen.

20. Hospitality water

It is best to use a water bottling system with reusable bottles than buying in bottled water

21. Wrap

Try not to wrap items unnecessarily, flexible plastic such as wraps, films etc. are generally not recyclable and need to be put into general waste. If you are storing something can you put it in a box with a lid rather than use cling film or foil?

22. Pots

There isn't really a more sustainable option than the PS and PET fruit pots, salad boxes etc. that you use. Compostables are not the answer. As the pots will have food waste residue it is likely that you need to put these in the general waste bin as unlike at home they will not be rinsed and then added to the recycling bin. You **MUST** check this with the waste carrier as they may take them as long as they are empty - please check. It is unlikely that glass will be a viable option as they need to be washed and are a health and safety risk.

23. Bottled water, cans & cartons

Plastic bottles of water and soft drink are essential to our business and our bottom line. Swapping out plastic bottles for cans or tetra-pak is not the answer. The production of aluminium cans is very environmentally damaging even though the can is highly recyclable, aluminium cans are not re-sealable so will not be acceptable to your customers. Tetra-pak is made from 7 layers of material which makes it only partly recyclable in one plant in the UK and they do not have enough capacity even if they wanted to - cartons are also not securely re-sealable and there are very few opportunities to recycle them. PET is widely recycled throughout the UK

I hope you find this useful as a starter for 10, as always if you have any specific challenges on your sites across WSH please do not hesitate to contact me.

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