



# 4 STEPS TO ENGAGE YOUR TEAM TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

Mini guide to successfully  
engage you kitchen team in food  
waste reduction

*Tips from Winnow Experts and Customers*

winnow





# Engage your team on food waste

---

When it comes to the hospitality industry, for any waste reduction campaign to be a real success you need to involve all of your team.

When introducing anything new into the kitchen, the success of the operation will often rely on team co-operation and buy-in. So if you want to launch an initiative to reduce food waste, effectively engaging with your staff is critical to driving productivity and profitability.

Over the past four years we worked with over 400 kitchens and have been privileged to learn a lot along

the way. We have developed a simple four stage process which we call 'The 4 As of staff engagement': Awareness, Accountability, Action and Award.

We summarised the key learnings into this handy guide to help every chef and food service operator in their daily efforts to run a more efficient operation.



# AWARENESS

---

The first step has to be to introduce why measuring and managing food waste is important both to your business but also to individual team members. Everyone has different motivations on why we care about food waste, whether it's environmental, economic or social. Talk to your team and ask them what's important to them.

## COMMUNICATE

Whether it is in the kitchen or within teams at all levels, gaps in communication can and are likely to lead to misunderstandings. Explain to your kitchen team the rationale behind your new focus on food waste reduction, including the personal benefits for the team if they succeed and manage to reduce food waste. Communication underpins all good results, and speaking to your team using data will help build buy in and drive change.

## INSPIRE

The best awareness raising method is to inspire people and to find those points within the food waste agenda that interest everyone in the kitchen staff. Getting teams to collectively come up with solutions to food waste, and then putting those solutions into action is the most inspiring and motivating thing you can do.

## SHIFT MENTALITY

Reducing food waste is a huge challenge that will be tackled through lots of small actions. Shifting your teams mentality to get them to think on a daily basis about the positive and negative consequences of their actions will help them make decisions earlier on in the production process, which ultimately results in optimized workflow and of course, fewer food waste.



# ACCOUNTABILITY

---

Creating a sense of accountability and ownership within your team is necessary to drive change sustainably. You can't be in the kitchen all the time so you need to delegate responsibility.



## ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES

Allocate responsibilities and assign different tasks to different people. For example, put one person in charge of recording waste types and quantities and another in charge of reviewing the documentation on the purchased goods. Include waste management objectives in job descriptions, or add bonus targets for your existing employees.

## AGREE ON WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

However you decide to measure food waste, make sure that you agree on what success looks like with your team rather than imposing quotas or targets. In this way they'll be more inspired to try and meet those targets and reduce food waste.

## CREATE OWNERSHIP

Talk about issues from an individual perspective, and also help your team to see the broader picture. Pointing out that throwing away food means wasting their time and labour that went into making it helps raise a sense of ownership for the food that is going to waste. On the other hand, shedding light on how food waste is a global concern will make them proud that they were part of a bigger movement making an impact on the world.



# ACTION

---

Once you have agreed on what success looks like it's time to begin making changes to reduce waste. Brainstorm possible food waste reduction techniques such as batch preparation, effective peeling, using smaller cooking pots and freezing prepared items with your team.

## TRAIN YOUR TEAM

For effective waste reduction it is essential to train all of your staff. Make sure they are clear on how waste is classified, sorted and stored before it is collected. Give your staff an overall perspective of food waste and the associate costs. Build a graphic to demonstrate how food waste arises in the kitchen e.g. spoilage, preparationw, overproduction, plate waste, and its end of life solution.

## USE DATA TO EMPOWER

Collect data to get valuable insights into the sources and scale of food waste in your operation. The information you collect can help you identify and implement a range of actions to reduce food waste. Food waste tracking systems such as Winnow provide a simple and easy way to monitor and track food waste. It provides food waste reports to its customers that empower kitchen teams. The data allows everyone to feel confident making data backed decisions, engages staff and gives them a clear focus for setting targets.

## LOOK FOR QUICK WINS

Most of the quick wins stem from common sense. Small things such as switching from bulk production to smaller batches, revising order quantities regularly, and getting team members to communicate with one another can lead to significant results in food waste reduction.





# AWARD

---

The best way to gain the attention of the staff is positive reinforcement. Staff need to know that their hard work has resulted in something tangible so share your success with your team. Consider posting positive results on the team notice board, make food waste a daily talking point in your team meetings, or celebrate with a small treat. This way staff can feel that the project is not only achievable but fun as well.

## SUPPORT POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

It is essential that staff understand the businesses' waste goals and how they can help to achieve them. Incentivise teams to achieve waste reduction targets and celebrate any milestones achieved. Make sure that rewards are fun, but this doesn't have to mean expensive. Include waste management objectives in job descriptions, or add bonus targets for your existing employees.

## SHARE SUCCESS

Shouting about your achievements is a great way of motivating and thanking staff, as well as showing them that their hard work is making a difference. Consider posting positive results on the team notice board and make food waste a daily talking point in your team meetings.

## MAKE IT FUN

Engage and involve staff as much as possible with lots of activities where participants can share hints, tips and advice. Get your staff to think of ideas or activities to reduce waste, try this in teams or as a competition. Create a quiz and test their knowledge on food waste at the end of the training.



Photo credit: Roman Kraft via Stocksy

# About Winnow

---

We believe that chefs deserve the information in an easily accessible way to make their kitchens more productive, freeing up time to focus on being creative with food. Our pioneering smart meter helps chefs cut their food waste in half, dramatically improving their profitability.

We believe that what gets measured gets managed, and by using technology and information intelligently, kitchens can be made more efficient.

We believe that it is all of our responsibility to make the most from our food.

Our team at Winnow have worked with hundreds of kitchens – we have learned a lot on the journey so far. We understand that achieving and improving profitability in a professional kitchen can be a daunting challenge.



*"Food is too valuable to waste, and technology can help us change the way we make food"*

Marc Zornes  
Founder, Winnow

## FIND OUT MORE

By telling us a bit about your business we can give you a detailed estimate of how much your operations could save using our the Winnow System to cut food waste:

[www.winnowsolutions.com/calculator](http://www.winnowsolutions.com/calculator)

Photo credit: Lumina via Stocksy

*We are proud of be part of  
[Friends of Champions 12.3](#)*



*We are proud to be part of the  
[Courtauld 2025 Commitment](#)*





# We would love to hear from you!

We'd love to hear about your tips and tricks about how you supercharge your kitchen and reduce your costs. If you've got any other great ideas not listed here please get in touch to continue the conversation:

[info@winnowsolutions.com](mailto:info@winnowsolutions.com)



[www.winnowsolutions.com](http://www.winnowsolutions.com)