

How UNBC, a Dana Hospitality site, cut food waste by 44%

Dana Hospitality, a division of Dexterra Group and Canada's leading premium foodservices provider, operates the dining facility at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Known for its strong commitment to sustainability, UNBC serves approximately 850 meals to resident students daily through an "all-you-care-to-eat" program. To align with the university's environmental goals and optimize food service operations, Dana partnered with Winnow to tackle food waste, achieving remarkable results.

Challenge

Before implementing Winnow, food waste tracking at UNBC was a manual process. Without accurate data, finding actionable solutions to reduce waste was a challenge. Yazan Kanaan, District Manager for Dana Hospitality, oversees operations across

multiple provinces, including UNBC. With over 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Yazan brought a strategic focus on sustainability and operational efficiency to the implementation of Winnow at this site.

Data-Driven Solutions

The introduction of Winnow's AI-powered platform allowed the team to collect accurate, real-time data on food waste. Weekly reports provided insights into high-waste items, enabling Dana Hospitality to adjust operations accordingly.

The data also informed the team's production decisions, menu planning, and training initiatives, resulting in tangible waste reductions.

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We use the weekly reports to motivate staff and congratulate them on their progress. It's not about pointing fingers; it's about teamwork and finding solutions together.

Yazan Kanaan, District Manager, Dana Hospitality

Results Using Winnow AI:



44% reduction in food waste*



\$9,000 saved in food cost annually



21,000 meals saved annually



36.8 tons of CO₂e emissions annually

* savings data from Jan - Nov 2024, compared to baseline

Strategies and Actions Taken

Optimizing Production:

By analyzing waste data, the team adjusted batch sizes to match actual consumption trends, reducing overproduction of items like rice and butter chicken.

Staff Training:

Chefs were retrained on techniques, such as properly cutting fruit, to minimize waste.

Menu Refinement:

Weekly reports guided chefs to refine menus, avoiding unpopular dishes that generated high waste and replacing them with more popular options.

Student Engagement:

A "Save a Plate" initiative displayed daily plate waste totals on a whiteboard in the dish room. This encouraged students to take smaller portions and return for seconds if needed, reducing self-serve waste.

"The biggest surprise is the fruit trimmings. I just didn't realize how much fruit the kids eat on a daily basis and how much fruit trimmings we are wasting. It really helped us to see if they are cutting the watermelons and honeydew correctly and retrain chefs to minimize waste."

— Yazan Kanaan, District Manager, Dana Hospitality

Team Engagement and Culture Change

Weekly team huddles became a platform to celebrate successes, review waste trends, and brainstorm solutions collaboratively. The visible impact of their efforts motivated staff to stay engaged and continuously improve.

"The team sees the numbers, and it keeps them on their toes. They're motivated to do better every week, and the results speak for themselves."

Yazan Kanaan, District Manager, Dana Hospitality

Conclusion

Dana Hospitality's partnership with Winnow at UNBC exemplifies the power of combining innovative technology with teamwork to achieve sustainability goals. By reducing waste, repurposing ingredients, and engaging students, the team has set a new standard for sustainable dining operations. UNBC's journey serves as an inspiring blueprint for other institutions committed to environmental stewardship.

About Winnow

Winnow develops Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help chefs in large businesses like hotels, contract caterers, casinos, and cruise ships to run more profitable, and sustainable kitchens by cutting food waste in half.

Measuring food waste is a challenge for all commercial kitchens with up to 20% of all food purchased going to waste. Winnow offers a solution for every kitchen.

Our analytics platform and reporting suite help teams pinpoint waste quickly, allowing enterprises to drive significant waste reductions at scale.

Kitchens that use Winnow cut food waste by half on average, driving food purchasing costs down by 3%-8%, improving margins whilst doing the right thing. Winnow is deployed in over 60 countries with offices in London, Dubai, Singapore, Cluj, and Chicago.