



# FOOD WASTE



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**#86FOODWASTE**

FALL 2019 • RESTAURANTKITCHEN.ORG

How  
**SMALL STEPS**  
can have a  
**BIG IMPACT**  
on reducing  
waste and  
**PROTECTING  
THE PLANET**

- 01. Menu Redesign Concepts
- 02. Donation Guidance
- 03. Customer Messaging**
- 04. Procurement Best Practices
- 05. Employee Engagement
- 06. Diversion Resources
- 07. Food Waste Self Audit

## WHITE PAPER INFO SERIES

# 03

A combined effort with



NATIONAL  
**RESTAURANT**  
ASSOCIATION



## FIGHTING FOOD WASTE IN RESTAURANTS

### CUSTOMER MESSAGING

#### FOCUSING ON THE CUSTOMER

Providing the perfect customer experience is the most important aspect of any successful restaurant business and, as a goal, should never compete with the goal of reducing food waste. Today, however, customers' expectations are quickly shifting toward environmental stewardship so that a restaurant's efforts to reduce food waste sends a positive message.

Food-waste awareness is growing globally: The National Restaurant Association's recent [State of Restaurant Sustainability](#) report found that **55% of consumers** across all age groups **consider reducing waste an important factor when choosing a restaurant**, and environmental **sustainability was a top 10 trend** for menus in 2019.

To this end, restaurants and foodservice businesses can highlight their fight against food waste to their customers, cultivating loyalty and respect from patrons, as well as gently educating consumers about reducing food waste in their own homes.



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## CREATING AN ANTI-FOOD-WASTE PHILOSOPHY

**Research has shown that an effective way to reduce food waste is to share your management strategy and vision with customers.** Consider writing and sharing a “food philosophy” — an articulation of how your restaurant, brand, or chef values food — as part of the guest experience.

Keep the message positive: Studies show consumers respond better to positive messaging that is also tied to health and wellness. Below are some key questions to help you develop this message, some samples to get you started, and research on the best places to communicate it to customers.

### REFLECT ON YOUR BUSINESS VALUES

Use this exercise to reflect upon the mission, vision, and values of your business. Think through the following questions with your staff and use your answers as your customer-facing food philosophy.

- **How** does it make you feel when you have to throw away food?
- **Why** is reducing food waste important to you?
- **What** is motivating you and your team to reduce food waste? Think about environmental impacts, waste of staff resources and time, loss in revenue, and other factors.

### FOOD PHILOSOPHY INSPIRATION

To help you get started, here are a few sample messages for customers:

- At [restaurant name], we are proud to provide our guests the best possible experience. Preparing foods of the best quality and variety in amounts that are generous without being excessive helps us ensure that our food is eaten and not wasted. – [Signed by management or chef]\*\*
- In our restaurant, food is treasure, not trash.
- We respect all the love, labor, and land that goes into creating each dish, and therefore always try our best not to waste any of it.
- What we prep, we cook. What we don't serve, we donate. What we can't donate, we compost.
- Love Food, Hate Waste.\*
- Save the food! Ask your server for a to-go container for leftovers.
- Choose which portion suits you.\*
- Not that hungry? Smaller portions for a smaller price.\*
- Recycling food waste is good, preventing food waste is even better.\*
- Want a healthier option for you and the planet? Ask your server to put half your meal in a to-go container for later.

*\*Tested in the UK as part of a study performed by WRAP.*

*\*\*A version of this tested well as part of WWF's work with hotels in 2017.*





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The National Restaurant Association's [State of Restaurant Sustainability Report](#) found the following are the most effective ways to convey environmental efforts to guests, including food-waste reduction. These are ranked in order of most effective to least, according to our survey of consumers.

## MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO CONVEY ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS TO GUESTS

- 
1. Printing it on the menu.
  2. Including it on the website.
  3. Printing it on packaging and supplies (e.g., napkins, to-go containers).
  4. Sharing it on social media.
  5. Showing it on wall plaques or posters.
  6. Having staff tell them about it.

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