

CLEAR IMPRESSIONS

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How cleaning companies can help slim down food waste

The end of this month sees us wave goodbye to British Summer Time for another year and with it, the realisation that the festive season is just a few weeks away. The hospitality industry will of course already have been preparing for months, but one issue that may not have been top of its agenda is food waste. Cleaning companies have their own role to play in helping to promote the diversion of food waste away from landfill, as **Steve Hill** from **Grundon Waste Management** explains.



Every year, food waste costs the UK hospitality and food service sector an estimated £2.5 billion. That's equivalent to 1.3 billion meals. From fast food restaurants to fine dining, from conference venues to corporate canteens, from pubs and hotels to large volume food processors, each has a role to play in the better management of food waste.

The Christmas and New Year period is traditionally a time for excess and therefore it's also the perfect time to encourage customers and venues to make changes. We work both directly with customers and also in partnership with cleaning companies to educate people about the benefits of segregation of food waste and, once they see the improvements that can be achieved - both financial and practical - they are usually keen to take action.

Excess food comes in many shapes and sizes. It may be individuals' own

leftover lunches in a small office canteen, it could be from meals on plates returned to the kitchen and, of course, in food preparation areas. Whatever the scenario, we have a simple solution.

We know that most food waste is disposed of via general waste bins and can end up in landfill. Because food waste is heavy, this means establishments will often incur excess charges for waste collection and increased costs in Landfill Tax charges.

This does nothing to help those who wish to achieve the goal of zero waste to landfill and there is also the fact that, as food waste biodegrades, it releases harmful greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, which contribute to climate change. Encouraging and educating customers to segregate food waste is an important role and it's something we do regularly.

For example, at The Cotswold Plough Hotel in Clanfield, Oxfordshire - a hotel with 11 ensuite bedrooms, a 60-seater restaurant and a bar, as well as private dining rooms for business and family events - all hotel and restaurant waste was going into four general waste bins. The weight of the bins meant they were regularly charged an additional fee of around £100 a week above standard costs.

The solution was to introduce recycling bins, glass bins and separate food waste bins, all of which were clearly labelled to help staff understand which items should go where. Within the first four months the hotel's general waste weight went down from an average of 450kg a week to around 140kg and the change was reflected in lower waste management costs. In addition, restaurant and kitchen staff were



encouraged to realise that segregating food waste helped them to better understand issues like portion sizes and stock control.

Earlier this summer, we worked alongside a specialist cleaning company at the inaugural Fever-Tree Championships, the prestigious ATP 500 tennis tournament held at The Queen's Club in the heart of west London. It was the first time we had provided waste management services for the event and the owners, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), embraced our suggestion of introducing segregated food waste.

The venue had a formal restaurant providing a table service lunch menu and afternoon tea, a terrace bar and a café offering more casual dining. Ten x 23 litre food waste caddies were

installed for use in back-of-house kitchens and when full, these were emptied into 20 x 120 litre food waste bins, specially designed for food preparation areas. To help encourage participation, catering staff were given practical tips and advice on how to segregate food waste.

During the tournament, an average of 10 food waste bins a day were collected and immediately replaced with clean bins, making sure it was a seamless service for the busy caterers. Not only did this help to reduce the weight of the general waste containers, but it also offered a greener approach as all the food waste we collect is sent to anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities. There, naturally occurring organisms break the waste down to produce

biogas, which is then converted into renewable electricity and fed into the National Grid; in addition to producing fertiliser which is used for agriculture and land regeneration. In addition, because our vehicle fleet is certified CarbonNeutral, all our collections avoid adding to a customer's carbon footprint, something the LTA was pleased to acknowledge.

These are just two examples of how we help customers and cleaning companies to take a greener approach and save money, so ahead of the Christmas rush, if you would like to find out more about our food waste collection service, please contact:

sales@grundon.com
or call us on: **01753 686 777.**
WWW.GRUNDON.COM