THE BALLOON BAR, BRISTOL: TACKLING FOOD WASTE IN A UNIVERSITY
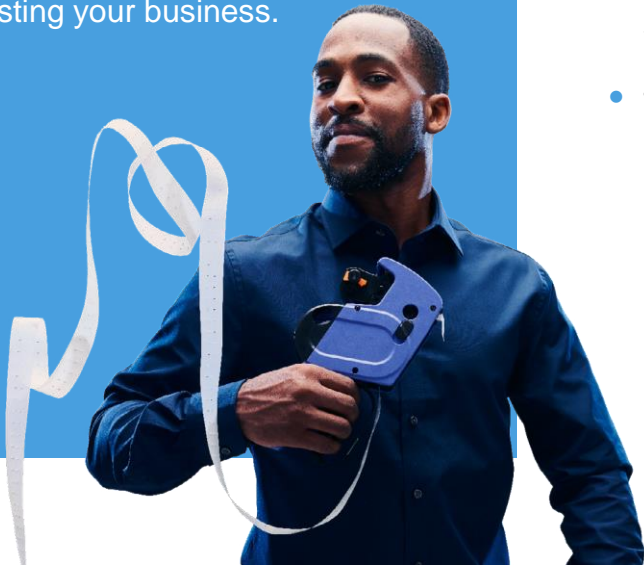
BACKGROUND

- The Balloon Bar is a café/restaurant located in the University of Bristol's Students Union.
- In collaboration with a team of Master's students, The Balloon Bar took part in a pilot to measure and identify food waste.

? TIP

Work out how much the food thrown away is costing your business.

KEY FACTS

- During the seven-day pilot, using the tracking sheet and calculator tools available at www.guardiansofgrub.com, The Balloon Bar produced 60kg of food waste, at a projected annual cost to the business of £4,160.

- This food waste is the equivalent cost of 16 full English breakfasts or 30 jacket potatoes on The Balloon Bar's menu.

- The majority of food waste produced at The Balloon Bar came from plate waste (64%).

STAFF SURVEY

- The majority of staff at The Balloon Bar were concerned about the amount of food they wasted.

- Time pressure and a lack of awareness about best practice were barriers identified by staff.

The Balloon Bar @ Bristol SU

"We undertook the food waste tracking pilot with the environmental aspect of reducing waste in mind – using the materials also helped us in our goal to reduce costs and to be as cost effective as possible."

Feedback from The Balloon Bar's Manager

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CHALLENGES AND DRIVERS

- A key challenge was the proportion of casual staff at The Balloon Bar.

- Increasing employee engagement and gaining managerial commitment are key drivers to successful implementation.

WHAT NEXT FOR THE BALLOON BAR?

- Since completing the pilot, The Balloon Bar has removed the salad from the buffet due to wastage levels (salad remains available as a menu option).

- This will reduce spoilage waste, as well as gaining cost savings.

- The pilot highlighted the importance of menu development and portion control in reducing edible food waste. The Balloon Bar plans to have a greater focus on these themes in the future.

? TIPS

Carrying out a food waste tracking pilot at The Balloon Bar has helped to generate useful insights as to the factors which may best help successful implementation in Universities. These include:

- Target the materials at higher-level catering managers and provide guidance on combining food waste and food safety policies. This will help drive managerial commitment and ensure that reducing food waste is led from the top.

- Use managers and/or supervisors as your food waste reduction Champions in catering outlets with casual employees. This will help staff engagement.

- Create visual aids and prompts for catering outlets that encourage staff. Getting creative can help prompt staff to help reduce food waste.

- Consider encouraging staff to engage with the University's Green Impact scheme. This will help incentivise staff to reduce food waste.

- Run another pilot of the materials in a catered halls setting. This will generate new insights, as the complexities of this environment will differ from those observed in The Balloon Bar.

Check out our free resources at on the Guardians of Grub website www.guardiansofgrub.com, including a quickstart guide, tracking sheets and calculator.

You can also contact us at GuardiansofGrub@wrap.org.uk