Healthy and sustainable foods can improve your business. Here's how.

YOUR BUSINESS IS FOOD

DON'T THROW IT AWAY...

By throwing away less food you are already taking a big step towards improving your bottom line, making your business more sustainable, and delivering better value to customers.

There's even more you can do to offer your customers meals that are better for them and better for the environment.

A menu with healthier choices doesn't need to cost you more.

When surveyed, industry experts agree that healthier food options cost about the same as current food offerings.

Small changes really can make a big difference. Simple steps in this factsheet don't cost the Earth, and can add real value to your menus.

wrap

89% of people say that they want to make dietary changes to improve their health. At the same time, 67% see climate change as a serious problem, and believe lifestyle changes to reduce the effects of climate changes are necessary.

The hospitality and food service industry can help customers make healthier and more sustainable choices. For most businesses, this can be done in minor changes that will also enhance brand reputation, and help meet the increasing expectations of customers.

We are also seeing food trends such as 'plant-forward' eating on the rise, which can be seen as business opportunities. Unlike vegetarianism or veganism, plant-forward meals don't completely exclude animal products. Instead they put vegetables, pulses and whole-grains to the front and centre. This approach is better aligned with dietary recommendations by the government and leading health organisations.

A healthier menu can even increase sales and margins. For instance, Pret A Manger launched its first Veggie store over the summer of 2016. It was expected to operate at 30% lower sales compared to regular store, but instead led to a 70% increase.

Case study: Green & Lean

In 2015, Sodexo and WWF piloted 10 school meals that were balanced, responsibly sourced and made with healthier ingredients. The meals also had a lower carbon footprint than the regular meals, and were just as popular with students, in some cases even more so.

In 2016 this set expanded to include 15 brand new recipes and rolled out to 40 independent schools in England. Now, all new recipe design is putting vegetables at its centre, leading to Sodexo's Veg Pledge in 2017; committing to procure 15% more vegetables in its UK & Ireland business by 2025 as part of its Better Tomorrow 2025 commitment to serving healthier food.

10 ways you can create a healthy and sustainable menu

1. Highlight plant-based options on the main menu
rather than in a separate box or section. **Using a separate menu box has been found to decrease sales of vegetarian dishes [by 56%.](#)**

2. Try out more simple, descriptive words
Simple descriptions have been shown to increase sales by more than a quarter. Words that will resonate with your customers, like 'creamy' or 'indulgent'. **Using descriptions can increase sales of a dish [by 25%](#)** .

3. Offer plant-based options first
in priority over meat options. Try putting the healthier carbohydrate first (e.g. baked potato rather than chips). This will help establish the 'norm' of plant-based, healthy eating (see sample menu below).

Sample menu with plant-based option highlighted.

Creamy Mushroom Stroganoff with a baked potato	£7.00
or chips	+£0.50
add beef	+£3.00

---

4. Be symbolic.
Overuse of health positive wording can reduce sales [by 16%.](#) Try using logos, icons or boxes to highlight healthier or vegetarian/vegan dishes in place of wording. This approach is proven to be more attractive to customers.

5. Review protein portions
Many of us eat more red and processed meat than is recommended. The [recommended daily allowance](#) of animal proteins ranges from 70g for red meat to 130 grams for fish.
Lentils and beans can make meat go further, or can be used in their own right. They are also high in protein and fibre, and count as one of your '5-a-day'.

6. Offer half-size portion sizes
Label the half portions, e.g. 'smaller portions for lighter appetites'.

7. Introduce different portion size options for sides
Offering different sizes of side dishes provides more options for customers.

8. Look at the size of plates and take away containers
Over-sized plates can increase the amount customers waste, sometimes without them even realising. Getting portion sizes right [will help](#) reduce plate waste.

9. Simplify your recipes
This will help you focus on healthy, low allergen, and sustainable ingredients (be sure to provide customers with the necessary allergen information). **Customers are now asking for additional menu information including simple nutritional and environmental facts.**

10. Advertise healthy dishes in your specials
This could include eye-catching salads or quick to prepare sandwiches.

Did you know?
Animal-based ingredients generally require more land and resources to produce than plant-based ones. In addition, the digestive systems of cows and sheep produce methane, a powerful, climate-changing gas.

Find out more:
[Your Business is Food; don't throw it away TRiFOCAL](#)
[Small Change Big Difference](#)

Other organisations who can help
[The Sustainable Restaurant Association](#)
[Peas Please, The Food Foundation](#)
[Buying Better Lab, WRI](#)
[The Protein Challenge 2040, Forum for the Future](#)
[Livewell, healthy eating for a healthy planet, WWF](#)