

## HOTEL | KITCHEN

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# Fighting Food Waste in 16 Weeks: Champion's Guide





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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Developed by



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## A NOTE TO CONSULTANTS

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This Champion's Guide is developed as a resource for a hotel property-level Champion to independently implement a food waste management program. As a secondary use of the material, the 16 Week structure is well-suited to be used as a hospitality consulting package. A [sample consultant timeline](#) has been developed to aid consultants interested in executing Hotel Kitchen inspired projects with their client properties.

## A NOTE TO FOOD SERVICE OPERATORS OUTSIDE OF THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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This guidance and the resources included in the Guide, as well as HotelKitchen.org as a whole, were developed to specifically target the hospitality sector. While these materials are particularly suited for use in hotels, much of the underlying concepts and resources can be generalized to inspire similar food waste management programs in catering operations, campus dining, senior living or hospital dining services, and other food service.

For food waste guidance developed for the US restaurant sector, see [RestaurantKitchen.org](https://www.restaurantkitchen.org).



# 00 Introduction

**Congratulations on beginning your property’s journey to prevent and manage food waste. Your efforts as Food Waste Champion benefit your business, your community and the planet.**

#### BUY-IN FROM PROPERTY MANAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL TO THIS INITIATIVE!

Bring them on-board using this [pitch presentation](#).

#### AS FOOD WASTE CHAMPION, YOUR ROLE INCLUDES:

- Coordinating and leading your property’s Food Waste Task Force of cross-functional leadership staff
- Establishing a data baseline to measure progress
- Overseeing the testing and adoption of food waste prevention and management interventions and, eventually, behaviors and operational changes
- Planning to institutionalize learnings from this initiative in your operation

As you are planning to launch this initiative, we encourage you to explore [HotelKitchen.org](https://HotelKitchen.org) for guiding information and resources. The guidance on [HotelKitchen.org](https://HotelKitchen.org) and in this 16-Week Guide were developed to apply broadly to hotels of a wide variety, **please adapt to best fit your property’s goals and needs**. Also be sure to consult your brand, management group, or community stakeholders if they have additional resources or support to offer in this endeavor.

Thank you for beginning this journey. You are a leader among your peers—recognizing food management as an opportunity to improve your property’s operations, service to clients and guests, community relations, business bottom line, and environmental stewardship. [HIK](#)



# 01

## Building Your Task Force



### WEEKS 1 – 3

#### BUILDING YOUR TASK FORCE

Tackling food waste at your property cannot be undertaken alone. Preventing food waste in a hotel involves a well-orchestrated food management system that relies on many teams and staff members.

Project success will require enthusiastic support from property management and engagement across the property in the form of a Food Waste Task Force. The tasks below will help you get started.

Please review this Guide in its entirety ahead of initiative launch and adapt tasks or resources as needed to better fit the needs of your operation/initiative.

#### TASKS

##### 1. GARNER ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FROM PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Call a meeting and use this [pitch presentation](#) to communicate initiative expectations and benefits. If additional materials are needed for food waste separation and measurement, be sure to communicate this potential cost and secure a budget.

##### 2. SHARE NEWS OF THE FOOD WASTE INITIATIVE WITH DEPARTMENT LEADERS AND STAFF

Share news of initiative involvement with all involved staff via email or during meetings or huddles. Mention the benefits and intended outcomes of the initiative and the necessity of every staff member to be engaged.

Alert department leads that they will be called upon to serve on the initiative Task Force or, if they are unable, to

nominate a member of their staff to serve in this role. Each of the following departments should have a seat at the table:



3.

##### SEND THE FIRST WEEKLY EMAIL TO DEPARTMENT LEADS

Use the [email template](#) provided to engage the heads of the other departments. If they are unable, have them elect another member of their team to serve as the department representative on the Task Force.



#### 4. SCHEDULE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE

Before this meeting, review [HotelKitchen.org](#) guidance for separation and measurement. While there are several options for food waste categorization, a Dual Stream approach – separating food waste into Pre- and Post-Service waste – is a beneficial way to gather insights into key drivers of waste without dedicating significant up-front cost. A printable Dual Stream Food Waste tracker can be downloaded [here](#), and [this excel template](#) includes a tab for tracking and analyzing dual stream food waste.

Learn more about the benefits of Dual Stream separation and other separation strategies [here](#).

Encourage Task Force participants to also review [HotelKitchen.org](#), and specifically guidance pertaining to their function. Prepare to discuss timeline, expectations and roles during this meeting.

#### 5. HOLD A 1-2 HOUR IN-PERSON LAUNCH MEETING FOR THE TASK FORCE

See this [sample agenda](#).

Goals for this meeting include:

- Completing [Lobster Ink video training program](#) (optional).
- Reviewing project timeline and goals of each phase.
- Discussing roles and responsibilities.
- Determining a strategy and mechanism to separate, measure and track food waste in order to set a project baseline. See guidance on [establishing separation and measurement](#). A [printed log](#) or [various tech tools](#) can be used to track data as it's collected; customize to best fit your separation and measurement scheme.

! As you decide your separation and measurement, this is a good time to also discuss options for how your separated organic waste may be diverted from landfill. Do you have local compost haulers or infrastructure? Access to anaerobic digesters? Even if the answer is no, its important to establish what will happen with the separated waste after its been measured for this initiative. This topic will come up again later in more detail.

- Indicate resources, checklists and posters that might be helpful for relevant departments. See printables on the [Resources](#) page, such as posters and 'Reduced Waste Menus' materials.
- Inform the Task Force that they will receive weekly emails for the duration of the program with tasks they are responsible for completing and messages they are responsible for communicating to their staff team. Adapt these [weekly email templates](#) to meet the specific needs of your property/initiative.

- Plan to introduce staff responsibilities during meetings and huddles, and to continuously reinforce new behaviors.
- Schedule Task Force meetings for the duration of the initiative. Meet at least once during each subsequent phase of the initiative. Require a proxy attendee for any department representative who is unable to attend.

#### 6. ASSESS NEED FOR NEW BINS TO COLLECT FOOD WASTE

With Culinary, Serving, Stewarding and Procurement leadership, discuss the need and placement of bins to collect food waste according to the agreed upon separation and measurement scheme.

You may need to rearrange locations of bins in food storage areas, kitchens, breakdown stations, and dishwashing stations to ensure all food waste is being captured. Keep in mind food waste created in staff dining facilities and from room service. It could be helpful to use a map of your property to determine where food waste might be generated. When introducing new bins:

- ✓ Communicate changes in waste management strategy to all staff before they occur.
- ✓ Coordinate with the stewarding team on bin placement, place food waste bins near where waste is produced if possible and consistently return them to the same place. Ensure new bins do not disrupt the existing flow of operations.
- ✓ If necessary, assess other waste streams (like landfill or recycling) to determine opportunity to downsize, replace or remove bins that are no longer appropriate or needed.

See additional guidance on bin procurement and placement [here](#). If necessary for your measurement scheme, procure or allocate scales to weigh food waste. [H1K](#)

## PHASE 1 CHECKLIST

- Garner initiative support from property management
- Announce initiative to staff
- Confirm Task Force participants
- Schedule and execute first Task Force meeting
  - o Discuss timeline, goals, expectations and responsibilities
  - o Determine separation and measurement scheme
  - o Indicate useful resources
  - o Plan to introduce and reinforce messages to staff
  - o Schedule subsequent meetings
- Procure and place food waste collection bins and scales
- Send [weekly emails](#) to Task Force:
  - o Week 1
  - o Week 2
  - o Week 3

# 02

## Setting a Data Baseline & Planning Interventions

### WEEKS 4 - 7

#### SETTING A DATA BASELINE & PLANNING INTERVENTIONS

To design an adequate food loss and waste reduction strategy and gauge the effectiveness of this effort, you'll first need a data baseline to compare your progress against. It may take a week or more of tracking to feel confident that waste is being accurately reported. Introduce and reinforce separation and measurement behavior with relevant staff teams (store room, culinary, service, stewarding), ensure the behavior is successfully adopted, and track reliable data for 2 weeks. Also keep track of the cover and/or occupancy counts for these dates to normalize data. If you have a composting or digestion program to manage food waste, it may be possible to set the baseline and track waste by requesting reports from your provider.



## TASKS

### 1. TRAIN ALL RELEVANT STAFF

With relevant Task Force members, train all involved staff to separate, measure and dispose of food waste according to the agreed upon method.

### 2. SEPARATE AND MEASURE

Begin separating and measuring all generated food waste, including that produced from room service and in staff dining facilities. Reinforce behaviors continually with staff during meetings and huddles, and by conducting visual bin checks. Request that staff and Task Force members note key drivers of food waste and share those observations with the Task Force.

It may take one to two weeks for the Task Force to feel confident that the tracked data is accurate. Adjust strategy as needed and continue separation and measurement behavior at least for the duration of this initiative.

### 3. TRACK MEASURED FOOD WASTE DATA

Use this [printed log](#) and [excel spreadsheet template](#), or similar method, to track food waste data.

Also track daily cover and/or occupancy counts to normalize data.

### 4. HOLD A TASK FORCE MEETING

- Discuss successes, obstacles, and the main factors that were observed to drive food waste.
- Review collected data, as aggregate measurements and normalized per guest using cover or occupancy data.
- Confirm two weeks of collected data as your data baseline.
- Determine interventions (listed in the next Phase) to prevent waste, based on data and observations from the baselining period. For example, if you learn that a significant portion of waste is happening during food preparation, prioritize at least one intervention to address that driver.
- Develop a list of specific actions each department will adopt during each agreed upon intervention.
- Set an achievable numeric or percentage reduction goal for Phase 3 based on your data baseline. Setting a goal helps maintain momentum and motivate change. Plan to share progress toward this goal with staff throughout the initiative. Reduction of 10% from baseline measurement is suggested as a significant and achievable initiative goal. [HIX](#)



## PHASE 2 CHECKLIST

- Place bins to collect food waste, according to the separation and measurement scheme decided by the Task Force
- Train all staff to separate, measure and dispose of food waste
- Begin separation, measurement and reporting. Also track occupancy or cover data for context.
- Hold a meeting with the Task Force to:
  - o Set data baseline
  - o Decide on interventions and an adoption strategy based on observed key drivers of food waste
  - o Set a measurable initiative goal
- Send [weekly emails](#):
  - o Week 4
  - o Week 5
  - o Week 6
  - o Week 7

# 03

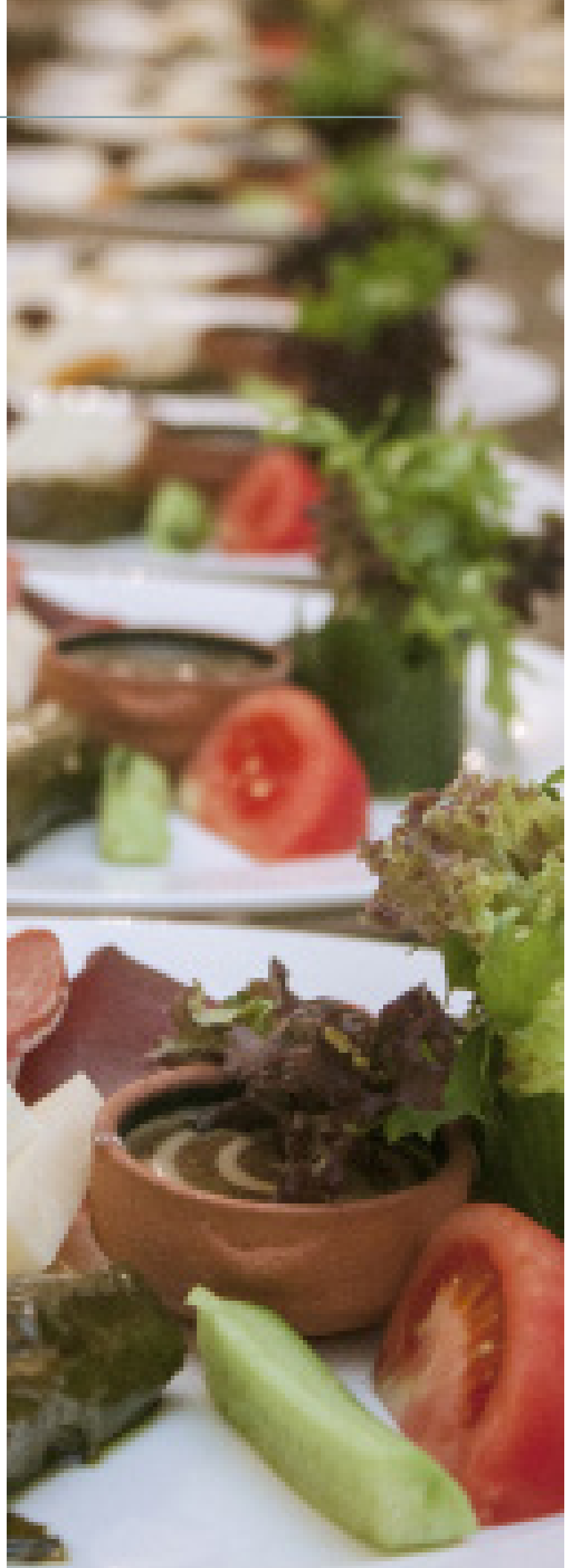
## Intervention Implementation

### WEEKS 8 - 15

#### INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

During Phase 2, a data baseline was set and the Task Force worked to identify one or more interventions to test. These interventions should address the key drivers of food waste specific to your property that were observed during the baselining period.

In Phase 3, the Task Force should focus on reinforcing separation, measurement and intervention behavior with relevant staff teams. The change in food waste over these weeks compared to the data baseline will show the impact of these interventions, so be sure to accurately track waste and occupancy/covers during this time.



## TASKS

### 1. ADOPT INTERVENTIONS

Work with relevant staff teams to adopt one or more of the following interventions.

Intervention	Resources
Train staff using Lobster Ink videos. Work with department leaders to reinforce or disseminate training messages.	<a href="#">Lobster Ink Video Training Series</a>
Experiment with reduced waste menu design.	<a href="#">Reduced Waste Menus</a>
Experiment with reduced waste buffet design, potentially including guest-facing messages.	<a href="#">Buffet Redesign Strategies</a>
Coordinate culinary, banquet and sales departments for reduced waste events.	<a href="#">Working with Clients, Planners, and Guests</a>
Employee empowerment/competition	<a href="#">Engaging and Training Staff</a>
Perform an event audit to determine key drivers of food waste. This takes a close look at the exact items and amounts being wasted from a specific event and can reveal targeted strategies to reduce waste from catering operations.	<a href="#">All About Audits</a> <a href="#">Audit Guide</a> <a href="#">Event Audit Template</a>
Explore food donation opportunities and feasibility.	<a href="#">Donation Guidance</a>
Explore diversion of organic waste from landfill and conventional hauling.	<a href="#">Diversion Guidance</a>

*This list is not comprehensive; visit [HotelKitchen.org](http://HotelKitchen.org) or consult your brand, management group or other community partners for further details on possible interventions.*

### 2. TRACK AND ANALYZE DATA


Track generated food waste and covers/occupancy.

Analysis of waste-per-cover, or even waste-per-occupied-room, can lead to new insights and ideas for reducing waste, and measuring progress.

### 3. ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK

Encourage all Task Force members and staff to communicate feedback during the implementation process.

### 4. KEEP IT UP!

Continue sending weekly emails, reinforcing messages and celebrating successes with staff along the way. 

## PHASE 3 CHECKLIST

- Adopt interventions and continually reinforce new behaviors
- Track generated food waste and covers/occupancy data
- Hold Phase 3 Task Force meeting
- Send [weekly emails](#):
  - Week 8
  - Week 9
  - Week 10
  - Week 11
  - Week 12
  - Week 13
  - Week 14
  - Week 15



# 04

## Institutionalizing Change

### WEEK 16

#### INSTITUTIONALIZING CHANGE

Review the outcomes of the initiative and determine the most effective strategies to adopt permanently. WWF suggests continuing to separate and measure food waste to see how key drivers and strategies for reduction evolve. These 16 weeks will likely expose several opportunities to address food waste in your operation, begin with interventions that seem most achievable and impactful. Once the program has momentum and buy-in, develop a long-term strategy to ensure new behaviors are maintained and opportunities for improvement are explored.

Reach out to [foodwaste@wwfus.org](mailto:foodwaste@wwfus.org) to share your initiative experience with WWF. Inquire about opportunities to develop a case study for publication on [HotelKitchen.org](http://HotelKitchen.org).



## TASKS

### 1. CONVENE TASK FORCE TO:

- Compare tracked food waste data against the baseline and determine the percentage or total change in food waste following interventions. It is valuable to look both at total waste data and waste data normalized by occupancy or cover count.
- Review successes, challenges and next steps.
- Plan to communicate initiative outcomes to staff.
- Set goals to institutionalize effective behaviors in functional teams, when on-boarding new staff, and in catering/events discussions as appropriate.
  - ! Consider sharing these goals publicly. Public-facing goals are listed on the [Hotel Kitchen commitments page](#).
- Find ways to share successes and plans with clients and guests through PR and Marketing Teams, and/or through your Catering/Sales Teams.
- Determine additional opportunities for food waste reduction and management.
- Set time-based food waste benchmarks and goals. Plan to measure food waste continually or conduct audits to determine progress. (Global hospitality brands have set a target of 50% reduction in food waste by 2030, aligning with [UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3](#)).

### 2. COMMUNICATE INITIATIVE OUTCOMES TO STAFF & CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Make all staff aware of the initiative's final outcomes, the resulting changes that will be permanently adopted, and any new goals that have been set. Recognize the Task Force and any staff that were integral to initiative success. Encourage staff to communicate their feedback and experiences over the course of the 16 weeks.

### 3. COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK TO WWF (OPTIONAL)

Reach out to [foodwaste@wwfus.org](mailto:foodwaste@wwfus.org) to share your experiences and feedback. WWF may be able to help analyze and visualize initiative data or develop a property case study for publication on [HotelKitchen.org](http://HotelKitchen.org).

Congratulations, Champion. Your leadership and the leadership of the Task Force were integral to your property's completion of this initiative. The potential improvements to your operation will have an impact not only on your business, but on your community and the planet. **HK**

## PHASE 4 CHECKLIST

- Send final [weekly email](#)
- Meet with Task Force
  - o Discuss initiative outcomes
  - o Set plan to update standard operating procedures and institutionalize best practices
  - o Set goals
- Communicate to staff and celebrate
- Optional, communicate outcomes and feedback to WWF

