

# Smart savings at Crieff Hydro hotel

CASE STUDY

## Background

Crieff Hydro is a four star luxury spa hotel in Perthshire, set in a 900-acre estate with 213 en-suite rooms and over 500 staff. The hotel is in a group of 8 similar, high quality hotels. It has five restaurants, cafes and bars serving a wide range of full meals and snacks.

**TIP:** Use our tracking sheets and calculator tool to help your business make smart savings too!



**YOUR BUSINESS IS FOOD**

**DON'T THROW IT AWAY...**

## Summary

Crieff Hydro took part in a trial to track food thrown away in its main Meikle restaurant. By using a smart meter the hotel identified the areas to focus on were the breakfast and lunch buffet. Subsequently the hotel reduced food thrown away through various measures:

- Reduced buffet container sizes;
- Smart production planning and greater use of small batch preparation; and
- Greater staff engagement and the setting of weekly food waste reduction targets.

After just 8 weeks in a single restaurant, Crieff Hydro reduced costs relating to food thrown away by around 43%, and by 31% in "weight per cover" terms. This equates to an annual saving of around 11.5 tonnes of food, with approximately £51,750 of savings.



*"This has given us the wake up call that we needed. It has shown us just how much cash we were effectively putting into the bin on a daily basis. Seeing the level of detail, down to the waste from specific components of a dish, really brings home the need to change practices and increase awareness. The WRAP trial has played a massive part in helping to change perceptions and deliver savings."*

**Marcus Kenyon, General Manager**

## How the savings were made

Smart meters were used to measure food thrown away in the Meikle restaurant. The system tracked spoilage, prepared not served and customer plate waste. Food thrown away was weighed by digital floor scales linked to a tablet touch screen that allowed food to be categorised by selecting the correct icon.

This weight data was then linked to cost information to give the true cost of food thrown away for the hotel. Data was analysed to produce daily and weekly reports for the hotel.

## Raising awareness and taking action

The reports were discussed weekly to identify actions to reduce food thrown away from buffet operations. Using this information, kitchen and serving staff were able to take a number of actions:

- Using smaller containers on the buffet to better match demand rates, combined with more small batch preparation, rather than having everything pre-prepared;
- Reducing the amount of food on the buffet towards the end of the service, as customer numbers decline, whilst still offering the same choice of dishes; and

- Directly engaging staff on a regular basis and giving them a clear focus by setting weekly targets.

## Major savings achieved

These actions resulted in a substantial reduction in the quantity and value of food thrown away. Comparing data for the first week of the trial to the average of the last three weeks:

- **The amount of food waste per cover reduced by 31%; from 169g to 117g.**
- **The cost of food thrown away, as a percentage of sales, fell from 9% to 5%.**

## Making further improvements

Building on the progress made at Crieff Hydro, the company now plans to extend this good practice to the other seven hotels in the group. An action plan is being developed which will deliver the waste prevention opportunities identified during the trial through targeted staff training, capital investment and introducing smaller plate sizes for buffets.

## Top Tips

- ✓ Actively track what food types are being thrown away at spoilage, preparation and plate stages.
- ✓ Check your specifications (e.g. preparation procedures) and make sure these are met consistently.
- ✓ Prepare and cook in small batches to respond to demand 'on the go'.
- ✓ Make the most of meat, fruit and vegetables through careful trimming (e.g. reducing the end waste on carrots).
- ✓ Use pre-portioned meal elements where possible.
- ✓ Take particular care over portioning of chips, veg and salad garnish.
- ✓ Maximise use of prepared and not served food in daily 'specials' (e.g. soups and curries).
- ✓ Vary portion sizes and offer 'light' versions of main courses.
- ✓ Ask customers if there are items that they don't want that are included in a meal, such as tomatoes with breakfast and steaks.
- ✓ Reduce side dish and buffet plate and bowl sizes, but allow top ups.



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