Upstream Food Waste Prevention at Boston College

- 22,000+ meals per day
- Self-operated
- 14 operations open to public
- 250+ FTEs and several hundred part-time employees
- 14,000 undergrad and grad students
- All retail, à la carte menu

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1. **Compare purchasing** inventory with customer ordering

2. **Modify menus** to increase customer satisfaction and prevent and reduce uneaten food

3. **Examine production and handling practices** to prevent and reduce preparation waste.

4. **Ensure proper storage techniques.**

5. **Be creative with your kitchen excess.**

6. **Reduce serving sizes as appropriate and avoid use of garnishes that don’t get eaten.**

7. **For buffet-style service**, encourage customers to take only what they will actually eat.

8. **For colleges**, go trayless in the dining halls.

Source: EPA “Food Recovery Hierarchy”
Challenges to Source Reduction

➢ ‘Don’t Run Out’ Policy
   → Number customers varies each meal period
   → Maintain appearance of full at all times

➢ Time Scarcity
   → Repurposing food scraps takes time and labor
   → Conflicting priorities for managers

➢ Rigid Allergy Restrictions
   → Labels limit scratch cooking with scraps
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➢ Set a baseline
  → what we measure, we can manage
➢ LeanPath waste tracking system

→ Weighs, tracks and divides unutilized food into:
  o Trash
  o Donation
  o Compost

→ Baseline measures week-over-week “savings”
➢ Foster staff buy-in
  → Assigned ‘Champions’
  → Staff instantly saw value and impact
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➢ Foster staff buy-in
   → Front-line workers has best solutions
   → Create a culture of food waste prevention

Within two weeks, salad bar waste was down 50%.
Food Waste Prevention BC Dining

Food waste reduced by 60.7%
= 263 tons of food waste
= 197 tons CO2

How it helps with food waste prevention:
- Sets a baseline
- Helps management improve practices
- Engages staff with environmental issues on individual level
Lessons Learned

➢ Set a baseline: measurement forms the basis for actionable change
➢ Assign waste reduction ‘champion
➢ Manager buy-in is crucial to success
➢ Listen to the front line workers
➢ Start with low hanging fruit

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