

## PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING AT THE TOP OF THE MENU

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Sustainability continues to permeate discussions in the UK restaurant industry, with new initiatives regarding food waste, sourcing, plastic use and seasonality popping up every week.

However, with limited buy-in from staff, implementing and succeeding with these initiatives is much easier said than done. While many chefs, front of house and managers are passionate about minimising their impact on the environment, there can be a disconnect between recognising its importance and actioning changes that make a difference. What's more, as hospitality is quite a transient industry, a constant array of new faces means it can be a challenge to ensure a consistent understanding across the kitchen, floor and management.

This is where sustainability training makes a huge difference. Sustainability procedures should be treated like health and safety measures – compulsory and understood by every member of a restaurant, whether they are brand new or leading the charge. One way to do this is to offer standardised training that introduces the key concepts of sustainability and demonstrates how these are applied within a professional kitchen environment.



### Why bother with sustainability training?

Beyond the obvious environmental impact, investing in sustainability training can go a long way in ensuring business success. A general shift towards sustainable purchasing and consumption means that individuals are now prioritising the environmental impact of what and where they are eating. Those that fail to embrace this shift risk being left behind.

Employing a number of sustainable measures, such as sourcing locally, reducing food waste, reducing packaging and buying seasonally will also assist in limiting operating costs, while also encouraging stronger relationships with suppliers.

With the right training, staff become advocates for your initiatives, spreading your ethos to your customer base, who then become advocates for your restaurant as a whole.

### What sustainability training involves

As with any action in a commercial kitchen, consistency is key. Ensuring your staff are educated about sustainability and have the same base understanding makes it easier for procedures to be followed and a standard to be set. It also encourages buy-in from staff and joins the dots between their actions and their impact.

Regardless of their role, staff should understand why sustainability matters so much, starting with an explanation of the problem, key terms and the identification of key players in reducing environmental impact. From there, it's onto the importance of sourcing food sustainably and ethically and how to minimise the use of unnecessary packaging, as well as minimising the depletion of natural resources and food waste. Breaking down these concepts and providing practical solutions means that staff at every stage of the process can make a change – the chef with menu planning, the waiter with serving sizes and so on.

However, where sustainability training has the most impact is in the practical application – actually sending staff to supermarkets to source ingredients or asking them to plan menus with what they've learnt in mind. When groups of people are forced to choose between plastic-free, organic, air miles, seasonality, ethics, cooking methods and carbon footprint, it really puts the theory into perspective!

As restaurants look to improve their environmental practices, the appropriate staff training is set to be more important than ever. An informed workforce will result in higher buy-in, easier integration and the best chance at sustainability success.

