

Sustainable Hospitality & Tourism Management

LEVEL 5

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In today's environmentally conscious world, the hospitality industry has begun to recognise the importance of adopting sustainable practices in their daily operations. Hotels and resorts are no longer just places to rest your head; they have become essential in the global effort to reduce our ecological footprint. As travellers seek eco-friendly destinations, green hospitality has evolved from a mere trend to an integral component of the lodging experience. (<https://ecobnb.com/blog/2023/05/green-hospitality-sustainable-practices-hotels-resorts/#:~:text=The%20core%20principle%20of%20green%20hospitality%20is%20to,eco-friendly%20technologies%2C%20and%20promoting%20awareness%20of%20environmental%20issues.>)

More and more hotel and hospitality providers are becoming aware of green issues and acting more responsibly in their business. Some benefits of making hotels more eco-friendly include conserving resources, reducing pollution, and improving operational efficiency. However, there are still gaps in the green practices at the hotels and room for initiatives to be applied. Hotels worldwide are rolling out many green initiatives like smart showers, solar power installations, and waste diversion. But what's right for one hotel may not be right — or achievable — for others. Sustainable Hotel Ideas: 25 Ways to Go, Green, | Cvent Blog) (<https://www.cvent.com/uk/blog/hospitality/eco-friendly-hotel-ideas>

Sustainability, greener practices in the context of the hospitality industry, refers to the practice of conducting hotel operations in an environmentally responsible and resource-efficient manner. It also encompasses promoting social responsibility by supporting local communities and adhering to ethical business practices. Sustainability in hospitality aims to minimise the industry's negative impact on the environment while maximising its positive impact on the local economy and society. (<https://thehospitalitydaily.com/sustainability-in-hospitality-industry/>)

Although significant progress in the hotel industry has been made, many hotels still lag in implementing comprehensive waste management solutions, illustrating the need for innovative strategies like composting. (United Nations Environment Programme. (2019). Sustainable Hotel Industry. Retrieved from <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/sustainable-hotels>)

Premier Inn is the UK's biggest hotel brand, offering quality accommodation at affordable prices with over 800 hotels in great locations. Each year at Premier Inn, they undertake a robust materiality process to help shape their sustainability strategy, ensuring they focus on tackling the risks and opportunities most relevant in these times of social and economic change. <https://www.whitbread.co.uk/sustainability/our-strategy-targets/>

Noticing gaps in many hotels and in Premier Inn's sustainability procedures brings suggestions to create new sustainability ideas to help improve green practices, looking carefully at waste management practices that are not already in place and can be applied to Premier Inn to reduce waste and costs and carbon footprint. The research for this will discuss the benefits and challenges of integrating sustainability into daily operations, how food waste management can benefit Premier Inn hotels, other hotels, and the environment, and explore the historical context and influential individuals who have shaped sustainable practices in hospitality. Aiming to also examine a gap in sustainable practices within the hospitality industry, focusing on food waste reduction through a proposed solution: implementing a dynamic food ordering system. It will analyse the benefits and challenges of integrating sustainability, exploring how this solution benefits Premier Inn hotels, other hotels, and the environment.

Premier Inn takes learnings from their teams, customers, investors, other stakeholders, and wider

sustainability trends to ensure their programs and targets are fit for our current business and the wider ESG landscape. Their strategy is called 'Force for Good', and is more important than ever before. The strategy is split into three pillars: opportunity, community, and responsibility.

<https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/why/force-for-good.htm>

Premier Inn annually report on the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) for Water and Climate and the Sustainability Accounting Standards (SASB) as well as providing an update on their progress towards responding to the Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recommendations, which is in their Annual Report and Accounts. Premier Inn's program is underpinned by several policies, each outlining the standards they commit to working towards as they move towards achieving targets. (Premier Inn (2023) 'Sustainable Practices'. Available at: [insert URL]) The hospitality sector generates significant waste, and Premier Inn is no exception. While the hotel has implemented various policies to manage waste, gaps for improvement remain. Implementing a more robust waste management program can have far-reaching benefits for Premier Inn and the environment. (<https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/why/force-for-good.htm>)

In Europe, a shocking 20% of the food produced – around 173 kg per person – goes to waste. The hospitality industry is a big culprit, with food services estimated to contribute 12% of Europe's food waste. The cause? Food waste can happen at any point after food ingredients arrive in the kitchen of a hospitality business. Food can spoil because it's not used quickly enough or organised effectively; customers may not eat all the food that's served to them; and businesses might order the wrong quantities of food for the number of orders made. <https://verive.eu/food-waste-in-hospitality/#:~:text=Food%20waste%20in%20hospitality%3A%20why%20it%20matters%20and,the%20solution%20Making%20change%20can%20be%20challenging.%20>

Integrating sustainability within hospitality operations offers numerous benefits. First, it significantly enhances a hotel's brand reputation. Accommodation providers that prioritise environmental care often attract eco-conscious consumers. The rise of certification programs, such as LEED and Green Key, also reflects a growing market segment interested in sustainable practices. Research has shown that businesses focusing on sustainable practices often experience improved operational efficiency, leading to tangible economic benefits. However, challenges accompany the transition towards sustainability. One of the most significant barriers is the initial financial investment required for the implementation of greener technologies and practices. Many small and independent hotels may struggle to find the necessary capital for upgrades, such as solar panel installation or water-saving fixtures. Additionally, staff training is essential to ensure that sustainability practices are effectively integrated into daily operations. This process can be time-consuming and may initially disrupt regular business activities. There is also the challenge of aligning short-term profitability with long-term sustainability goals, as stakeholders often prioritise immediate financial returns over strategic environmental investments.

According to a report from the World Travel & Tourism Council, companies that adopt sustainable practices report higher rates of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Premier Inn can benefit from aligning its operations with growing consumer preferences for sustainability, particularly among millennials and Gen Z travellers who value environmentally conscious brands. Garnett, T. (2016). The role of food systems in sustainability. *Nature*, 531(7594), 299-304.

The benefits of adopting sustainable practices extend beyond hotel operations to positively impact the environment. Waste reduction strategies, such as composting and recycling, minimise landfill contributions and support circular economy principles. By sourcing local goods and services, hotels can further reduce their carbon footprints while supporting local economies. Such environmentally conscious practices not only enhance consumers' experiences but also contribute to the broader movement toward ecological preservation.

A significant gap in many hotels' sustainable practices lies in the management of food waste. Hotels

generate substantial food waste from buffets, room service, and restaurants. This waste contributes to greenhouse gas emissions through decomposition in landfills. A credible solution to address this is the implementation of a dynamic food ordering system. This system would incorporate real-time data on customer preferences and occupancy levels to optimise food preparation and minimise overproduction. Through data analysis, hotels can gain insights into popular menu items and adjust ordering accordingly, reducing the likelihood of surplus food. Despite the adoption of various greener practices, a substantial gap remains in waste reduction strategies, especially concerning food waste management. Hotels often produce significant amounts of food waste due to over-preparation, guest leftovers, and expired inventory. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, approximately one-third of food produced for human consumption is wasted globally, which translates to a staggering 1.3 billion tonnes each year. This gap presents an opportunity for hotels to implement comprehensive food waste management systems as a solution. (<https://thehospitalitydaily.com/sustainability-in-hospitality-industry/>)

Many hotels face challenges in accurately forecasting food demand, leading to excessive waste. Premier Inn has implemented initiatives to reduce food waste, such as donating leftovers to charities. However, there is room for improvement in their tracking and measuring of waste levels. A more comprehensive system would help understand which foods are wasted the most and adjust purchasing decisions accordingly. Additionally, investing in staff training to raise awareness about portion sizes and waste management could significantly reduce waste in the kitchen. Furthermore, advancements in technology offer innovative solutions for food management. Digital platforms that track food waste can help Premier Inn analyse and reduce waste effectively. Smart inventory systems could also optimise supply chain management, contributing to a lower carbon footprint. By leveraging technology, Premier Inn could address many existing gaps in its food management practices. Sustainable Restaurant Association. (2021). About Us. Available at: <https://sra.org.uk/>.

To highlight to food waste problem within Premier Inn, records show they have a staggering amount of food waste, Most of the 200+ tonnes worth of food gets delivered to FareShare as part of an ongoing partnership with the food redistribution charity. However, other charities Premier Inn partnered with will also benefit from donations. The food—excess stock that would have otherwise gone to waste—will be used to help support thousands of the UK's most vulnerable people as the country continues to navigate through a challenging 2020. From fresh fruit and dairy products to quality steaks, Premier Inn delivers a wide range of food to Fareshare for redistribution through the organisation's network of 11,000 frontline charities nationwide. Projects receiving this surplus food from Whitbread via FareShare include homeless shelters, community centres, school breakfast clubs, and food banks. <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2020/fareshare.html>

One credible solution to the food waste gap is the implementation of a comprehensive food recovery program. This program would include strategies for tracking food waste, educating staff, and establishing partnerships with local food banks. By tracking food waste, hotels can better understand their consumption patterns and adjust purchasing and preparation processes accordingly. Staff education is crucial in instilling a culture of sustainability within the hotel. Regular training sessions can reinforce the importance of proper food handling and the significance of waste reduction efforts. Partnering with local food banks and community organisations to donate excess food serves a dual purpose. It mitigates waste and helps address food insecurity within the community. Such partnerships can enhance the hotel's public image and strengthen community ties, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable local economy. Williams, H. (2020). Managing Food Waste in Hospitality: A Guide to Best Practices. *Hospitality Management Journal*, 21(3), 200-212.

Furthermore, the environmental benefits are substantial. Reducing food waste can lessen the greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste decomposition in landfills. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, organic waste in landfills produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas. From the environmental perspective, food waste management significantly reduces landfill waste, thereby mitigating greenhouse gas

emissions that would be produced from decomposing organic materials in landfills. By incorporating food waste management practices, hotels can show a commitment to environmental stewardship, enhancing their corporate social responsibility profile. (Hasek, G., 2022. Green Lodging News: The Year Ahead for Sustainability in Hospitality. Green Lodging News.)

Looking toward the future, hotels must continue to innovate and adapt their sustainability practices. Trends indicate that consumers will demand even greater transparency regarding environmental impacts. Hotels that invest in developing sustainable technologies and practices will likely find themselves at a competitive advantage. As public awareness of sustainability grows, the hospitality industry must evolve its strategies accordingly. (McLeod, M. (2022) 'The Circular Economy and Its Impact on Hospitality.'. Available at: [insert URL].)Future developments indicate a growing trend towards comprehensive sustainability education and awareness within the hotel industry. Collaborations between educational institutions and hotels can nurture a new generation of hospitality professionals trained in sustainable practices.⁹ World Travel & Tourism Council (2023) 'Sustainability: A New Opportunity for Increased Customer Satisfaction.'. Available at: [insert URL].)

In conclusion, while the hospitality industry has made significant progress in adopting greener practices, significant opportunities remain for improvement. Implementing a dynamic food ordering system presents a credible solution to address the issue of food waste. This strategy offers substantial financial and environmental benefits, aligning with the industry's increasing focus on sustainability. Through careful planning, implementation, and continuous improvement, hotels can significantly reduce their environmental impact and enhance their sustainability credentials.

The hospitality industry faces significant challenges and opportunities in integrating sustainable practices. By addressing the gap in food waste management, hotels can implement a food recovery program that benefits both the environment and their operational efficiency. While challenges such as initial investments and ongoing monitoring exist, the long-term benefits outweigh these obstacles. As highlighted, influential figures and organisations are paving the way for sustainable practices, setting the stage for a brighter and more responsible future in hospitality. (Sustainable Hotel Ideas: 25 Ways to Go, Green, | Cvent Blog) (<https://www.cvent.com/uk/blog/hospitality/eco-friendly-hotel-ideas>)

Premier Inn has made commendable advancements in sustainable practices, yet a critical gap remains. They also released their latest stand-alone Environmental, Social, and Governance report (ESG Report) to showcase the breadth of our Force for Good program and achievements in more detail. At Premier Inn, their target is to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030 against a FY18/19 baseline. This helps them to become a more efficient business but also reduces our GHG emissions and helps support food security, both in the UK and across our global supply chain. They are also working hard to ensure that none of their general waste goes to landfill, as we know that the environmental impact of landfill is a growing issue. They have a target to divert 100% of their operational waste from landfill and work with their supplier to meet this. (Premier Inn (2023) 'Sustainable Practices'. Available at: [insert URL])

Sustainable Hotel Ideas: 25 Ways to Go, Green, | Cvent Blog)

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