

## SUCCESS STORY: REDUCING FOOD WASTE

# Laughing Planet Cedar Mill

Since June of 2016, Laughing Planet's Cedar Mill location has provided nutritious, affordable and locally sourced fare.

Laughing Planet has 17 stores in Oregon, Nevada, and Washington. The company is invested in improving the health of local communities and the environment at large. Reducing food waste is at the heart of that work.



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### The Opportunity

The restaurant industry plays a crucial role in preventing food waste. Laughing Planet has worked to address this problem since the first location opened its doors more than 20 years ago. At that time, the farm-to-table company established food waste minimization as one of their core standards. In Cedar Mill, this is a major focus of their daily operations. This culture of food waste prevention is motivated by the company's understanding that food is precious and that the environmental inputs necessary to grow, harvest, ship and prepare food should be balanced by careful planning, purchasing and preparation of food to limit waste.

**Food Waste  
Stops With Me**

[FoodWasteStopsWithMe.org](http://FoodWasteStopsWithMe.org)

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## The Process

Laughing Planet orders food from their central commissary daily. These orders reflect a system of careful measurement and tracking that allows General Managers to order what is selling most in each store. These strict ordering processes allow Laughing Planet employees to combat food waste through precision.

The restaurant's menu has also standardized ingredients. So, the ingredients they purchase are used across several recipes, which increases the chances that food will be used each day, reducing the possibility of waste. They also follow a strict, First-in, First-out method to maximize freshness and reduce spoilage and waste. Food is stored based on its use-by or expiration date. Products with the earliest dates are stored in front of items with later dates so that older food is used first.

Customer involvement is also at the center of the restaurant's efforts. Rather than allowing customers to throw away their left-over food in the garbage, Laughing Planet asks that each customer put their food in a bus cart. Restaurant employees take care of the rest, separating food scraps into compost, and recyclable materials into the recycling.



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## The Results

At Laughing Planet Cedar Mill, the team tracks waste using a waste log. Each day, the team writes down what is being composted and how much has been thrown away. In the first twelve months, through a practice of daily measurement and precise ordering, the restaurant reduced their waste log from two pages each month, to roughly half a page—meaning that through their efforts they've prevented most of their ingredients from entering the waste stream with the exception of a few sauces, garnishes, vegetable and fruit peels and eggshells that are composted.