

SUCCESS STORY: Employees feedback drives food waste prevention at

¿Por Qué No? Taqueria



¿Por Qué No? Taqueria is a Portland eatery recognized for its delicious guacamole and margaritas, and long lines of customers nearly every day of the week. Less known are the taqueria's sustainability efforts.

"From the very beginning, we prioritized sustainability," said Brigid King, General Manager of ¿Por Qué No? Taqueria, which operates two locations in Portland and a catering business. "We started with composting shortly after we opened in 2005. As we grew, we focused on preventing food waste."

Getting consistent employee engagement is key for the taqueria. They seek employee feedback during monthly staff meetings, via paycheck inserts, via email, with voice mail memos and at the end of each shift. All their communication is done in English and Spanish.

"It was because of this feedback we implemented some important changes that helped us prevent food waste," said King. "We invested in an extra freezer so we could save trim and leftovers to use

for soup, stocks and sauces. We use visual guides to help staff portion meat and size tortillas. We switched to more expensive cuts of meat that require less trimming before cutting. All these ideas came from frontline employees."

Staff at the register ask extra questions to ensure customers don't return food because veggie orders were meant to be vegan. They also keep an eye on portion sizes. Line cooks receive quarterly bonuses if food costs are within that range.

"We pay our employees a livable wage and provide health insurance, we couldn't do that if we wasted food," King said.

Learn how you can prevent food waste FoodWasteStopsWithMe.org

Food Waste Stops with Me is a collaboration between Metro, the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, as well as city and county governments to help food service businesses reduce food waste.

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