

## Shrink Prevention Options for Grocery Stores - Draft Under Review

Below is a list of shrink prevention ideas for grocery stores. Please use this as a guide for potential activities and ideas that you might be able to implement or add your own activities that you would like to implement.

**Join the US EPA's Food Recovery Challenge! :** <http://www.epa.gov/smm>

- Perform food specific waste audit.** This is your essential starting point for all other activities. A waste audit will tell you what is being thrown out and why. Pick a day and be there at the waste bin with a few volunteers, buckets, a log sheet, and a weight scale and record:
  - a. What is being thrown out,
  - b. Weight or number of items
  - c. The reason the food is being disposed if known
  - d. The expiration date of the product when applicable and
  - e. Whether the food was still wholesome/edible before being thrown out.

With the information you gain from this exercise, you can then adjust purchasing estimates or shipment sizes accordingly. Contact your EPA representative for log sheets, signs, and other tools. Reduce order quantities of low sold or otherwise tossed items. Take an inventory ranking your most wasted to least wasted items and consider changing procedures to minimize loss. Supermarket loss estimates for different foods:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/183501/eib44.pdf> Some additional example resources:

[http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/foodwaste\\_audit\\_tool.xlsm](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/foodwaste_audit_tool.xlsm)

[http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/r5\\_fd\\_wste\\_guidebk\\_020615.pdf](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/r5_fd_wste_guidebk_020615.pdf)

- Clear date labelling and date encoding to cause less confusion to customer.** Consider working with your supply chain to clearly label or define the difference between safety-based and quality-based dates. Some options might include:
  - a. Make "sell by" dates invisible to the consumer,
  - b. Use more "freeze by" dates where applicable so the customer knows they have that option,
  - c. Remove "best before" or other quality dates from shelf-stable, non-perishable foods for which safety is not a concern: this will reduce waste of these products and increase the weight given to labels placed on products that do have safety concerns, and
  - d. Make sure all dates have a description, not just have a date. This will also help improve your bottom line by boosting customer satisfaction, wasting less by holding on to food longer and donating with more confidence.

"Misinterpretation of date labels is one of the key factors contributing to food waste" – NRDC .

<http://www.nrdc.org/food/expiration-dates.asp>

- Redesigned product displays with less excess.** Ex: instead of a pile of produce have a back support that makes it look like it's a pile. This case study showed a savings of over \$180,000 per store and customer satisfaction actually rose because produce was three days fresher. "Customers did not notice ..... less-full displays and, in fact, their satisfaction rose, as produce was on average three days fresher than before (Gunders, 2012)" - <http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/food-loss-and-waste/database/projects-detail/en/c/207373/>
- Discount shelf for ripe, near to-expire, discontinued, or slightly damaged food. Provide clear communication to customers.** Have a space in the store separate from regular products or another offsite location strictly for discount items that are soon to be thrown out. Ex: "Berkeley, Calif., grocery store Berkeley Bowl bags up nearly

expired and damaged produce and sells it on its “bargain shelf” for \$.99/bag. ... The produce manager estimates the company sells \$1,500 per day of damaged produce at each store.” -

<http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2012/09/17/cutting-food-waste-savings-sustainability>

[http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news\\_and\\_views/food\\_systems/former-trader-joes-exec-wants-turn-slightly-past-its-prime-food-new-retailer](http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/food_systems/former-trader-joes-exec-wants-turn-slightly-past-its-prime-food-new-retailer)

- Have information available in your store departments on best storage practices for certain food and how long food should last when stored properly.** <http://england.lovefoodhatewaste.com/content/storage-0>
  
- Base orders on what you currently have.**  
[http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP\\_IGD\\_supply\\_chain\\_report.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP_IGD_supply_chain_report.pdf)
  
- Allow prepared foods to run out near closing. Only make as much as you can sell. Track purchases of prepared items.**
  
- Cook, freeze, juice, or otherwise process foods that are nearly spoiled to prolong its life.** Ex: Have a freezer display case devoted to saving foods that would otherwise be thrown away. Explain the environmental benefits of this practice to your customers to get them excited. Ex: start with mustard greens! A USDA study found that mustard greens had the largest percent loss of any vegetable and found that the demand for fresh mustard green is relatively low compared with the demand for frozen mustard greens. When your fresh mustard greens get close to expiration, throw them in the freezer display case for a second life!  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/183501/eib44.pdf>
  
- Buy surplus, “ugly”, or odd shape produce from farms/wholesalers that would otherwise be wasted and sell them at discount in their own section in the store.** Make it part of your advertising that by supporting this produce, customers are also supporting more sustainable practices and helping to get cheaper produce to low income families.  
<http://www.news10.net/story/money/consumer/2015/06/19/raleys-to-sell-imperfect-produce-for-a-discount/29009393/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vd6EjqL-GEO>  
<http://www.imperfectproduce.com/home.php>  
<http://www.endfoodwaste.org/ugly-fruit---veg.html>  
<https://vimeo.com/98441820>
  
- Send order estimates more frequently to supplier to better align production planning with order timings:** Ex: send order estimates twice a week instead of once a week.
  
- Eliminate “rounding rules” for order estimates.**

- Start or increase regular meetings between retailer and supplier with reducing food waste as the main agenda item.** [http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP\\_IGD\\_supply\\_chain\\_report.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP_IGD_supply_chain_report.pdf)
  
- Make food waste reduction a key performance indicator in operations, supply chain and employee performance.**
  
- Revise your supply contracts to require the supplier to have a food waste reduction or food donation program.**
  
- Implement policies and offer training to employees on how to make meals from fresh ingredients from the store shelves that are approaching the sell by date.** Consider made to order instead of ready made to avoid leftovers.
  
- Work with your manufacturers to create a donation network for unsold orders.** If there is concern about having brand name donations possibly sold on the grey market, work with the manufacturers to cross out the brand label or repackage the order so to discourage grey market activities. Reach an arrangement with the manufacturer where they are able to donate while alleviating your concerns.  
<http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/food-loss-and-waste/database/en/>
  
- Consider using ethylene absorbing strips in packaging to extend the shelf life of produce such as avocados and tomatoes.** <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/jan/06/marks-and-spencer-packaging-fruit?guni=Article:in%20body%20link>
  
- Promote short supply chains. Look for more local suppliers, thus reducing the distance and time the food has to travel.** [http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/files/eatgreenfs\\_feb2010.pdf](http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/files/eatgreenfs_feb2010.pdf)
  
- Consider converting from fluorescent to LED lighting in refrigerated display cases and motion sensors to save energy and to make some foods last longer.**
  
- Offer more foods associated with less deforestation and less greenhouse gas pollution.** Encourage these options through signage and other means. <http://mitigation2014.org/>
  
- Post coupons or discounts online for near to expire products.**  
[http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news\\_and\\_views/business\\_models/aarthi\\_rayapura/foodloop\\_helps\\_consumers\\_retailers\\_work\\_together\\_elim](http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/business_models/aarthi_rayapura/foodloop_helps_consumers_retailers_work_together_elim)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUmtP2b1u28>

- Offer foods that use less water to produce and advertise it.** An example resource that shows how much water each food takes to produce can be found here: <http://waterfootprint.org/en/resources/interactive-tools/product-gallery/>
  
- Train staff to remind customers as they walk up that they can try a sample.** Provide taste samples on reusable service ware to minimize waste.
  
- Share practices with others to improve waste reduction industry wide. Pair up best performing managers with worst performing managers.**
  
- Have staff actively participate in the reduction of wasted food in your business.** Conduct a break room challenge where they might win “environmental employee of the month” or have a survey or an “idea sheet” posted in the break room.
  
- Other idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**This draft is under review.**

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