

CASE STUDY

Gamifying Food Waste Training



Introduction

The Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment (PCFWC) collaborates with businesses, governments, and stakeholders to implement effective waste prevention, recovery, and recycling practices to reduce food waste along the Pacific Coast. Dole Fresh Vegetables (Dole) is committed to decreasing landfill waste in alignment with the goals of the PCFWC. This is in alignment with their commitments to [achieve zero waste to landfill](#) by developing circular processes to maximize reuse or minimize waste throughout their supply chain by 2030.

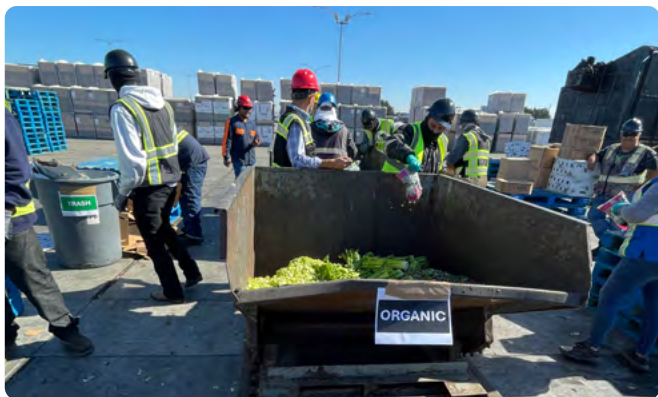
Dole recognizes that waste reduction is largely influenced by the employees who manage waste processes throughout the operations. Dole's team identified an opportunity for improvement at a cooler site in Marina, CA, where Dole launched a waste training series to enhance employee knowledge and confidence implementing proper waste diversion techniques.

A key result of this series was an 11% improvement in diverting food waste from landfill.

Solution

To address points of confusion in the waste disposal process, Dole developed a comprehensive waste training series with clear guidelines and hands-on experience to reinforce correct waste management practices. This program was executed at the Marina California Cooler where ready-to-eat salad bowls and salad kits are produced.

Waste training through gamification—a hands-on, learner-centric, autonomous, and empowering training experience for employees—is unique in the context of the agricultural manufacturing/produce industry.



The success of this training came from several key factors:

- Strong buy-in and ongoing support from facility leadership.
- Effective collaboration between leadership, learning & development staff, and sustainability teams.
- Well-structured training modules, developed with expert input and tailored to operational needs.
- Both online and in-person components.
- Positive engagement and enthusiasm among staff, contributing to successful training adoption.
- Incentives like food, gift cards, and verbal praise.

Training Approach

Training was developed by a cross-section of expertise: sustainability, learning & development and operations. Their shared objectives was to ensure success on learning efficacy, cultural change and operational excellence.

Training Components:

- Training content covered: what is waste, why it's important, and how to improve handling at the facility.
- Training closed with a six question quiz to validate retention.
- Gamification was a time-bound exercise to for each team to accurately sort a mixed commodity box into the correct waste bins.
- The winning team received a trophy and all teams received participation prizes and certificates of training completion.

Knowing very well the intricate link between sustainable agricultural and healthy environment, both leadership and learning & development experts valued the importance of implementing a hands-on waste training program to optimize waste management—not only to increase monetary benefits but also reinforce the company's goal of environmental stewardship.



Key Results

127 Employees

127 employees (99% of staff at the Marina Cooler that handle waste) received the training.

90% Satisfaction Score

The Gamified Waste training received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, with an average satisfaction score of 90% for the training experience.

11% Improvement

11% improvement in landfill diversion rates at the Marina Cooler in the month following the training.

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It helped bring people together to understand how to properly dispose of different types of waste.

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This training was useful to me to know the division of garbage and not to mix it or put it in the wrong containers.

Conclusion & Next Steps

Through leadership support, structured training design, and an engaged workforce, organizations can successfully implement a waste training program that significantly improves waste diversion efforts. In sharing this approach, the PCFWC hopes that this can serve as a replicable model for similar organizations aiming to enhance their sustainability initiatives.

Dole plans to expand this initiative to additional facilities, incorporating feedback from participants to further refine the training program. Additionally, Dole aims to introduce more interactive and gamified elements to enhance engagement and retention.



Acknowledgments

The PCFWC would like to thank Dole Fresh Vegetables for their dedication to their ambitious goal of achieving zero waste to landfill by 2030. Their proactive approach, including the waste training series at the Marina, CA cooler site, demonstrates a strong commitment to empowering employees and enhancing waste diversion techniques. Dole's efforts are a shining example of how businesses can lead the way in sustainability and waste reduction.