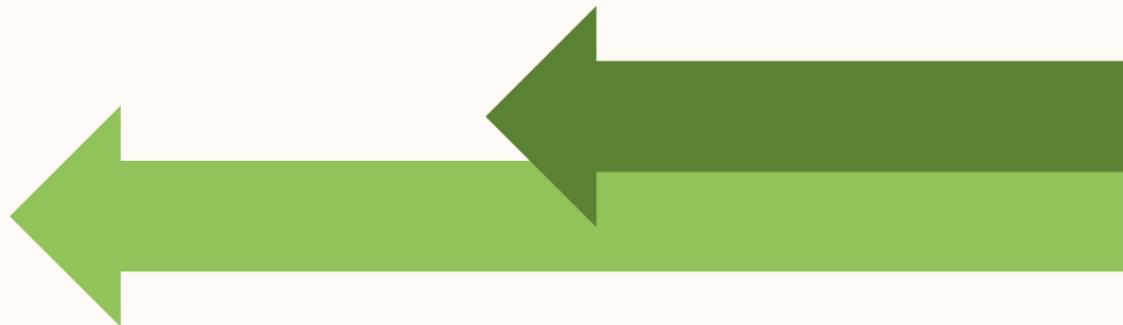


**Creating a Social Movement  
Around Food Waste:  
Recommendations for Waste  
Less Solutions**

by KEMP Consulting



## **Introduction**

The following report was compiled by KEMP Consulting, a group of Communications students at Westminster College. We were tasked by Waste Less Solutions to come up with a strategy for creating a social movement around food waste. In the following report, we have included the specific problems we have identified, our methods and analysis, and four recommendations with clear examples for Waste Less Solutions to utilize.

## **Overview of Problem**

Waste Less Solutions wants to get more restaurants to participate in their food rescue program. As they increase the number of restaurants and businesses that participate, they will also need more volunteers. Our goal is to create a social movement that encourages people to be more conscious about food waste and educates them on what they can do as individuals to address it.

In addition to volunteers, we want to drive more donors and receivers toward Waste Less Solutions. We want to create awareness within the community to increase participation on all fronts.

Lastly, we identified a need for a social movement regarding food waste. The public is becoming more aware of their environmental footprint and, with the right education and messaging, this could turn into a larger social initiative. There are currently no government regulations regarding food waste. If we want to create an effective, widespread movement to address food insecurity and climate change through food waste reduction, a social movement must be started to drive forward legislative change. While the ultimate end goal is to address the problem of food waste and food insecurity, first we need to narrow our focus to creating a social movement and raising awareness in relevant audiences.

## **Methods & Analysis**

To understand what is missing in the Waste Less Solutions approach to generating a movement, we analyzed a similar environmental movement that saw a lot of success – the plastic straw movement. The movement to ban plastic straws was so successful that many large restaurant chains and local businesses stopped using plastic straws, and we even saw the banning of plastic straws in several cities, including Los Angeles, Seattle, and New York City.

We looked at the website for the Plastic Pollution Coalition, which is dedicated to reducing plastic pollution and is one of the key contributors in driving forward the anti-plastic movement. One of the tactics they used was developing catchy slogans and phrases with impactful words. These slogans were often paired with steps that people can take to generate support. While Waste Less Solutions has some of these components on a smaller scale, our recommendations suggest a more concise and concrete approach to ensure the easiest path possible for readers to participate in the movement.

We also researched strategies for window advertising and the effectiveness of awards as an educational tool. In addition to web research, we conducted a survey as a way to determine if people value knowing restaurants and organizations that commit to being low or zero waste. We posed the question “Would you prefer to eat at restaurants that you know have committed to being a ‘low-waste’ facility?” The results showed that, out of 181 responses, 162 (89.5%) said they would prefer to eat at a restaurant that they know has committed to being low waste. This shows that the desire to contribute to an

environmental movement is already alive in the community, there is just a lack of education on where patrons should choose to spend their dollars. This survey helped us to determine that this isn't an issue of getting the public to care about reducing waste, and there is a need to identify which businesses are committed to reducing their waste.

## **Official Recommendations**

To address the problems listed above, we developed two multi-step tactics which are summarized below. The goal of these recommendations is to establish a clearly defined slogan and strategy to drive forward a new social movement about food waste and to identify a strategy to publicize that strategy to relevant audiences. Our recommendations are as follows, and will be expanded in subsequent sections:

- I. Build a social movement through branding and social media
  - a. Identify a slogan and branding to drive the social movement
  - b. Develop social media content strategies
  
- II. Expand and educate using “low-waste facility” certifications and advertise with a public relations campaign
  - a. Implement “low-waste facility” certifications for local restaurants and businesses
  - b. Design a public relations campaign to advertise new branding

### **Recommendation I, Part A:**

We recommend that Waste Less use the slogan “Tastes too good to waste,” as a phrase to drive this new social movement. Based on our research on other environmental movements (such as the plastic straw campaign), a catchy set of words that can convey a message quickly will be one of the most effective ways to quickly get the point across.



### **Recommendation I, Part B:**

We recommend that Waste Less reevaluate their use of their social media platforms by developing a more creative, strategic approach. Social media is shown to have success for creators, from businesses to pet owners, on both Instagram and TikTok, two platforms that the company already utilizes. We suggest they include more diverse, high-quality content to generate interest within the communities in Utah and beyond.

The approach to TikTok we recommend is focusing on calls to action. The TikTok community is often roused by a compelling call to action. Expressing urgency and presenting information on how to get involved would help stir the community to volunteer, donate food, etc. We recommend making specific posts devoted to calling on restaurants for excess food donations, as well as taking time to interact with videos by commenting and aligning with local food stops. Additionally, focusing on enhancing production

quality by using items such as tripods and ring lights to improve the overall quality and look of the content posted on TikTok.

To implement these ideas, we suggest the following ideas for the TikTok's themselves:

1. Create a video following along with a food rescue. Share the volunteer process and also ways the community can get involved (like resources for how to volunteer). Express some urgency and share the purpose of the food rescues (such as who is receiving the food) all in one video. Using a tripod (even a travel-friendly version) and focusing on compelling angles as well as lighting will help the overall look of the video as well.
2. Create a video sharing the purpose of the food rescues. Call on local businesses to do their part by utilizing and supporting Waste Less Solutions. Spread the message while consistently pushing for change and expressing urgency. This video could feature shots of Dana Williamson talking about what local businesses can do and shots from food rescues.
3. Informational videos sharing statistics of why Waste Less Solutions cause is so important, such as how much food every household wastes each year. Pairing this with ways to get involved as ways to mitigate their own food waste is another way to implement a CTA.

The approach to Instagram would take less of a call to action and more as a place of information. With Instagram, it is more effective to talk about the organization as a whole and the different things Waste Less Solutions does. We suggest going more in-depth about the food rescue and the different steps it takes, giving information on how to volunteer, and more on the garden share and how that benefits the community. Instagram stories can go hand-in-hand with the different pages on the website. Sharing videos that are posted on Tik Tok and posting it on the page to bring together both platforms and having the website align with both will round out the social media engagement and reach more people.

This recommendation will help boost social media content and viewers. This will bring awareness to a new group of people allowing them to gain knowledge of Waste Less Solutions and help spread the word to even more people across Utah.

### **Recommendation II, Part A:**

Our third recommendation is for Waste Less Solutions to revamp the certification system for restaurants that are committed to being low-waste facilities. Displaying awards at restaurants has been known to increase brand awareness as well as boost the credibility of the establishment. This can be seen in how restaurants display local or Tripadvisor awards for public viewing. Not only does the displaying of these awards help the business to establish credibility, but customers are also more likely to dine at a restaurant with multiple awards. If there is an award or certification granted to restaurants that commit to being "low-waste" and partner with Waste Less Solutions, displaying this will allow patrons to determine restaurants that align with their same morals. In the survey we conducted, 89.5% of responses indicated that people would value a certification system that showed them which businesses are also committed to reducing their food waste. Additionally, displaying an award is an excellent way to promote Waste Less Solution's messaging and educate more people on the harm of food waste.

While we are aware of Waste Less Solution's plans to revamp this certification system, we have specific recommendations on how it should be launched.

1. Whatever imaging Waste Less Solutions uses for the launch should incorporate a QR code to the website. QR codes are quick ways for people to access information without

having to remember URLs or company names. Incorporating a QR code into the award display allows people to quickly and easily educate themselves on the Waste Less Solutions mission and provides a simple way for people to figure out how to become either a receiver or a donor.

2. To give the certification more credibility, Waste Less Solutions should partner with a local publication or organization for the awards. For example, partnering with publications such as Best of Salt Lake, Salt Lake Magazine, or Gastronomic SLC, which already have developed reputations, gives the award more weight and value within the community. Being able to associate the certification with a credible local publication also allows Waste Less Solutions to access demographics through the publication who might not otherwise come across the website or restaurants.
3. Whether it is in the form of a certificate to print and frame or a sticker to put in the window, restaurants and companies should have a visible and recognizable way of displaying their award as a “certified low-waste facility.” This will include Waste Less Solution’s logo as a way to visually associate the organization with the budding movement. Additionally, using the phrasing “certified low-waste facility” allows patrons to recognize the significance of the award immediately with little to no prior knowledge of Waste Less Solutions. Until Waste Less Solutions becomes more of a household name, the award should be able to speak for itself, as well as serve as a way for people to learn more about the organization.



This recommendation would help the community to recognize which restaurants are committed to improving their environmental impact, it would potentially drive more patrons to restaurants who display this certification, and it would be an avenue for Waste Less Solutions to connect to a community that is eager to participate in the mission of reducing food waste.

### **Recommendation II, Part B:**

The final recommendation that we have will consolidate the recommendations listed above to best publicize the new tactics we’re using in this campaign. We recommend that Waste Less adopt our following proposed public relations campaign to advertise the new certification program summarized above, in order to most effectively communicate the message to target communities.

We identified four key components of a successful PR campaign:

1. Identify what message to convey and why
2. Identify what publications are most relevant to communicating the message to the right audience
3. Identify relevant audience
4. Writing the press release

Here are the components we suggest based on the research summarized above. Again, these components will only work when implemented in tandem and are not intended to stand alone.

1. **Message:** new low-waste certification allows local restaurants to save on dumping costs while addressing food insecurity in their communities.
2. **Publications:** The publications that are most relevant to communicating this message can be separated into two categories by the audience and reach: general local publications that reach a wide number of readers, and restaurant/small business-specific publications, which will be most effective in generating participation in the food donation program.

General Local Publications	Restaurant/Small Business Publications	Alternative Community Publications
Utah Now City Weekly West Jordan Journal (The City Journals) Deseret News Daily Herald The Spectrum The Herald Journal Sandy Journal (The City Journals)	Gastronomic SLC Dishing Park City Salt Lake Magazine Utah Stories	Catalyst Magazine SLUG Mag Q Salt Lake Bloom Gardens Magazine Trunkline Magazine

3. **Audiences:** There are two main audiences for this message: potential food donors, which could include restaurant owners, other small business owners, hotels, schools, etc.; and potential volunteers, which could include people with time on their hands to volunteer (such as retired individuals, religious communities that care about volunteering, etc.), and people who are passionate about social and community justice (such as local activist groups like the Red Hive Collective, PSL Salt Lake, etc.).
4. **Press Release:** The following is a sample press release for restaurant/small business-specific publications.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 14, 2023

**Food waste contracts help local businesses address food insecurity in communities**

*Waste Less Solutions offers food diversion at zero cost*

SALT LAKE CITY – Local nonprofit Waste Less Solutions now provides certifications for businesses that have low amounts of food waste. The “Tastes Too Good to Waste” campaign lets businesses get certified, and become food donors to the program through the company’s website.

Waste Less has diverted over a million pounds of food waste to over 388,044 individuals in the Salt Lake area since they started their mission in 2017.

**To become a food donor:**

- Visit <https://www.wastelessolutions.org/about/contact-us>
- Fill out the form
- Start donating!

Dana Williamson, founder of Waste Less, said that an average of \$1,500 is lost per year on wasted food in a typical family of four. One in five children are food insecure in Utah, according to the Waste Less Solutions website.

“It’s not a supply problem,” Williamson said in a 2022 interview with the Salt Lake Tribune. “It’s a distribution problem. We throw away up to 40 percent of the food we buy.”

So how does it work? Once businesses sign up to become food donors through the website, they can post on the foodrescue.us app to notify volunteers that they have surplus food ready to be donated. Volunteers are notified on the app that a pickup is ready, and will go to the business to pick up food.

The food is then repackaged and labeled by volunteers and delivered to those in need – via food banks, shelters, and other organizations that connect food with those who need it. Businesses can work to address food insecurity and save on dumping costs by getting involved with the program.

By launching the "Tastes Too Good to Waste" certification program, Williamson hopes to incentivize more businesses to participate in food donation, as well as raise awareness about food waste and food insecurity in the Salt Lake Community.

**CONTACT**

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## **Conclusion**

The community's desire to address our collective environmental footprint is already alive and well. The only thing missing is connecting the public to Waste Less Solution's cause. Our four recommendations are designed to address this information gap in an effort to spur a social movement as well as connect Waste Less Solutions with more potential donors, volunteers, and recipients. Through carefully curated social media, a certification system for businesses, and an intentional PR campaign, we aim to help Waste Less Solutions achieve their goals of reducing and eliminating food waste.