



nec
Birmingham

COMBATTING FOOD WASTE WITH



WHAT IS WINNOW AND WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO USE IT?

Food waste in the events industry is a focus area, and rightly so. Combine large spaces with large audiences and this naturally results in a large amount of food that has the potential to go to waste.

Amadeus was determined to find a solution to the problem and the business made a bold decision to be the first catering company in the live events sector to use pioneering food waste technology, Winnow.

Winnow helps measure the amount of food potentially going to waste in Amadeus kitchens.

The software, initially installed as a pilot in kitchens at the ICC, monitors both the type and amount of food being disposed of. Data is validated by the user selecting the item that's being disposed of from a catalogue on an iPad. The iPad is connected to Winnow which then weighs it, allowing for accurate daily and weekly reporting on wastage levels.

Winnow leverages the same type of technology found in driverless cars, and effectively teaches a machine to 'see' what is being thrown away. Teams then benefit from reporting which pinpoints waste, giving chefs the insight to reduce overproduction and drive down wastage.

Led by Food & Beverage Manager Marc Frankl, the technology is the first time that AI (Artificial Intelligence) has entered the professional kitchen at scale, with Amadeus being the first catering company in the live events industry to use the platform.

The initial benefits at the ICC have been such a success that the campaign has been scaled up across all NEC Group venues including the NEC, Vox, Utilita Arena Birmingham and Resorts World Arena.

WHAT INFORMATION HAVE YOU FOUND OUT SINCE USING WINNOW?

To date, the partnership between Amadeus and Winnow is still working extremely well at the ICC, saving 5,567 meals from going to waste at the venue between December 2021 and January 2022.

This means an annualised saving of almost 97,000 meals. Food waste saved in the same period totalled 2,231kg, saving 9,592kg of CO2 emissions.

On its installation and benefits at the ICC, Executive Chef Simon Hellier, said: "We are a venue with a conscience, and one that's always seeking new ways of reducing our impact on the environment without compromising on quality.

"The venue's kitchens cater for 400,000 delegate days every year, so if we over-stock, this can vastly increase what we have to send offsite for recycling or anaerobic digestion. Changing our habits using AI helps the environment and saves us resource, time and labour."



HOW HAS USING WINNOW BENEFITED YOUR BUSINESS?

Catering for more than four million visitors across the NEC Group venue portfolio, the opportunity for food wastage is high. With a full catering option to support each venue, including the NEC, ICC, Vox and Birmingham's two live music arenas, the business case for the technology was simple.

Reducing food waste makes business, environmental and operational sense – Amadeus believe it is one of the most cost-effective investments to reduce your carbon footprint. By putting better information in the hands of its venue operators, the business is empowering its staff to make a difference.

There are three key objectives for Amadeus' partnership with Winnow:

- Saving food waste
- Money
- CO2 emissions.

The benefits that come with each of these objectives is massive, decreasing Amadeus' impact on the environment and improving the business' bottom line.

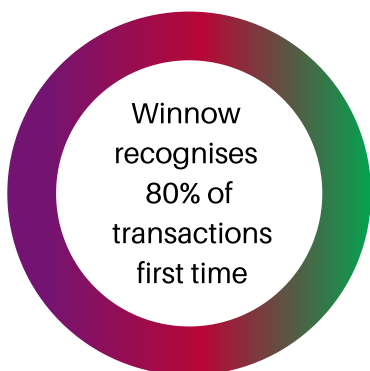
Monthly reports from the Winnow team are tracked against these metrics, so Amadeus can monitor waste at each venue and in each kitchen, tracking savings and areas for improvement.

With Amadeus venues now fully integrated with the technology and staff trained on the system, Winnow becomes more accurate than humans. Wasted items are automatically recorded which streamlines the process, meaning zero staff time and the elimination of human error. Venue teams benefit from powerful reporting which drives down waste and cuts food costs.

It has surpassed kitchen level accuracy of food waste categorisation. Due to the busy and often stressful nature of kitchens, kitchen level accuracy of food waste tends to be around 70%. With Winnow, the system recognises the correct item, first time, on more than 80% of transactions and will always improve the more it is used.

Automating food waste capture has also meant Amadeus kitchen staff can spend more time cooking rather than entering data, leaving them to do what they do best. In less than a couple of seconds, Winnow recognises wasted food and lets staff resume their tasks in the kitchen.

The technology drives chef behaviours, making them even more conscious about food waste, holding them accountable in setting the highest standards.



HOW HAS WINNOW HELPED YOU ON YOUR SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY?

Winnow is just one of the many ways Amadeus is placing a focus on sustainability. It is zero to landfill and on the road to carbon net zero alongside its parent company the NEC Group, with this project helping the team monitor and measure improvements along the way.

Marc Frankl, Food and Beverage Director for Amadeus, said: "Our food ethos is always visible across venues so that the team, as well as customers, can understand what it is doing and why. Winnow became the obvious next step for the business, reducing avoidable waste in kitchens and giving detailed insight and analytics to our teams."

The business has found that an increasing number of clients and customers are passionate about food waste and Amadeus believes by investing in its own technologies, this can only decrease carbon impact.

Customers are demanding sustainability - they are voting with their feet and proactively choosing food service businesses that are sustainable.

HOW DOES IT FEED INTO YOUR OVERARCHING SUSTAINABILITY AIMS?

Winnow plays a key part in Amadeus' overarching sustainability and ESG aims, and in turn that of the wider NEC Group.

As a leading live events caterer, Amadeus has a duty to limit its impact on the environment, playing a role in tackling change. The business has taken some great steps in recent times - along with Winnow, Amadeus is working closely with food sharing app OLIO to redistribute food into the community.

The caterer's work is not done, though, as it continually reviews measures and analyses new technologies to reduce and measure impact.

Amadeus is now targeting a **50% reduction in food waste** across the business, which has been targeted as a 0.5pp improvement in margin.

HOW DID YOU BEGIN?

Amadeus has always had a strong focus on sustainability and the reduction of food waste, but naturally it takes time and small steps in the right direction to be efficient. And this process is always ongoing!

The first step towards sustainability always begins with the food. Local sourcing is a massive part of Amadeus' ethos, with 80% of food and beverage suppliers found within a 30-mile radius.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE DATA?

The data forms part of Amadeus' ongoing review of its sustainability measures.

On a day-to-day level, Winnow collects data about what gets thrown into the bin, with the data collected being given to chefs in daily, weekly and monthly reports. This data is used to enact operational and behavioural changes required to eliminate waste.

WHAT TOP TIPS WOULD GIVE TO OTHERS LOOKING AT FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT?

Amadeus' top tip would be to take time to analyse processes and think how to do things differently. Any way to innovate to make your business more efficient, while at the same time saving food waste, is going to make a huge difference to business.

As well as this, identifying key members of staff within the company to focus on sustainability and innovation can be a real driver for change.

Also being part of associations like the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) is a massive help. They help aid food service businesses to work towards sustainability in their sector and guides customers towards more sustainable choices.



FIND THE REPORT LOOKING AT THE WINNOW PILOT ICC [HERE](#)