

SUSTAINABILITY

Best Practices Guide



High-efficiency steps for implementing low-impact operations and embracing future-ready foodservice

Produced by The Next Course for LEAF and Restaurants Canada

THE NEXT COURSE



**Restaurants
Canada**

The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

ABILITY **ENABLES** ACTION

There are, at a minimum, two great reasons to focus on the ABILITY part of sustainability.

First, with innovative development of a wide-range of products and services across the industry, it's easier (and cheaper) than ever to determine **how** to integrate sustainability into your daily operations. Second, you have Restaurants Canada and its partners in your corner, ready to collaborate and support your efforts. This guide is only one element of that commitment.

As for **why** you should do your part, there are lots of good reasons, and we're sure you already know many of them. However, being a responsible corporate citizen likely tops the list. As many other industries have also demonstrated, acting responsibly in your community isn't simply the right thing to do — it's good business. Better yet, it's smart business. In fact, one of the smartest things we can all do is act responsibly now, on our own (favourable) terms, rather than have actions be imposed by regulation.

Another factor in the why column is the ever-growing competition for responsible consumers (you know **who** they are). We've seen many business sectors, including foodservice, disrupted by new technologies and emerging business models. Having a smart, futureproof action plan will help your business keep up with the rapidly increasing pace of change or, perhaps best of all, get ahead of it.

And while it's important to take some substantial steps forward, no one says you have to take them all at the same time or in a certain order. Actually, it's also best practice to start with something that matters or means the most to you **AND** your team right **now...** something you can readily commit to, and that suits your personal goals and business opportunities.

We're sure you'll find some options, maybe even some inspiration, in this guide. So, give it a few minutes. Then pass it around.



ABILITY **EQUALS** TIMING **PLUS** TRACKING

Most of the best practices in this document are themselves guided by very simple instructions: consume less, waste less. The next step in the recipe says, for best results, do both as soon and as often as you can.

Of course, you already know how to do this. A successful restaurant relies on efficient management of resources, from energy to ingredients to people, and a knack for good timing, from novel menu choices to exceptional service. The fundamental difference in doing it all sustainably comes in the **decisions and choices you make, when you make them and how well you stick by them.**

Therefore, following the recipe above, this guide offers **two paths** to boost your readiness for the future and contribution to the sustainability of your community.

Each of these **checklists** covers most every decision and option applicable to current foodservice operations. Choose the one that best fits your **current or upcoming opportunity** for positive change. And these are hardly *one-size-fits-all* or *prix fixe* solutions. Feel free to mix-and-match to suit your own path forward.

To **go deep** into the details on either of the two checklists, visit www.leafme.org.



PATH #1: DESIGNABILITY

The best and perhaps easiest way to be sustainable is **by design**... building and 'baking' it in to your facilities and daily operations.

Planning a new restaurant, a major renovation, a shift in menu concept and other opportunities for change offer the best chance for substantial success in both reducing environmental impact and boosting bottom-line return-on-investment.

The **DesignABILITY Checklist** is based on recommendations from leading designers, engineers, consultants and noted executive chefs, as explored in the book and companion courses available from *The Next Course*. Visit thenextcourse.ca to learn more.

Kitchen and Back-of-House

- ☐ Optimize the kitchen layout to permit equipment to be easily rearranged or reconfigured to enable menu changes and/or in-house processing.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade to ENERGY STAR or other certified efficient cooking equipment; prioritize heavy demand/ use categories such as fryers, ovens, griddles.
- ☐ Select efficient equipment to optimize multi-functionality and adaptability to menu changes — avoid single-use devices wherever possible.
- ☐ Design work stations to minimize or focus the need for exhaust hoods; specify or upgrade to manual variable-speed kitchen ventilation controls; optimally, specify or upgrade a demand-control ventilation (DCKV) system.

Refrigeration and Storage

- ☐ Maximize use of high-efficiency LEED-qualified walk-in coolers and freezers with remote exterior condensers; where needed, specify or upgrade with ENERGY STAR-rated reach-in and under-counter coolers.

Warewashing and Sanitation

- ☐ Specify or upgrade to a high-efficiency condensing hot water heater and locate to optimize shortest supply distance to kitchen.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade to ENERGY STAR-rated ventless dishwasher with integrated booster heater (if desired).

Lighting

- ☐ Ensure all work light fixtures and lamps are ENERGY STAR-rated, including those located in exhaust hoods and walk-in coolers.
- ☐ Optimize opportunities for natural lighting (windows, light pipes) to minimize need for lamps.
- ☐ Specify motion-sensing or twist-timer controls for frequent in/out areas such as store-rooms, utility rooms, staff washrooms and loading areas.

Front-of-House and Service Areas

- ☐ Specify local and/or sustainable-source flooring, tiles and wall coverings made with materials that are compostable or recyclable by local facilities.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade to low- or non-volatile organic compound (VOC) paints and finishes.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade to local and FSC-certified wood for flooring, millwork or table tops.
- ☐ Specify locally reclaimed or reused materials for feature and/or design elements.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade windows and other glass to high-efficiency low-E type.
- ☐ Provide convenient, barrier-free under-counter or floor placement of collection bins for recycled materials by staff and customers where appropriate.

Lighting

- ☐ Specify or upgrade to ENERGY STAR-rated LED luminaires and lamps for all overhead, task and accent lighting.
- ☐ Optimize availability of natural light where appropriate.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade switching and dimming panels to simplify control over key areas across multiple day parts.

Washrooms

- ☐ Specify or upgrade to low-flow fixtures for sinks, toilets and urinals.
- ☐ Specify or upgrade to automatic on/off controls for hand sinks and flushing fixtures.
- ☐ In single-occupancy facilities, provide customers with convenient switch access and encouragement to turn off lights after use.

Equipment and Serviceware

- ☐ Specify or upgrade to ENERGY STAR-rated refrigeration for under-counter beverage storage and service, as well as under-counter glasswashers and ice machines.
- ☐ Specify ENERGY STAR or equivalent rating for hot beverage service equipment.
- ☐ Where appropriate, specify or upgrade to organic or low-impact fabrics for table linens and napkins; specify onsite or offsite laundering facilities be low-impact or sustainable.

Menu Planning and Purchasing

- ☐ Create a “zero-waste menu” designed to be fully adaptable to opportunities offered by a seasonal, local/regional supply and customer appetites. It also ensures all surplus products have the chance to feed people (via processing or donation) before going to compost.





PATH #2: OPERABILITY

After designing and specifying all that built-in sustainability, the best opportunity to obtain substantial, measurable results (reduced impact, return-on-investment) is to pair it with a robust operating plan. Even with few pre-installed, low-impact devices, the sustainable benefits from this plan can really add up.

This path starts with a detailed review of the dozens of decisions made and actions taken in your daily/weekly operations, from regular supply purchases to controlling energy and water use and enabling many other “smart habits” for both staff and guests.

To make the most of the **OperABILITY Checklist**, it's also best practice to track, measure and share positive results regularly with your team. This, too, is second nature to spreadsheet-savvy foodservice operators.

All this solid data can also produce the kind of credible sustainability report you can take to your community, especially when you get these recommended policies and practices certified by LEAF.

Purchasing: Food & Beverage

- ☐ Boost percentage of whole, seasonal, non-processed ingredients from local farms (less than 500 km).
- ☐ Buy certified organic or sustainable meats, dairy, fish and produce; join OceanWise or other sustainable seafood program.
- ☐ Boost percentage of plant-based vegan and vegetarian menu items; offer more protein and dairy alternatives as regularly available substitutes.
- ☐ Procure Fair Trade coffee and tea; stock organic and regional wines and beers.

Purchasing: Paper, Take-out Materials and Other Packaging

- ☐ Buy EcoLogo/GreenSeal/FSC certified high post-consumer waste recycled paper products; implement “paperless” menu (e.g., chalkboard, digital display) and marketing (e.g., online, social media) programs to minimize printing.
- ☐ Procure EcoLogo/GreenSeal certified paper take-out boxes, trays and cups.
- ☐ Stock plastic-free bags, straws, utensils and condiment ramekins.

Energy Use and Conservation

- ☐ Monitor utility bills to measure benefits of ENERGY STAR installations or note anomalies, indicating operational changes, change of habits or malfunctioning equipment (zero-waste is the goal here, too).
- ☐ Implement daily just-in-time start-up/shut down schedules, posted and updated regularly.
- ☐ Purchase renewable/alternative energy, or generate your own.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention

- ☐ Monitor water use on utility bills; repair leaks promptly.
- ☐ Post and implement a water use policy — e.g., taps off, no running-water thawing, dishwasher run when full (where possible).
- ☐ Eliminate bottled (in plastic) water onsite and serve water only on demand.
- ☐ Engage an environmentally-friendly laundry service offsite or run high-efficiency ENERGY STAR laundry appliances onsite.
- ☐ Specify low-VOC pest control and maintenance/cleaning service.
- ☐ Purchase EcoLogo/GreenSeal certified cleaning products for surfaces, floors and warewashing.

Waste and Recycling

- ☐ Place multiple bins for all recycling and waste types, front and back-of-house.
- ☐ Implement onsite or offsite food waste composting.
- ☐ Implement and track FIFO inventory controls; remedy wasteful food prep and production.
- ☐ Participate in community food rescue programs.

Employee Policies and Innovation

- ☐ Purchase locally-produced staff uniforms made from certified low-impact fabric.
- ☐ Implement sustainability orientation/training programs with support materials and signage.
- ☐ Support volunteer participation by staff in environmental and community programs.
- ☐ Provide regular incentives for staff public transit and bike-to-work programs.
- ☐ Purchase an EV as company vehicle; use EV or bikes for deliveries.

SHAREABILITY

Needless to say, these best practices are simply a good way to get started.

There are many more smart, downloadable ideas and recommendations, including resources from *LEAF* and *The Next Course*, available at www.leafme.org to help you navigate your own sustainable path.

Remember, you're not going it alone. With its sights set on a better future for this industry, Restaurants Canada is committed to keeping these resources current and available to all its members.

Here's one last best practice to consider: While there are lots of concepts and products we compete on (very successfully) in this business, ensuring a healthy, resilient future for our communities shouldn't be one of them. In fact, the more collaboration on this issue we can develop and maintain in this industry, the easier (and yes, cheaper) it will be to get and stay ahead of the game.

At the end of the day, successful sustainability is a product of collaboration.

RESOURCES



SAVE ON ENERGY

Saving energy means improving your bottom line. With Save on Energy incentives for lighting, refrigeration and more, you can cut your electricity costs, improve efficiency and grow your business.

www.saveonenergy.ca



ENBRIDGE

Enbridge has a variety of solutions to meet your needs, reduce your energy consumption and improve your bottom line. We offer financial incentives for energy efficiency upgrades, such as the use of infrared heaters and energy recovery ventilators. We also offer custom incentives designed to fit your objectives.

www.enbridgegas.com



RUSSELL HENDRIX

The largest dealer in Canada, with more than half a century of experience in the food equipment industry. Our complete product offering in both equipment and smallwares, with the combination of our design, sales, installation, custom fabrication, and parts and service departments allow us to handle all of your foodservice needs.

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LEAF

Through the LEAF certification process we help reduce environmental impact by targeting energy, water, and waste reduction. We promote community partnerships and farm-to-table concepts, while also increasing awareness and support of green restaurants across Canada.

www.leafme.org



ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR is the simple choice for energy efficiency, making it easy for businesses to purchase products that save them money and protect the environment with tools and resources help businesses determine cost-effective approaches to managing energy.

www.energystar.gov



NEWSPRING ENERGY

Creating solutions that meet your needs and your clients' demands while preserving the environment. Make sustainable practices part of your business, bring prosperity to your business and distinguish yourself.

www.newspringenergy.ca



SILVER CHEF

With over 30 years' experience and industry knowledge, Silver Chef is Canada's only dedicated hospitality equipment funding partner. Unique to Canada, Silver Chef exists to support hospitality business owners to achieve their dreams and achieve their full individual and business potential.

www.silverchef.ca



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste Management is a leading provider of environmental solutions, servicing more than 20 million customers across North America. We also care about the planet, and we feel a responsibility to leave it to future generations in better shape than we were given.

www.wmcanada.com



BULLFROG POWER

Bullfrog Power, Canada's 100% green energy provider, offers homes and businesses clean, renewable energy solutions. By choosing Bullfrog Power's green energy, you can reduce your environmental impact and support the development of new renewable generation in Canada.

www.bullfrogpower.com

NAVIGATE DESIGN

NAVIGATE DESIGN

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www.navigatedesign.com



INTELLINOX TECHNOLOGIES ECOAZUR

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www.organicinteriors.ca



GALLIGREEN

With a commitment to the sustainability efforts of the foodservice industry through our innovative take-out products, Galligreen has become the proud resource for one of North America's most diverse collection of high quality Foodservice Disposable products. Today our expansive line of products is comprised of over 300 items to serve you.

www.galligreen.com



RETHINK RESOURCE

We offer Innovative, Clean, Safe Recycling, Waste, Oil & Grease Services focused on the Restaurant Industry and diverting maximum waste from landfill while driving down operational cost and concern.

www.rethinkresource.ca



HOP

Hop has launched a non-sorting compost collections for the city's top 40 restaurants, cafés, and grocers. Creating the first organic craft compost, Hop will boost productivity for local growers by 38-100%.

www.hopcompost.com



SECOND HARVEST

Second Harvest is Canada's largest food rescue charity with a dual mission of environmental protection and hunger relief. Recovering nutritious, unsold food & distributing to 373 social service organizations. No Waste. No Hunger.

www.secondharvest.ca

Learn how to make your foodservice business
more energy efficient, visit
restaurantscanada.org/energychallenge

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