Single-Use Plastic:
Taking Practical Action in the Hospitality & Event Sector

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Today’s Focus:

1. The scale of single-use plastic in tourism
2. Preparing for legislation
3. Pitfalls and Considerations
4. Practical actions for purchasers
300 million tonnes of plastic every year
Cars have 4 times lower environmental impact due to minimised weight

Packaging significantly extends the shelf-life of food reducing spoilage and waste

Plastic is responsible for 1.5 million jobs in Europe alone

Reusable plastic glasses prevent injuries from glass around pool-sides

Transporting plastic leads to less carbon emissions due to the lightweight material

Alternatives to plastic can use significantly more amounts of natural resources during production
• Group of 10 hotels
• All-Inclusive and half board
• 85 – 90% occupancy over 12 months
• 6.6 million single-use items
• 1 million of which add no value
• Saving €11,000 per year

15% of single-use plastics were completely unnecessary
Sometimes the challenges are very difficult to overcome.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Health, Safety, Hygiene</td>
<td>Minimise injuries at pool side and/or on the beach, minimise incidences of cross contamination, concerns around safe tap water</td>
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<td>Habit</td>
<td>Bathroom amenities, cups wrapped in plastic, plastic wraps informing that the toilet is clean</td>
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<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Take-Away options - less space required in dining areas, easy to clear away, no requirements for dishwashing or storage, keeps buffets clean and tidy</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
<td>No need to pay additional staff to clear, wash, stack and prepare reusable items</td>
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<td>Alternatives</td>
<td>Cost, availability, usability, infrastructure</td>
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Be Prepared for Legislation

• EU to ban single-use plastic plates, straws, cutlery, polystyrene fast-food containers, ear-buds by 2021
• EU Recycling rates for plastic beverage bottles must achieve 90% by 2025
• Straw bans either in force or coming in to force globally in destinations and via businesses taking action
What are your options?

**Eliminate**
Unnecessary plastics that add no value to the customer experience – many of which are in the EU Top 10

**Reusable**
Choose from a range of reusable alternatives, including plastics, bamboo, silicon, stainless steel, aluminium, fabric

**Single-Use**
Consider bioplastics, organic based (leaves, coffee husks), paper
Pitfalls and Considerations

- Infrastructure for bio-plastics
- Unforeseen impacts of alternatives (environmentally and ethically)
- Not everything is as green as it seems
- Bio-degradable alternatives have a limited shelf life
- Tour Operators may consider that some alternatives clash with current H&S expectations

- Ask your wholesalers and suppliers for help in sourcing alternatives
- Speak to suppliers about the opportunity to reduce unnecessary packaging
- Look for local – support your own economy and reduce carbon associated with transport
How can you reduce or eliminate plastic from your operations?

Phase 1 – Knowing your baseline
- Be clear on how much single-use plastic your business purchases and how much it costs
- Identify any completely unnecessary items and commit to eliminating them
- Identify any pending legislation that may require you to prioritise particular items
- Identify a further top 3, 5 or 10 single-use plastic items that you believe can make the biggest impact (environmentally and financially)
How can you reduce or eliminate plastic from your operations?

Phase 2 – Engaging Others

• Invite department heads to a meeting table and share with them the statistics from your cost/consumption exercise
• Discuss the potential impacts that any changes would have upon workload, customer satisfaction, current processes, disposal etc
• Agree a procedure for implementing changes
• Agree a set of customer communications
• Make enquiries with suppliers/wholesalers to gain support for your objectives
How can you reduce or eliminate plastic from your operations?

**Phase 3 (Implementation)**

- Trial a range of new products for usability, customer feedback and staff feedback before making a final decision
- Monitor and record the impacts
- Keep abreast of any new, impending legislation
- Keep up to date with innovative alternatives as they come into the market place.
If waste reduction suddenly became the priority target for your purchasing department, what would you identify as priority actions for 2019?
References

Plastics Europe


EU Single-Use Plastic Ban 2021

Other Plastic Bans https://www.earthday.org/plasticban/