

Swap for Good

Behaviour Change Guide



Share and tailor your reason why

Ever notice how people don't like being told what to do, but if you tell them the reason why, they're more likely to understand... and act?

Awareness about the issue of plastic waste and litter is growing exponentially.

Yet sometimes it's difficult to know where to start to reduce your footprint especially when the problem can seem overwhelming.

When we're reminded of our reason, we are more resourceful and find a way to make workable solutions.

Your reason. Your story. Your values. It can make all the difference to achieve positive actions from your staff, suppliers and customers.

Here's some tips to help you build your story to empower and educate everyone connected to your business:

1. Share your personal reason. Why do you care? Be authentic and tap into the universal values of your community. Start by talking about your favourite natural place that you love and want to enjoy into the future. It's ok to add that you want to save money or attract new customers too. We all love a win-win story!
2. Remember that others might prioritise different reasons, but we all share common values.
3. Tailor your message to different audiences. Everyone, including your customers, will love to hear about your connection to nature so start with that. Staff might also need to know the marketing strategy behind the move. Suppliers may want to hear about the cost savings you'll achieve by making the swap.

How to make a lasting change

Let's get one thing out there - it's ok to fail. We can all learn from failing. It's called 'Flearning'. Failure + Learning = Flearning.

Even though it has a cute name, Flearning won't feel great at first. However, sharing your journey will help others and you'll be moving closer to success by ticking that failure off the list of things to try.

Changing behaviour can be a challenge but we've got a few tips to help make this change for good.

In the beginning, it's all about rewarding new habit-forming behaviours. Set yourself up for success with reminders everywhere. We've got a few resources that you can use such as posters tailored for customers and staff.

Train your staff to promote the 'BYO reusables' culture and upsell any sustainable alternatives that you have for purchase.

Here are a few steps to convert your customers:

1. Ask "Did you bring your own (bag/cup/cutlery) today?" This reminds the customer that you're encouraging this measure to reduce waste and litter.
2. If your customers didn't BYO, refer to your behaviour change posters and take this opportunity to tell them your reason. Remind them they can BYO next time or buy a reusable item and start today.
3. Offer your customers a reusable product to buy and mention any discounts you offer to encourage BYO. For example, upsell your stainless steel drink bottles, canvas bags, cutlery pouches, containers or reusable coffee cups and mention that you offer a discount for customers that BYO cup.
4. Refer customers to the share library (e.g. bag share or mug library) which they can borrow and bring back.
5. As a last resort, offer a sustainable alternative to single-use plastic, such as cardboard packaging or bamboo cutlery (not bioplastics). Even if you get here without converting your customer to 'BYO reusables' today, you've planted the seed for them to think about it for the future. Keep steps 1-4 in a positive frame and empathise with their challenges, so that the messaging sits well for further contemplation.



Share everyday hero stories

Sometimes the “why” story can feel like a burden, but seeing “how” Mrs Smith has risen to the challenge can be empowering.

Catalogue a few case studies to have on the ready when a customer brings up their barrier to behaviour change. This creates a moment where the customer starts to believe, “I could do that too”.

Here are a few conversation examples. You might want to use aspects of these or have a go at planning your own:

1: Customer

“I’ll never remember to bring my own cup, it’s just like all the shopping bags that I have to keep on buying because I forget.”

Staff member

“I thought the same a year ago when I started on my journey towards reducing waste. After watching the War on Waste, I really wanted to do something. I felt a bit overwhelmed at first but for me, the best way forward was to set small achievable goals.

I started by saying, I’m going to remember my coffee cup on Mondays because I usually pack my bag for work on Sunday night and I’m the most organised on Mondays. I put reminders in my phone, made a pretty sign which I stuck on the back of the front door that said, “You look beautiful today... Don’t forget to BYO Coffee Cup!”

Eventually, it was easy to remember every day and I felt so empowered by smashing my goal out of the park. I made it into a bit of a game by taking lots of pictures of my cup in all the places I visited and I loved seeing all the positive feedback I got from my friends.

Anyway, have a think about how you could reward yourself and set small goals - you’ll also get a 50c discount every time you BYO cup here so that’s a nice little incentive.”

2: Customer:

"It's so great that people are getting on board with the paper straws, I often wonder if it's really making a difference though. Will everyone care enough to bring their own cutlery and takeaway containers?"

Staff member:

"We're all on a journey! Getting started with straws is like the baby's first steps. Alone this action might not change the world, but once we get started swapping out single-use plastics for other items it becomes easier and it all adds up.

I remember just a few months ago when using plastic straws was pretty normal around here, but now it's not and people are more open to having a drink without a straw all together. Soon BYO cutlery and containers will be considered normal too.

What I love seeing are all the school children that are leading the way. There's the 8-year-old girl, Hannah Chalmers, that won the young scientist award for developing an app that reminds you to bring your green bags when you go shopping and reminds you to get them out of the boot when you arrive at the shops.

There's 15-year-old Sophia Skarparis who got 10,000 signatures on a petition to ask the State Premier to ban plastic bags (again). One person can make a big difference and every act has the potential to inspire another one on their journey."





Set goals to track your progress

If you're used to setting goals, you may have heard of SMART goals. By setting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based you're more likely to set yourself up for success! We've broken down the goal of reducing single-use plastics into bite-sized manageable goals in our Action Plan templates. Check out our free online resources for more information.

The Big Picture: we're joining a worldwide movement

Northern Beaches Council has already implemented two policies to reduce single-use plastic, the Single Use Plastic Policy and the Waste Minimisation for Functions and Events Approved by Council Policy¹. Progress like this is happening around the world with 127 countries implementing policies to regulate plastic bags according to the United Nations Environment Programme². In Australia, big supermarkets Coles, Woolworths and Harris Farm have implemented single-use plastic bag bans because of the detrimental impact they have on the environment. In the UK, the Queen banned plastic straws and water bottles across all her Royal Estates after being inspired by David Attenborough's documentary, *Blue Planet II*. After watching ABC's *War on Waste*, many cafes have ditched disposable coffee cups altogether and offer a mug library for customers that forget to BYO cup³.

¹ northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

² United Nations Environment Programme. 2018. Legal Limits on Single-Use Plastics and Microplastics: A Global Review of National Laws and Regulations.

³ abc.net.au/ourfocus/waronthewaste/

Remember, change takes time

Every action is adding up to make a difference! Be kind to yourself and others on their journey, especially during the challenging moments as you and your customers make new sustainable habits. Support each other and share inspirational stories to keep the momentum going. Make time at staff meetings to talk about the changes, empathise with the difficulties and adjust as necessary. Plan celebrations and acknowledge staff for achieving milestones along the way. Over time, the positive change you create will be fulfilling. This is a priceless intrinsic reward!





northern
beaches
council