

GOING FULL CIRCLE

How can hospitality businesses feed the circular economy?



An insights magazine by BRITA Professional

SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sustainability has long been a topic of high importance for many hospitality businesses. While the coronavirus pandemic has seen many businesses focusing on staying afloat, it has also been an undeniable catalyst for change, shining a much-needed spotlight on the environmentally destructive patterns within the sector and beyond.

However, for many, the pandemic has understandably knocked sustainability down their list of priorities, with three quarters (75%) of professionals admitting that Covid has slowed their drive towards sustainability.

Research shows that four out of five (82%) hospitality businesses say sustainability is important to their customers, while 92% agree hospitality businesses should be expected to set targets around sustainability and carbon reduction. And yet, only a third have a one-year timescale associated with achieving these targets, with less than a fifth looking ahead to five years from now.

Sustainability is an all-encompassing topic, and it can be challenging for businesses to know where to begin, which is why BRITA Professional has taken a deep dive into how the hospitality industry can tackle these issues right now.

We have investigated the biggest challenges hospitality businesses are facing, the questions that need answering and which myths need debunking.

In the following pages, BRITA Professional teams up with a strong collective of sustainability experts to help businesses in the industry make positive strides in achieving their targets, reducing their carbon footprint, and fuelling the circular economy.



SUSTAINABILITY SNAPSHOT

Research conducted with UK hospitality businesses has revealed key insights into the industry's sustainability journey:

Businesses are taking steps to achieve sustainability goals:

44% of businesses have a deposit return scheme in place

58% of businesses have a plastic bottle/disposable cup levy

49% of businesses label to show food mileage

Top areas where support is needed:

33% require support with energy efficiency of equipment

25% need support with working with sustainable suppliers

21% are looking for support with end-of-life machine disposal

How will technology support sustainability processes in the future?

54% say smart storage devices and automated stock taking will help reduce food waste

35% think smart technology will ensure equipment is running as sustainably and efficiently as possible

30% say the automated cleaning and maintenance of equipment

Sustainability initiatives that will be most important for hospitality businesses in 10 years' time:

38% say limiting food waste

35% think energy efficiency of equipment

33% suggest reduction in single use plastic mileage

ACTION PLAN:

A roadmap to net zero from the Zero Carbon Forum

Globally, we are striving towards net zero carbon emissions. This means setting ambitious carbon reduction pathways and it is vital if we are to reverse global warming and therefore preserve the life and environments on our planet.

The Zero Carbon Forum is a non-profit organisation which works with businesses within the hospitality sector to help them reach their sustainability targets faster and more efficiently.

It promotes a strong reductions-first approach to decarbonising, which means rather than relying on offsetting, the contributors to carbon emissions themselves are removed. By focusing on reducing carbon emissions, hospitality businesses can help the environment with long-lasting changes that are a better use of their investment funds than offsetting projects.

The Zero Carbon Forum has developed a roadmap for hospitality businesses of any size to follow on their road to net zero. It covers net zero milestones that a business should reach by 2040.

Click [here](#) to download your copy and find out more.

What can your food business do to protect the planet?

For practical steps that can be taken to tackle climate change, hospitality businesses can also refer to this useful guide from ReLondon and The Sustainable Restaurant Foundation, which outlines simple and effective changes business can make:

1 Buy Less
Buying less energy, products and consumables, so that what is bought can be used carefully and wastage minimised

2 Buy Smart
Thinking carefully about supply chains to ensure these are as efficient and sustainable as possible

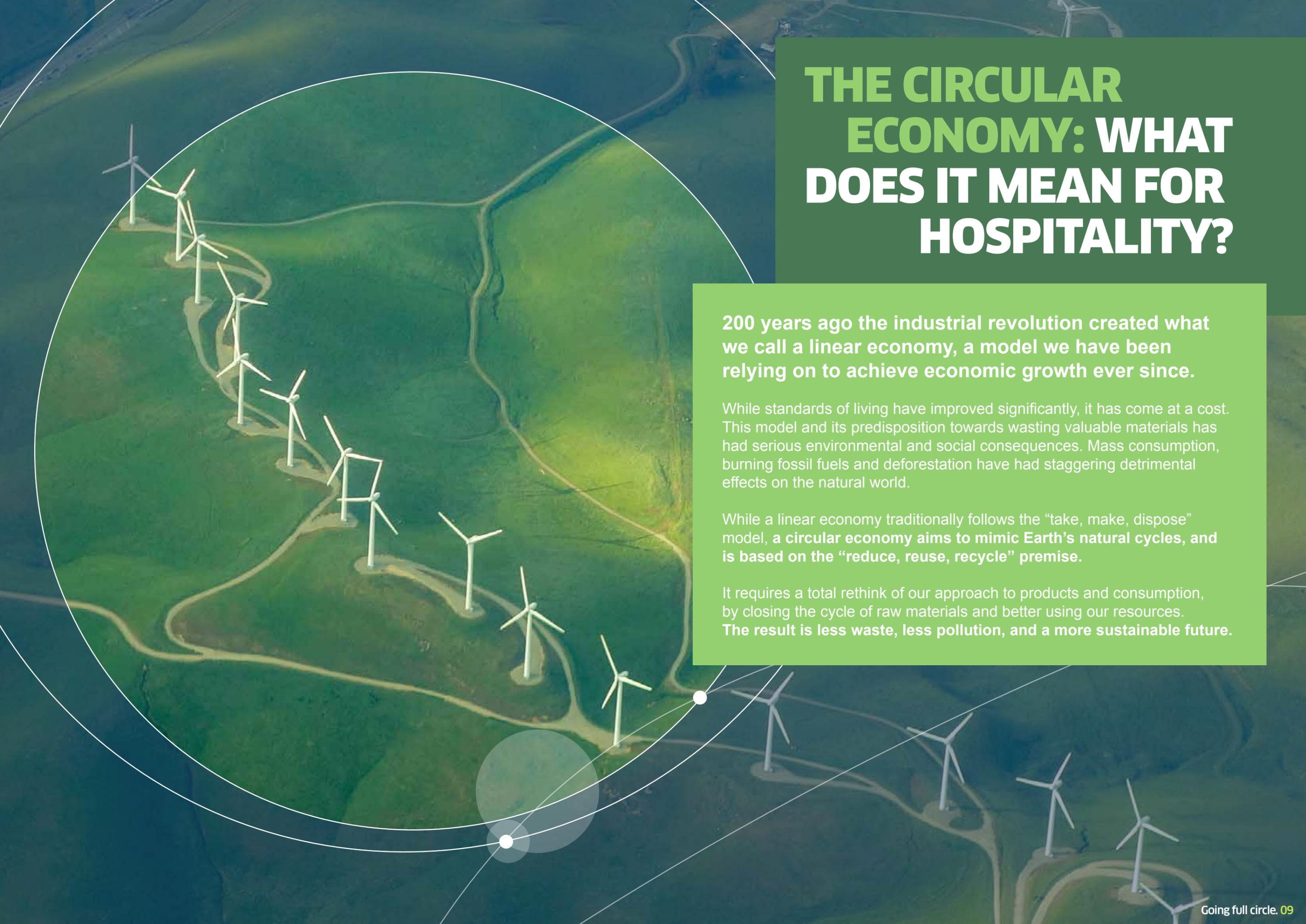
These principles should be applied to 7 key areas:

- Food and Drink
- Energy
- Water
- Packaging
- Facilities Management
- Consumables
- Transport

3 Use More
Minimising food waste by making ingredients spread across menus and working carefully to ensure nothing expires without being used

4 Throw Less
Reducing the amount of waste created by food, drinks and packaging, and ensuring equipment lasts as long as possible

5 Throw Smart
Understanding waste disposal processes and working with local authorities to ensure as little waste goes to landfill as possible



THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR HOSPITALITY?

200 years ago the industrial revolution created what we call a linear economy, a model we have been relying on to achieve economic growth ever since.

While standards of living have improved significantly, it has come at a cost. This model and its predisposition towards wasting valuable materials has had serious environmental and social consequences. Mass consumption, burning fossil fuels and deforestation have had staggering detrimental effects on the natural world.

While a linear economy traditionally follows the “take, make, dispose” model, a **circular economy aims to mimic Earth’s natural cycles, and is based on the “reduce, reuse, recycle” premise.**

It requires a total rethink of our approach to products and consumption, by closing the cycle of raw materials and better using our resources. **The result is less waste, less pollution, and a more sustainable future.**

HOW CAN HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES FUEL THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

Sustainability experts Will Richardson and Alex Cronin from Green Element share their insight on the key questions hospitality businesses should be asking their suppliers and themselves.

1. Production

When you think about the circular economy principles, ask if there is an opportunity to redesign products to avoid waste in the first place.

- Is your packaging reusable or returnable?
- How can you maximise the potential of your food – can ingredients be used in several different ways?
- What's the least harmful way to dispose of your waste?

2. Distribution

Work in partnership with your suppliers to create efficiencies.

- Can any of your deliveries be condensed to reduce the number of trips?
- Have your suppliers conducted a carbon footprint analysis?
- Are they minimising products shipped by air freight?
- Can your suppliers support your business to relieve some of the pressure on your team?

3. Consumption

How can you work smarter to reduce the raw materials and energy your business uses?

- Does your kitchen need to turn on all equipment in the morning?
- Can you incentivise customers to choose reusable options?
- Can you monitor your water usage to better understand areas of overconsumption and waste?
- Is your equipment working at optimal efficiency? For example, has a water filter been installed to avoid limescale build up on heating elements?

4. Reuse or recycle

Do you know the best way to dispose of your waste?

- Does your local waste collection support compostable plastic disposal?
- Can you utilise food sharing or recycling programmes?
- Are your suppliers able to help you with recycling of their products?

5. Avoid landfill

Does your equipment stand the test of time?

- Do you have a water filter installed to reduce limescale build up and prevent premature breakdowns?
- Are you carrying out preventative maintenance on equipment to increase its longevity?
- Do you regularly change your water filter to ensure it is working effectively?



INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW STEPHEN FROM THE ZERO CARBON FORUM

Former CEO of The Sustainable Restaurant Association and co-author of the 'Food that doesn't cost the earth' report answers the industry's most common sustainability questions.

How would you describe a sustainable business?

As a country, if we're going to reach net zero by 2050, or hopefully a lot sooner, we need to focus on decarbonising every pound of turnover that businesses generate. So, in that respect, there should be no sustainable business which isn't actively aware of its carbon impact and is working to optimise it.

Another framework to think about is a circular business, where the materials used by a business flow in operating circles, as opposed to a straight line.

This impacts everything a business does, so when it comes to hospitality businesses it can be more challenging as it doesn't just apply to one person's job. The sustainability of a business encompasses everything from the premises it operates from, the players across its supply chain, its waste contractor and how all of this is managed.

What are some of the key challenges that a hospitality business faces when working to become more sustainable?

The pandemic has only accelerated a move towards takeaway and delivery services which, coupled with the rise of quick service restaurants, makes it harder for restaurants to operate sustainably. It creates more packaging and waste to be disposed of, instead of reused, and generally is a challenging market in which to embed circular principles.

While great strides have been made in hospitality in terms of reducing single-use plastic in the front-of-house environment, for back-of-house it's more challenging. But changes are being made and, as the cost of landfill is increasing, there are significant drivers towards efficiency and more awareness of a need for change.

It's important to note that up to 97% of emissions for a hospitality business can come from its supply chain, and up to 60% from its food and beverage offers – so it's important to look at changes holistically.

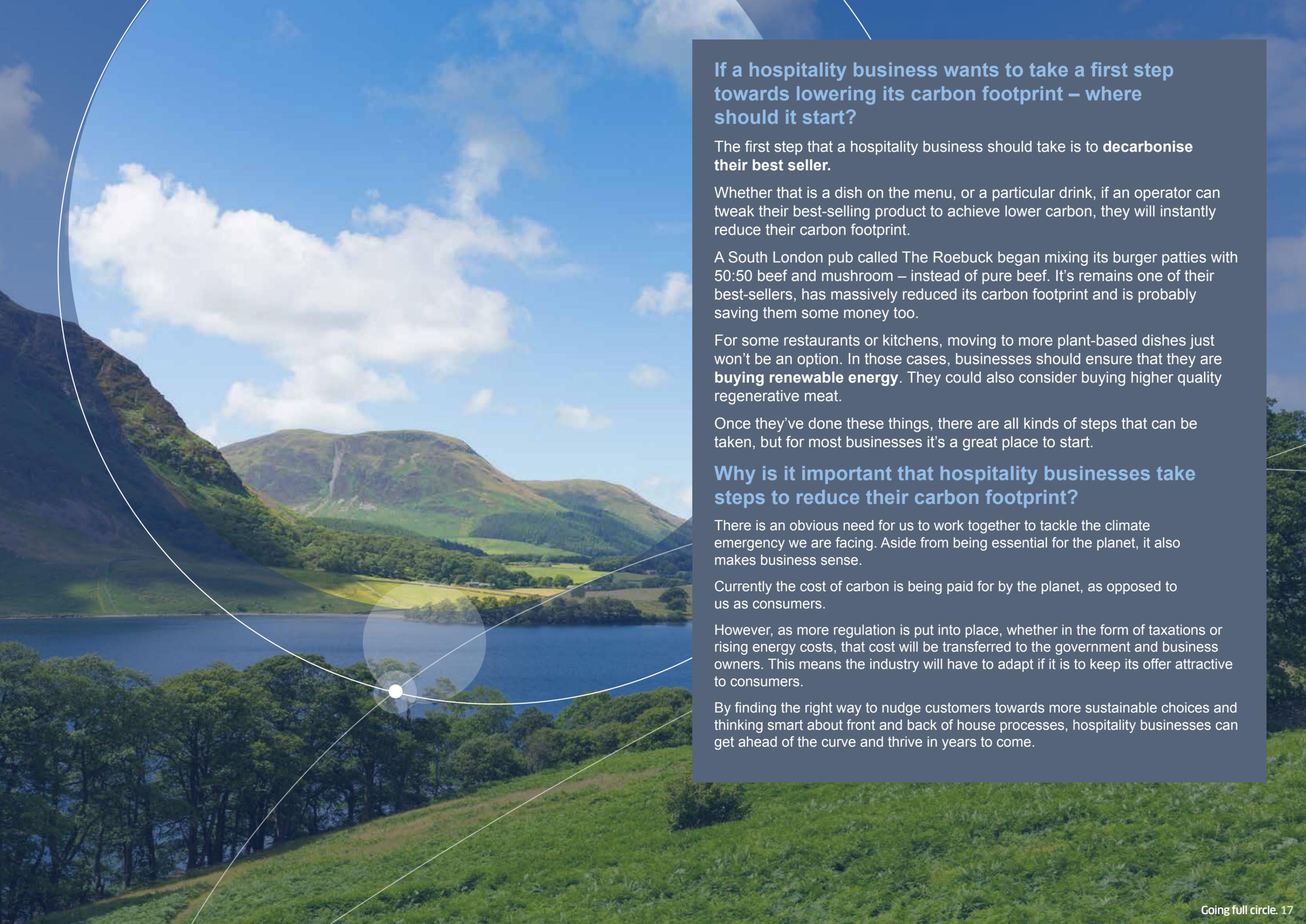
The pandemic has undoubtedly had a serious financial impact for almost all hospitality businesses. How can the industry make sustainable changes, without increasing operating costs?

I think there are three key factors here:

1. Energy-efficient equipment: Evidence suggests that if you buy equipment that's not A-Rated energy efficient then it's a false economy and over its lifetime it will end up costing you more. Rather than buying new equipment, businesses should ensure their equipment lasts as long as possible and runs as efficiently as it can. Preventative maintenance and using the correct water filter to minimise limescale build-up is one way to achieve this.

2. Food waste: Throwing away less food is the single most impactful way to operate more sustainably and save money. With food waste, hospitality businesses are paying twice – first for the unused food they purchase and secondly for anaerobic digestion. Menu simplification and reduction, where ingredients are used interchangeably, can help businesses shift their sales mix to become more sustainable.

3. Smart energy usage: On average, £25,000 per site per year is wasted on the cost of overnight energy usage. This just goes to show the importance of switching off all equipment that doesn't need to be left on overnight. The same is true for powering on, if kitchens can work smart and only fire up the equipment they need that day, there could be further opportunities to save energy and drive down costs.



If a hospitality business wants to take a first step towards lowering its carbon footprint – where should it start?

The first step that a hospitality business should take is to **decarbonise their best seller**.

Whether that is a dish on the menu, or a particular drink, if an operator can tweak their best-selling product to achieve lower carbon, they will instantly reduce their carbon footprint.

A South London pub called The Roebuck began mixing its burger patties with 50:50 beef and mushroom – instead of pure beef. It's remains one of their best-sellers, has massively reduced its carbon footprint and is probably saving them some money too.

For some restaurants or kitchens, moving to more plant-based dishes just won't be an option. In those cases, businesses should ensure that they are **buying renewable energy**. They could also consider buying higher quality regenerative meat.

Once they've done these things, there are all kinds of steps that can be taken, but for most businesses it's a great place to start.

Why is it important that hospitality businesses take steps to reduce their carbon footprint?

There is an obvious need for us to work together to tackle the climate emergency we are facing. Aside from being essential for the planet, it also makes business sense.

Currently the cost of carbon is being paid for by the planet, as opposed to us as consumers.

However, as more regulation is put into place, whether in the form of taxations or rising energy costs, that cost will be transferred to the government and business owners. This means the industry will have to adapt if it is to keep its offer attractive to consumers.

By finding the right way to nudge customers towards more sustainable choices and thinking smart about front and back of house processes, hospitality businesses can get ahead of the curve and thrive in years to come.

OUR PLEDGE

At BRITA Professional, we are committed to supporting our customers to achieve their sustainability goals.

By installing a water filter into equipment, like combi ovens and coffee machines, hospitality businesses can ensure their equipment runs efficiently and lasts longer, ultimately reducing waste to landfill and reducing their carbon footprint.

We are also working with partners to align the entire supply chain to encourage used filters to be recycled. BRITA Managed Services can support your hospitality business by monitoring your filter usage, managing filter replacements, recycling old filters, and training your staff on maintaining equipment.

The hospitality industry has faced its toughest challenge yet. But we believe by working together and supporting one another, we can all make a difference.



To find out more about how
BRITA Professional can support
your sustainability goals,
please get in touch:
brita.co.uk/filter-contact

