

CASE STUDY: Palette Food and Juice

**ReThink
Disposable**
STOP WASTE BEFORE IT STARTS

BUSINESS PROFILE

Name: Palette Food and Juice
Business Type: Café
Location: Los Angeles, CA
On-site dining: 35 seats
Take-out: Yes
Warewashing: Three-sink system
Employees: 9

Palette Food and Juice, located in Atwater Village, Los Angeles, serves farm to table fast-casual foods and fresh juices. Palette prides itself in using local, sustainability grown ingredients that yield nourishing meals that are both healthy for patrons and the planet. Molly Keith and Melissa Nester, co-founders, are passionate about Palette's manifesto and were thrilled about taking their eco-efforts to the next level. About half of Palette's orders are for take-out. When dining on-site, customers order and pick up food from the counter register, but were served on a mix of reusable and disposable foodware. Palette already had a successful operation in place to support the collection, washing, and reuse of dishware that could be utilized for other reusables introduced in this certification process.

Packaging Practices prior to ReThink Disposable:

- ➔ Food orders served in reusable ceramic ware
- ➔ Cold cup beverages served in single-use bioplastic cups with lids
- ➔ Disposable plastic straws placed next to cash register
- ➔ Stainless steel reusable water cups available next to water cooler in self-serve area
- ➔ Napkins stacked in self-serve area
- ➔ Plastic disposable condiment cups and cup lids in self-serve area



Recommendations Implemented:

- ➔ Replaced single-use bioplastic cold cups and lids with 16-ounce reusable glassware
- ➔ Replaced single-use plastic condiment cups with reusable 2.5-ounce stainless steel cups and reduced condiment cup lids
- ➔ Implemented efficient napkin dispenser
- ➔ Individually wrapped straws available only upon request

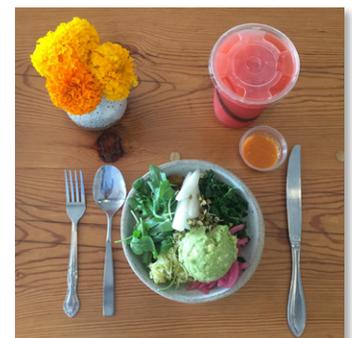
As a result of implementing **ReThink Disposable's** recommendations, Palette Food and Juice reduced their use of targeted disposable foodware items by an average **35%** and is preventing the use of **23,376** disposable items and **291** pounds of waste from annually entering the waste stream. Palette also earns an ongoing annual net cost savings of **\$668.12** from the avoided disposable foodware purchases. In order to implement the recommendations for program certification, reusable foodware purchases amounted to **\$1,322.50**.

To address the most significant operational change — reducing the use of bioplastic cold cups and

lids — required one large upfront purchase of a “Crathco” refrigerated beverage dispenser (**\$1,244.80**). This appliance is required to support Palette's switch to reusable cups for cold beverages since their fresh agua frescas and iced matcha have naturally occurring sedimentation and in their prior operation, the bioplastic cups and lids were used to shake up cold beverage when ordered. Due to space limitations in their refrigerator, the Crathco appliance helped overcome the barrier to utilizing reusable cups and eliminates the need for lids on-site because it continually stirs the beverages to prevent sedimentation. The high up-front cost of the Crathco made the payback period for each beverage-related item longer, yet there are still cost-savings after the payback period was met to cover and exceed the set-up and ongoing costs in the future.

Straw use was reduced by 75%. Prior to **ReThink Disposable**, straws were situated next to the cash register where customers would grab them. By implementing a straw upon request only policy, the straws are out of sight for both customers and staff with **ReThink Disposable** signage emphasizing, “Do you really need a straw?”

In addition to reusable cold cups and straws upon request, reusable condiment cups for side sauces and the napkin dispenser source reduction recommendations were implemented smoothly. The owner reported no issues with dishwashing capacity to keep up with the new reusable items and no increase in water usage. The owner was enthusiastic and receptive to the mission to reduce single-use disposable foodware in the business's operations and this excitement was also observed among Palette's employees who championed the day-to-day behavior and operational changes.



BEFORE: Disposable cold cup with lid and disposable condiment cup.



AFTER: Reusable cold cup with reusable condiment cup.

Results:

Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized	ReThink Disposable Recommendation Implemented	% Disposable Reduction	Payback Period (months)	Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced (# of pieces)	Annual Net Cost Savings* (after payback period)	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)
Greenstripe 16-oz Cold Cups	Implement reusable glassware	40%	16.6	4,867	\$304.75	150
Greenstripe 16-oz Cold Cup Lids	Eliminate disposable lids used for on-site dining	40%	34.8	4,867	\$143.13	37
Jumbo Wrapped 'Eco' Straws	Implement straws upon request policy	75%	46.5	6,111	\$106.94	17
2-Ply Kraft Napkins	Implement napkin dispenser	25%	4.9	6,083	\$101.96	82
2-oz Solo Condiment Cups	Implement reusable stainless steel condiment cups	14%	16.2	724	\$3.58	3
2-oz Solo Condiment Lids	Eliminate disposable condiment lids used on-site	14%	0	724	\$7.76	2
TOTAL				23,376	\$668.12	291 lbs.

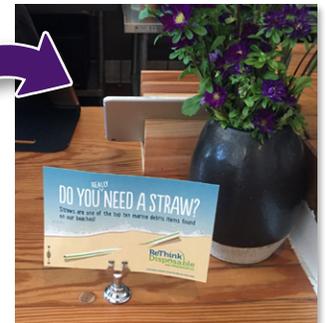
*Net Cost Impact considers any upfront and ongoing costs associated with the purchase and care of reusable items and capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable's recommendations. Net cost savings are based on avoided disposable foodware purchases.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- \$668 in annual net cost savings
- 23,376 disposable items reduced per year
- 291 pounds of annual waste reduction
- No impact to labor costs
- Positive feedback from café staff and patrons



BEFORE: Individually wrapped straws available next to register.



AFTER: Individually wrapped straws available upon request only.



Molly Keith and Melissa Nester, co-founders: "ReThink Disposable has helped our culture here at Palette immensely! Our employees, our regulars and our owners are super excited about the changes we have made! Cutting down on disposable waste and resources has become a wonderful part of Palette's mission and business model. Thank you ReThink Disposable!"

ReThink Disposable is a program of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund conducted in partnership with The Bay Foundation, local businesses, and government agencies. Generous support is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: www.rethinkdisposable.org.



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