



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:

HIGHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL  
FOR ENGLAND  
**hefce**

# Finalist's case study

## University of Leeds Research & Development - Institution Changing food waste behaviours

### About the project

#### Summary

This landmark study field-tested the influence of Asda to reduce the food wasted of its millions of customers. Over two years, food waste reduction messages were communicated across Asda stores in the UK. Six national surveys tracked customers' self-reported food waste before and after interventions. As a result of this project, 12% of Asda's 18 million customers are now saving £57 a year by cutting down household food waste.

#### Project partners

This was a partnership between the Sustainability Research Institute at the University of Leeds and Asda Stores Ltd

### The results

#### The problem

Food waste is one of the most significant environmental and social problems facing society. Evidence of the effectiveness of behavior interventions by retailers is scarce.

#### The approach

The study field tested different communication channels using food waste reduction messages through Asda supermarket to help their customers to reduce their food waste at home.

#### Our goals

- 1) Reduce the environmental impact of Asda customers;
- 2) Cost savings for Asda customers through product waste reductions;
- 3) Enhance customer loyalty to Asda by alignment of sustainability values;
- 4) Provide insight to help suppliers improve the sustainability of current products.
- 5) Advance theories of social influence, co-production and planned behaviour.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

#### Profile

- University of Leeds
- 31,906 students (includes full and part time students)
- 7517 staff
- Urban

Category supported by

**SALIX**  
SOLVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
FINANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

[www.greengownawards.org.uk](http://www.greengownawards.org.uk)

Delivered by  
**eauc**



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

## Obstacles and solutions

Which interventions to use without reinventing the wheel	The study field tested different communication channels using food waste reduction messages through Asda supermarket to help their customers to reduce their food waste at home. The communication channels were in-store magazine, e-newsletter, Asda's Facebook site, on product stickers and in-store presentations. The control group were those who said they had not seen any of the food waste messages. The communication material and the communication channels used have been put into Asda's systems as part of its Love Food Hate Waste campaign to fulfil its commitments to the Courtauld commitment with WRAP.
Monitoring behavior change nationally	These messages were exposed to 18 million customers in a 4- 6 week window in 2014 and 2015. An internet panel of 20,000 customers answered six surveys over 21 months on their reported food waste behaviour.

## Performance and results

The main benefit was a reduction to reported food waste across the UK and a shift in attitude to being more proactive on reducing food waste. Overall, this equates to 12% of Asda's 18 million customers are now saving £57 a year by cutting down household food waste. •The results showed that the combined communication channels (in-store magazine, e-newsletter, Asda's Facebook site, on product stickers and in-store demonstrations) influenced customers to reduce reported food waste but it was difficult to differentiate between the each individual channel.

## The future

### Lessons learned

1. Sustainability interventions do influence behaviour through the noise of our busy lives.
2. Interventions need to be repeated for consumers to continue to reduce food waste.
3. Consumers were influenced by interventions even if they did not remember seeing the interventions.

### Sharing your project

Project findings were shared with 20,000 suppliers through annual Asda conferences and online forums, WRAP, the grocery sector trade association - IGD and Asda's competitors. Results shared online and at a Parliamentary reception in summer 2016

### What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

It is really great to be recognized by the sector for our continuing efforts to create a more sustainable university through our research, teaching and operations. We also know it is important for us all to share best practice, as a two way process, for a more sustainable future.

### Further information

Prof William Young, Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds

[c.w.young@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.w.young@leeds.ac.uk)

<http://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/research/sri/>

0113 343 1640