

How to Make Your Bar or Restaurant Green(er)

By Rieva Lesonsky

Consumers today want to feel good about the places they go and where they spend their money. Not only is being environmentally friendly good for the environment, it's good for your bar or restaurant as well! Here are a few ways to "green" your restaurant or bar:



1. **Look at your equipment and lighting.** Replace your light bulbs with energy efficient ones. Look for the Energy Star symbol when purchasing equipment such as refrigerators, ventilation systems, and appliances such as griddles and ovens. Also think green for your office equipment such as computers, monitors and phones. EnergyStar.gov has a list of green equipment.
2. **Conserve water.** According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), plastics are the fourth largest category of municipal waste. Instead of using water bottles, it's much greener to offer reusable glasses of water in your bar or restaurant, or set up a self-serve water station with reusable glasses. Also, invest in low-flow toilets for your restrooms and install flow restrictions on your faucets—you'll see your water bill decrease.
3. **Recycle your office toner cartridges.** You can get them refilled yourself or buy recycled cartridges, so there's no excuse for throwing them in the trash. You can also donate them to a school recycling program in your neighborhood.
4. **Use biodegradable paper products.** Stay away from Styrofoam and invest in recycled paper products.
5. **Set up recycling bins throughout your restaurant.** If you have a fast-food restaurant, you'll want to set up separate bins for trash and recycling and make sure they are clearly marked. Even if you run a full service bar or restaurant, make sure employees know to separate the recycling from trash.
6. **Use hand dryers in the bathroom.** They are much more environmentally friendly than wasteful paper towels, and newer models dry hands almost as fast as paper.
7. **Go organic.** You can buy both organic and locally grown foods to reduce the use of toxic synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. Plus, using local foods cuts down on the pollution and gas use required for long-distance transportation.

8. **Get involved.** Make yourself a part of the green community by staying current on green issues. Attend green trade shows or ask employees, friends and customers to help you create a green environment.
9. **Promote.** Don't keep your green efforts quiet. Make sure customers know about it by promoting your green policies on your website and via signage in your bar or restaurant.

Brainstorm with your [SCORE](#) mentor for more ideas on greening your bar or restaurant. You can learn how to become a certified green restaurant and find more information on how to go green at the [Green Restaurant Association](#) website.

Rieva Lesonsky is CEO of GrowBiz Media, a media company that helps entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses. Follow Rieva at [Twitter.com/Rieva](https://twitter.com/Rieva) and visit her blog at SmallBizDaily.com. Visit her website [SmallBizTrendCast](#) to get the scoop on business trends and sign up for Rieva's free TrendCast reports.