

Small Business Toolkit



Dear small business representative,

Congratulations on taking the first steps towards making your Salish Sea business Plastic Free! Our planet is thanking you. It can be overwhelming to decide where to start on your small business plastic free journey. Please remember, any progress is progress! Do not be discouraged if your business cannot completely switch over to being plastic free at once (or ever). Baby steps create sustainable change! We hope this toolkit creates a starting point for your journey and can be used as a guide for some frequently asked questions and first steps.

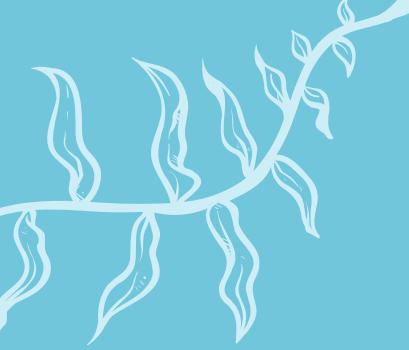
Starting Steps

Step 1: Make sure everyone is on the same page:

An important starting step is sharing with all interested parties, management, and staff about your business's plastic free goals. Share the reasons behind why the business is making these changes, what these changes may look like, expectations for participation by staff, and also being receptive to feedback, questions, and concerns. Being successful on your plastic free journey starts with being transparent with staff and including everyone in the conversations. This conversation could start with everyone discussing some fun facts about plastics and potentially having all staff work together to create a "plastic free" mission statement and/or goals.



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Step 2: Do a plastic audit:

One of the first steps in taking action is recognizing how much single-use plastic your business uses. A plastic audit is a way to take inventory and examine what and how much plastic you use. Sit down with your team and create an audit plan. Your business should aim to do two different types of audits, a waste audit and a supply & use audit. Choose the duration of your audits; for example, you could sort through your waste every day for a week for your waste audit and do a month-long supply audit.

Waste Audit: By going through the waste at your business, you can see what customers (if applicable) and staff are using and discarding. Create a table/record sheet to document your audit, potentially something that looks like this example (you could have a new chart for every day):

Type of Plastic	Amount/Number	Weight (if needed)	Recyclability
Straws	15	1 lbs.	No
Water cups	11	-	Yes

After doing your audit, use the information to answer these questions:

- What items did you find the most of?
- How many of them were recyclable but ended up in the landfill?
- Are these items essential to your business? If so, are there non-single use plastic alternatives?



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Step 2 Continued:

Supply & Use Audit: A supply & use audit can show you where your plastics are coming from and how often they are used. This allows you to figure out if these things are necessary to your business or if there are easy swaps and alternatives. Sit down with your team and create a chart for your audit, it could look something like this:

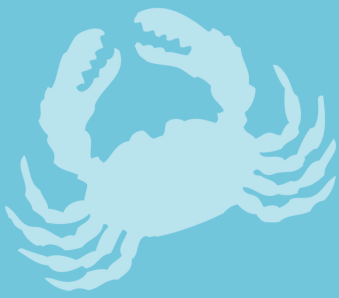
Type of Plastic	Supplier	How much do you order in a month?	How much is used per week?	How much is used per month?
Straws	Straw Co.	400	100	400
Cups	Cup Co.	500	100	400

After conducting your audit, you can ask yourself similar questions to the waste audit.

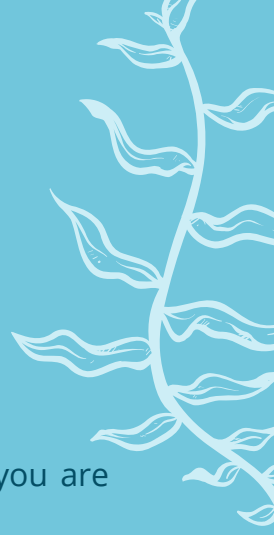
- What products do you order/use the most? Do those align?
- Are all of these products essential to your business? If not, do you think there are alternatives that you could invest in?
- Are you selling single-use plastic items? Can these be swapped for reusable?



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Step 3: Be loud and proud about your Plastic Free journey!

- Go public: announce on your website, Facebook, in-store, etc. about how you are integrating Plastic Free practices into your business model.
- Provide educational information in your business: You can print out and use one of the provided Plastic Free Salish Sea Infographics/posters (or make your own!) and put it up in your business.
- Motivate your staff and Individuals to integrate Plastic Free ethics into their personal life! A few examples are:
 - Incorporate “Challenges” for your staff or customers: Challenge them to do something plastic free and take a picture to document it, and then reward them in some way! If possible, incorporate your challenges on social media.
 - Have a “Plastic Free Employee of the Month” as a fun way to reward employees for their plastic free efforts (and then reward them with some cool plastic free prizes!)
 - Encourage folks to bring their own mugs for coffee and reusable cutlery for their lunches.
- Provide incentives (punch cards, discounts, etc.) for people who bring their own mugs or containers.
- Become a Plastic Free Salish Sea partner! Contact us to learn more.



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Common alternatives for your business:



Implement a Compost bin into your kitchen.

Ask staff to only bring in reusable coffee mugs/reusable containers.



Switch to Paperless billing and sign bills electronically.

Opt for reusable coffee filters and say no to K-cups!



Buy bulk for your business (which typically reduces plastic usage AND costs!)



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