

Sustainable hydration

Why it's time for businesses
and organisations to say hello
to an eco-friendlier future



Better thinking, better water,
better for you, better for the planet™



Introduction

Becoming more sustainable isn't a new concept to any of us, but levels of awareness and action have grown hugely in recent years.

As the world locked itself down to protect from the pandemic in 2020, images of wildlife flourishing and the environment blossoming hit the headlines globally. For many, this was a wake-up call, highlighting the destruction that is taking place around us – an attitude that has been reflected in a recent global survey in which 60% of consumers reported making more environmentally friendly, sustainable or ethical purchases since the start of the pandemic.

But for large-scale change to happen, businesses need to lead the way in promoting and adapting their approaches and aligning processes and initiatives with sustainability. Looking at the bigger picture is essential. Companies need to ask themselves how sustainable their processes are from cradle-to-grave, and ensure that their green goals are acted on, rather than just being a tick-box exercise for ESG purposes and board reports.

They will also need to consider the fact that customers are beginning to question the environmental credentials of a company when making a purchase, with 81% of people now preferring to buy from sustainable sellers. This shows that there is a financial benefit to businesses that enact change and ensure that people are aware of their efforts, as they are set to be rewarded by investors and customers for their commitment to ESG causes.



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An average of 35.8 million plastic bottles are used in the UK every day

A big contributor to the problem is hydration – whether that’s for employees within the workplace, those on the go or consumers.

This essential part of staying healthy is having a huge impact on our ability to act sustainably. It is estimated that in the UK, an average of 35.8 million plastic bottles are used per day – an unacceptable amount for a single country, and something that needs to change urgently. As we emerge from lockdown restrictions, the number of people who will be grabbing a bottle of water or using plastic cups, particularly if they have slipped into less sustainable habits due to COVID-induced germ anxieties, will only grow.

Staying hydrated is essential and should be encouraged within all workspaces. After all, 75% of respondents from our 2019 [hydration in the workplace survey](#) say that regular access to a water dispenser greatly increases their productivity and concentration.

Therefore, companies must consider maintaining this hydration supply without harming the planet and its resources. But what can employers and businesses do to make a change and support safe and sustainable hydration? In this whitepaper, we look at the impact of the plastic consumption and pollution crisis, the steps that businesses can take to be more sustainable when it comes to hydration, and what the future can look like if organisations don’t adapt their approaches in a world that is more health-conscious following the pandemic.

The consumption and pollution crisis

It's well-known that the rate at which we consume single-use plastics and similar materials is a problem worldwide.

Thankfully, this has not gone unrecognised on the global stage, with legislation in place across a number of countries to tackle the issue before it is too late. For example, France banned plastic cups at the start of 2020 and continues to tighten its ban on plastics in an effort to curb single-use plastic consumption.

Meanwhile, in the UK, environmental protection legislation was agreed to ban plastic straws, cotton buds and similar. Further measures include a tax on plastic packaging for companies whose materials are made from less than 30% recycled content, due to come into force in 2022. Many other countries are also taking similar measures, with more set to follow suit.

However, there is much more that needs to be done beyond simply setting regulations. We must look at how single-use items are made in the first place before we will truly be able to tackle the wider issue.



>60%

of companies said they will be focusing their budgets on making their businesses more sustainable

The manufacturing process involves extracting crude oil that is later refined; chemical processing is carried out to turn the oil into plastic and create the shape; shipping and delivery to the purchase point then takes place. Each part of the process has a devastating environmental impact, and that's even before disposal is taken into account.

It's undeniable that we all need to take action to save our planet, but businesses must lead the charge. And not just because they are legally obliged to, or that employees, customers and consumers demand it, but because they want to make a difference to the world. Over 60% of companies in a recent survey have said they will be focusing their budgets on making their businesses more sustainable when it comes to manufacturing and internal processes, as well as buildings and equipment. For those that don't make the effort, there will be questions as to why, and there will be very few answers that will be acceptable.

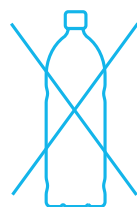


Embracing change

Taking steps towards sustainable and safer hydration.

Organisations will need to regain the confidence of the public as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Understandably, consumers are cautious but cognizant of the impact of plastic pollution. Because of this, employers need to carefully consider their approach so they can allay fears linked with keeping hydrated – in and outside of the workplace – without adding to the problem.

Hydration is important to employees, but so is sustainability. Our 2019 'Hydration in the Workplace' report found that 72% of workers feel that their employer could do more to reduce single-use plastic at work. This will need to be done with people's anxieties in mind – plastic bottles, cartons and cutlery have all been used throughout the pandemic under the understanding that they were safer. However, installed hydration is, in fact, a more reliable, sustainable and hygienic source of drinking water; as a result, workplaces ensure that their staff hydrate safely.



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of workers feel that their employer could do more to reduce single-use plastic at work

At Waterlogic, we work hard to ensure that our solutions are as safe as possible.

In 2020, we reassured our customers and their consumers that the water we provide access to is 99.999% effective against COVID-19, with our patented Firewall® UVC purification technology safeguarding millions of people globally and providing a sustainable and safe hydration option.

For example, we installed free plumbed-in Waterlogic Firewall® dispensers in the NHS Nightingale Hospital in London for patients and key workers.

The safety of our water was attested by Dr Gerba of the University of Arizona and his team of microbiologists from the Water & Energy Sustainable Technology (WEST) Centre, giving further reassurance.

As well as providing safe dispensable water, there are many other ways that employers and organisations can do their bit and be more eco-friendly. For example, Wates Construction switched to our 100% biodegradable and compostable cups and, in just one month, saved 28,000 single-use cups from landfill. Providing employees with reusable water bottles can also ensure that they stay hydrated while avoiding single-use plastics. Businesses are willing to get involved when given the opportunity; often all they need is a little help.

Signs of sustainable success

The good news is that change is coming. Legislation is being enforced to ensure we are all part of a sustainable future.

New ways to encourage more sustainable hydration are being launched to make the change easier, including the 'Freefill' initiative that we championed alongside major organisations and businesses such as Boots, DPD, The Co-op and Londis. By installing bottle filling stations that staff and customers could use, 1.1 million refills were recorded in 2020 alone as communities embraced reusable bottles.

In the hospitality industry, great strides are being taken to be more sustainable to help the planet and show customers that the sector is responsible. Purezza is a prime example of a premium dispensing solution that enables establishments to utilise their own locally-sourced water supply to offer to their customers.

One example includes the Four Seasons Hotel in Miami, which, since switching to Purezza, has removed almost 275,000 single-use plastic bottles.

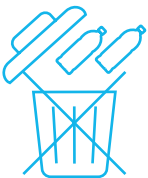
This has saved 22,770 kilograms of CO₂ and 107,133 gallons of water. Similarly, Kimpton Clocktower Hotel in Manchester (part of the Intercontinental Hotel Group) has seen incredible benefits through demonstrating its environmental conscience and associated initiatives to corporate clients and customers.

We also acknowledge and celebrate those customers who have taken the necessary steps to actively reduce plastics in their workplace with our Oceansaver Accolade. These have been presented to a number of our carbon-conscious customers, including Interserve, which supports energy supplier E.ON, and Goldman Sachs, for its commitment to doing better and changing its practices regarding single-use plastics.



1.1 million

refills were recorded as communities embraced reusable bottles



275,000

single-use plastic bottles removed by one hotel since switching to Purezza





Conclusion

Collectively, we need to do more to protect the planet. Businesses and organisations should be actively stepping up and making real change.

In addition to many of us wanting to do better, the call will only get louder from all areas – legislators, consumers, employees, and investors alike.

There are many ways in which businesses can actively help with the level of consumption of single-use plastics, including but not limited to:

- Supplying safe, freely accessible and sustainable methods of hydration to staff and customers, and encouraging a ‘bottle for life’ culture
- Opting for mains-fed dispensers rather than bottled water coolers, to save the emissions associated with the regular deliveries of water
- Where single-use consumables are required, ensuring these are biodegradable and compostable, or, at the very least, that trustworthy recycling schemes are in place
- Working with suppliers who can demonstrate environmentally-sound practices in their product manufacturing, supply and service delivery to support businesses and organisations in achieving their own green goals

The alternative paints a dark picture; one of a world struggling with oceans full of plastic, an increase in climate change and a crisis left for generations after us to try and tackle.

It’s something we’re already seeing, with temperatures rising to extreme levels in the U.S. and Canada – and this is only the beginning. If we do not make a change, we could see up to a 170% increase in the risk of flooding, at least one ice-free arctic summer a decade, and rising sea levels that would impact one billion people worldwide by 2050.

It is in light of this that we must understand that taking action is not an option; it’s needed for survival. Together, businesses, organisations and the public can join forces to make a difference.

Better thinking, better water, better for you, better for the planet™

At Waterlogic, everything starts with the way we think about water. Behind every drop of Waterlogic water are years of knowledge, innovation, and experience to deliver pure, great-tasting water in the safest and most sustainable way.

And because we design, manufacture, distribute, install and service our own water dispensers, you can enjoy unparalleled product quality, including a range of consumables and accessories and a highly responsive Total Care service that is second to none.

Contact us today to learn more about Waterlogic and find out which solution is right for you.

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