

# Institutional Case Study: Genentech's Café B33

## **BUSINESS PROFILE:**

### **CAFÉ PILOT:**

Café B33

### **PROJECT TIMELINE:**

February 2016–May 2017

### **LOCATION:**

1 DNA Way,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080

### **EMPLOYEES:**

14,815

### **AVG. TRANSACTIONS PER DAY:**

800

### **FOOD VENDOR:**

Bon Appétit  
Management Company

### **FOOD SERVICES:**

Breakfast and Lunch

### **DAYS OPEN PER YEAR:**

248

### **WARE WASHER:**

Yes

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Genentech, Inc. is a biotechnology research and development corporation located in South San Francisco, California. The company's Sustainable Campus Plan targets 80% waste diversion from landfill by 2020, and an employee volunteer group, Green Genes, promotes sustainable practices across campus. Bon Appétit Management Company is contracted for food service operations with a sustainable-sourcing mission.

**Genentech selected Café B33, one of nine campus cafés, to pilot Clean Water Fund's ReThink Disposable's program through cost saving and waste reduction practices, targeting disposable food ware packaging with audited metrics.**

# ReThink Disposable with Bon Appétit and Genentech in South San Francisco: Over 1 million disposable packaging pieces eliminated across 44 items, a 25% reduction.

## Annual Packaging Impacts prior to Rethink Disposable

- 3,998,380 disposable food ware items purchased
- \$149,091 in disposable food ware cost
- 56,477 pounds of waste requiring sorting, hauling, and processing
- 74.71 metric tons of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions generated

Clean Water Fund's (CWF) ReThink Disposable team gathered baseline packaging procurement inventory for all single use items in Café B33, observed café food operations, interviewed stakeholders from Bon Appétit and Genentech, and identified opportunities to reduce disposable packaging. Even with ample dishwashing capacity and a wide array of reusable food and beverage ware options available to employees at made-to-order food and self-serve stations, 70% of Genentech employees were observed eating on some or all dispos-

ables in the café, finished their meal on-site, and then discarded the pile of left over packaging into the landfill, compost, or recycling streams. The ReThink Disposable team worked with the project stakeholders to identify which source reduction Best Management Practices to pilot, developed an action plan and timeline for pilot implementation, and prepared to track packaging inventory and employee feedback during the three month pilot from February – April, 2017.

## Recommendations Implemented

- Reduced two sizes of disposable containers and lids at the soup and salad self-serve stations
- Reduced napkin usage in the dining area
- Eliminated individually packaged condiments and replaced with bulk dispensers
- Reduced use of disposable utensils
- Bon Appétit staff defaulted to reusables at stations where Genentech employees ordered meals

Green Genes led the charge to inspire Genentech employees to prevent packaging, focusing on dining in on reusables to support campus-wide Zero Waste goals. To kick the project off, there was a robust communications strategy including emails, table and self-serve station signage, digital signs on the food station menu display, surveying employees during and after the pilot, and tabling in the café during the first week of implementation.

Bon Appétit reported two cost impacts to the changing operation: \$20,675 one-time initial set up cost to purchase new reusable food ware items and supplies, and \$24,000 in annual ongoing cost to sustain the operation to cover additional washing supplies, labor, and replacement of broken, lost, or damaged food ware. Bon Appétit trained staff to default to reusables at made-to-order stations, prioritized the use of reusables at self-serve stations, and eliminated some disposable items all together.



*BEFORE: Disposable soup cups and lids stacked at the self-serve station with a few reusable bowls available on a shelf at knee level. →*





**“Bon Appétit plans to continue with the reduction recommendations made at Café B33 and we are now eliminating individual condiment packages campus-wide.”**

Sue Truocolo, General Manager  
Bon Appétit Management Company at Genentech

## Annual Packaging Impacts after Café B33’s ReThink Disposable Pilot

- **\$12,496 cost savings** from avoided foodware purchases (reflects setup and ongoing cost)
- **11,582 pounds of waste prevented** from needing sorting, hauling, and processing
- **1,010,171 disposable items eliminated**
- **23.04 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced (MTCO<sub>2</sub>)**
- No additional labor required
- Bon Appétit is considering campus wide rollout of successful practices
- Genentech is closer to achieving their 2020 waste reduction goals
- Elevated dining experience in the café



↑ Signage helped reinforce employee participation.

## Annual Results:

ReThink Disposable Recommendation Implemented	Product Replaced or Minimized	Disposable Reduction (%)	Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced (#)	Payback Period (months)	Cost Savings After Payback Period (\$)	Waste Reduction (lbs.)	GHG Emissions Reduced (MTCO <sub>2</sub> )
Increased availability and prioritized use of reusable soup bowls	Two sizes of disposable soup containers and lids	21.2%	53,892	9.5	\$1,516.38	846 lbs	4.18
Only offered napkins at a central self-service station	Napkins	14.1%	251,815	0.5	\$920.33	1,217 lbs	3.13
Replaced individually packaged condiments with bulk alternatives	14 packaged condiments and sweeteners	100%	354,020	0.9	\$4,280.92	302 lbs	7.24
Increased availability and prioritized use of reusable utensils	Disposable forks, knives, and spoons	24.3%	156,431	9.3	\$4,660.55	1,948 lbs	0.72
Defaulted to reusables at stations where Genentech employees ordered food	Two sizes of clamshells, paper bags, pizza boxes, food wrap, sushi tray	24.6%	83,748	13	\$9,798.55	6,749 lbs	8.47
Increased availability and prioritized reusable cups	3 sizes of cold cups, lids, straws	22.2%	67,723	5.2	\$360.62	487 lbs	0.19
Increased availability of reusable coffee mugs	Hot cups, lids, sleeves, stirrers	40.7%	97,865	0.4	\$374.29	518 lbs	(+0.68)
Implemented a reusable ramekin at the self-serve station	Sauce cups and lids	(Increase of 74.4%)	(+55,323)	0	(+\$2,326.71)	(+486 lbs)	(+0.21)

# Pilot Project Challenges, Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Success

Genentech and Bon Appétit experienced three challenges during the pilot. First, Bon Appétit reported that some products, like plates and utensils, were being lost as Genentech employees walked out of the Café with these items and did not return them. Employees, encouraged by the campaign to reduce waste, wanted to use reusable food ware items (and did), but there was no reusable to-go container, and no satellite return stations for employees to return reusable items taken out of the café. Second, lack of sustained communications in months two and three of the pilot to reinforce the project goal caused some items targeted for packaging reduction that were significantly reduced in month one to increase in usage during months two and three. Clean Water Fund estimates that this pilot would have yielded an additional \$8,000 in savings from avoided food ware costs, preventing an additional 3,000 pounds of waste from being generated, if the communications strategy was sustained in months two and three as it had began in month one. Third, as a result of eliminating single use disposable condiment and sweetener packages for to-go orders, the use of disposable ramekins (sauce cups) and lids increased by 74% from the baseline to the follow-up inventory.

In response to the lessons learned from the above challenges, Clean Water Fund offers the following recommendations for success in the future implementation of ReThink Disposable's Best Management Practices (BMPs) for source reduction both in Café B33 and as Genentech and Bon Appétit consider rolling out these BMPs in Cafés campus wide:

**1. Bon Appétit should incorporate a campus-wide reusable container program** for to-go orders to complement the source reduction practices implemented in the Café to achieve the overall waste reduction goal and prevent product loss requiring repurchasing. Employees would then be able to dine-in on reusable china and silverware or grab a reusable to-go container to take their food to go and then drop off the container at satellite locations strategically placed around campus and in Cafés. Janitorial staff would then pick up the dirty reusable to-go containers from the satellite locations and bring them back to Café B33 and others with dishwashing capacity for washing, drying and redistribution.

*ReThink Disposable* is a **Clean Water Fund** program conducted in partnership with local businesses and government agencies. Generous support for the program is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. This project has been funded in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement X99738501 to Clean Water Fund. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.



*From disposable to reusable cups at the specialty beverage station. New signage is displayed to encourage employees to refuse straws.*

## **2. In partnership with Bon Appétit, Green Genes should focus on creating and sustaining an ongoing communications strategy**

to reinforce employee participation in Genentech's campus waste reduction goals to reduce disposable packaging items in the Café and to dine-in on reusables. Peer-to-peer communications regarding the behaviors that employees should be practicing will encourage greater participation as employees are reminded and feel that they are making an impact to support Genentech's campus 2020 waste reduction goals.

## **3. Even though the use of disposable ramekins (sauce cups) and lids increased by 55,323 units as a result of eliminating condiment and sweetener individually-wrapped packets in Café B33, the condiment packet reduction was 354,020 units and is a successful outcome**

of the pilot project. CWF carefully took into consideration the various cost and environmental factors. While the net *increase* in waste generated is 184 pounds, the net *reduction* in metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions produced is 7.03 MTCO<sub>2</sub>, the net annual cost savings is \$8,000, and the net reduction of packaging items is 298,697. CWF supports the rollout of eliminating disposable condiment packages campus wide, and Genentech and Bon Appétit can coordinate on additional messaging and signage to reduce ramekins and lids at the condiment self-serve station for to-go meals (like "Just Sauce It!" with imagery showing ketchup going right on the fries) and encourage employees dining in to use a reusable stainless steel ramekin.

For more information  
about the program, visit  
[www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org)  
or email us at  
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