

Fit for Growth: Reusable Cups

Tips for reusable cups, drink sizes and variety



Big bang, small effect. The results after a few months were sobering. GA-Trendagentur has observed that the number of consumers in Germany using deposit and reusable cup systems in remains very low. What's more, many public authorities do not have a standardized approach to accepting and issuing returnable or deposit cups. There are also plenty of consumers who find it annoying and inconvenient to carry empty cups around with them until the next time they want a hot drink. Even the prospect of cleaning them can be an irritation. Despite this sad reality, there are good marketing opportunities in actively promoting reusable cups in a variety of shapes and sizes. Check out the tips below.

Adjust prices now! Prices for hot drinks rose significantly in 2023, much to the delight of suppliers. The two-euro mark for a classic filter coffee has now been broken in bakeries – and the three-euro mark for specialty coffees. The first coffee bars have passed the four-euro barrier for specialty coffees. Consumers have not, however, taken too kindly to the “five euro plus” mark set by some gas stations. Coffee lovers here accept a maximum of 4.75 euros for latte macchiato and the like, as long as there is an attractive, perceptible price entry for them.

Tip: Update the columns on your drink board. In the first column, advertise your hot drinks for reusable cups (the customer's own cup) as an entry price. In bakeries, this could be a filter coffee for two euros - or even one euro as an entry price, depending on the local target group. Follow this with the other hot drinks with the corresponding price advantage. The second column on your drinks board now belongs to the hot drinks for take-away or in-house consumption. These prices here need to be adjusted. The difference from the old price should be no less than 20 cents and no more than 30 cents.

What size? Depending on how many drink sizes you offer, your number columns on the board will increase.

Tip: Reduce drink sizes to a maximum of two different sizes. Many coffee bars have now even redefined their drinks to just one size. The price and volume are determined by the contents of the beverage container. The flat white, for example, is prepared in a smaller cup or glass than the latte. In bakeries, on the other hand, two sizes are only expected for cappuccino and caffè crème. Latte macchiato is now predominantly served in a single-size goblet glass.

Keep an eye on your range of drinks. While hot drinks such as flat white and cortado have found their way into coffee bars, which tend to have a high level of coffee expertise, consumer expectations in bakeries are more relaxed. The following drinks are expected as a minimum, however: filter coffee, caffè crème, cappuccino, latte macchiato, latte or caffè latte. In terms of coffee competence, including espresso on the drinks board is more of a marketing measure.

In addition to the coffee specialties mentioned above, hot chocolate and various types of tea should be offered. In bakeries, the expectations regarding the types of tea are generally limited to black tea, e.g. Darjeeling, Assam or the Frisian blend for the north of Germany, herbal tea, green tea, Earl Grey tea and rooibos tea. The GA-Trendagentur is also aware that the sales volumes for these varieties are rather low.

Offer the right reusable cups. Save money on deposit systems by offering different reusable cups for sale. A plastic option may be appropriate for entry-level prices, and metal for premium users. Another deluxe option would be a porcelain reusable cup. When choosing, make sure that the filled coffee-to-go cups do not get too hot in the hand. It's also important that the cups have a lid that closes well, is easy to clean, and prevents spills. The latter is the most important argument for users, who often carry the cup in their pocket or backpack when it's almost empty.

Stock up economically. Again, research shows that people prefer to buy their own reusable cups in stores or online. Nevertheless, you should offer a visible sample selection as a source of inspiration. The price entry logic described above with the "own reusable cup" allows you to increase the price of to-go/in-house drinks. In fact, the perceived lower price of the reusable cup may encourage more users to act in the interest of the environment and sustainability. And that's certainly a step in right direction for your branding.

Good luck!