

# 9 Sustainability Trends To Watch Out For In Irish Supermarkets In 2024



## 1 Circular retail mindset

The aim of a circular-economy mindset is to design out waste. It also means supporting shoppers to make purchasing choices that reduce food waste through solutions such as smaller pack sizes and encouraging shoppers to consciously buy what they need and will use within their homes.

## 2 Supporting the right choices

Many retailers are taking the premise of 'try before you buy,' offering more product sampling in store, to allow shoppers to make informed choices about a product before purchasing it.

## 3 Waste not, want not

Food waste has always been an issue, but one of the innovative ways in which retailers are reducing food waste and turning that waste into revenue is by partnering with app services such as Too Good To Go, which connects customers to restaurants and stores that have surplus unsold food.

## 4 Wonky but wonderful

By creating 'wonky boxes', both suppliers and retailers are utilising products that could otherwise have ended up in landfill, offering shoppers the opportunity to choose 'wonky' and avail of shopper discounts in the process. While I first came across this concept using local farmers' fruit and vegetables, I've since seen it expand into categories such as confectionery. Expect to see more 'wonky boxes/offers' appearing on shelves in 2024.

## 5 Modular store environments

Digital signage is a clear option, as it already eliminates the regular use of paper, ink, paint and chemicals for physical signs. LED signage displays consume up to 50% to 70% less electricity than their traditional digital counterparts. Expect to see a deeper proliferation of LED digital signage within retail in 2024.

## 6 Giving shoppers transparency

The use of QR codes next to produce. This has become an effective way of giving shoppers more information about the products that they buy – how ethically they are being sourced, ingredients, contents, and even ways in which to use the products.

## 7 Sustainable community retailing

In July 2023, Killarney became the first town in Ireland to ban single-use coffee cups, in a move aimed at eliminating over one million single-use containers from local waste disposal systems. The initial results were hugely positive. This type of success only happens when retailers come together to plan a cohesive approach. Globally, this community-based retailing is becoming more common, so expect to see more proactive community-led initiatives, such as the one rolled out in Killarney, appearing in 2024.

## 8 Sustainable staff efforts

You can also expect to see more emphasis on staff training to support sustainable shopper behavioural change in 2024. With the focus on the roll-out of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), which goes live on 1 February 2024, and a spotlight on single-use coffee cups and their environmental impact, it is in the interests of retailers to use the backdrop of the DRS to train staff to support sustainable shopper behaviours within the store, such as the use of keep cups, returning 'empties', etc.

## 9 People-focused retailing

Savvy retailers know that being in a wheelchair, having sight impairment or sensory challenges, or even trying to navigate a pushchair with children can be a huge barrier to entering the retail environment for some shoppers and discourages them from frequenting certain stores. Expect to see more 'inclusive' efforts by retailers in 2024, with initiatives such as dedicated autism-friendly trading hours, focused community efforts to support elderly shoppers, and even having a dedicated section outside stores for 'dog parking'.

(Adapted from *9 Sustainability Trends To Watch Out For In Irish Supermarkets In 2024*, December 06, 2023)



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