

## **How to Start a Waste Diversion Program at Your Business**

- **Obtain owner/management support**
  - It is critical to get management support for any program that affects all employees.
  
- **Appoint a recycling coordinator and obtain buy-in from employees**
  - A successful recycling program needs an enthusiastic individual to serve as a recycling or environmental champion who can get everyone motivated and working together as a team.
  - Depending on the size of your office, several coordinators may be needed to keep the program running smoothly. Your recycling service provider can answer questions or contact the Local Environmental Action Division staff resolve issues and help train your recycling coordinator or entire staff.
  
- **Determine what to recycle and how to separate**
  - Conduct a walk-through audit by checking waste containers and assessing the material that your business produces. Typically office environments produce lots of mixed paper including cardboard and food and beverage containers.
  - Identify the number of employees in the business that will need an extra container.
  - Find out where the large waste generators are. Examples include in-house copy centers, computer rooms, and kitchens.
  - Determine the volume being generated and frequency of current waste pick-up.
  
- **Obtain maintenance, custodial and staff input**
  - Involve the custodial staff in planning of your program since they will play a critical role in reducing contamination and transporting your recyclable materials. Many times, the custodial staff may simply help with transferring recyclables from internal containers to the outside or center collection point for the recycling service providers.
  - If you do not have custodial staff it is important to be clear that each employee is responsible for taking recyclable materials to a central area where the recycler picks up the material. Choose the system that will work best for your business.
  
- **Contact recycling haulers**
  - All waste haulers operating in the city also provide recycling service. Contact your waste hauler to add recycling or compost service to your account.

- If you do not have an existing contract with a hauler, call around for cost quotes. Find the hauler that suits your businesses' needs and make sure to ask for guidelines, desk-side containers, signage and container stickers if available.
- **Order recycling containers**
  - Most businesses find that participation increases when collection begins at an employee's desk. Some recyclers may supply you with desk-side recycling containers.
- **Schedule and provide educational sessions**
  - Providing employees with an adequate understanding of how your recycling program will work is crucial to its success. All employees should be encouraged to attend. Serving food always helps motivate employees to come!
  - The education sessions should explain:
    - Why the company is starting a recycling program.
    - What benefits the company expects to receive from recycling.
    - What materials are going to be recycled/composted.
    - How the materials are going to be diverted and collected.
    - Any new responsibility employees need to undertake.
    - Provide the name and phone number of the individual who can answer company recycling questions.
- **Kick off your program and issue recycling containers**
  - To officially start your program, issue a memo signed by your CEO which is directed to all employees. The memo should highlight the benefits of recycling and describe the specifics of your program.
  - Listing the materials that employees can recycle, the location of the bins and the responsibility of each employee and will set your program up for success. Stress the seriousness of contamination and how it can make or break your recycling program.
  - Respond to employees' questions or problems quickly.
- **Publicize your program**
  - It is important to reinforce the new recycling practices. You can do that by keeping the employees involved and motivated.
  - Promotional methods include: paycheck insert reminders, goal chart or progress board and contests among departments.
  - If you have a company newsletter, be sure to submit articles about the program.

- **Evaluate your program's success**
  - Evaluate the success of your recycling program on a regular basis. Take note of the following:
    - Can you reduce your trash pick-ups now that the company is diverting recyclable/compostable materials?
    - What percentage of material is being recycled/composted?
    - Is the program cost-effective?
    - Have there been any employee complaints or suggestions?
    - How can the program be improved?