



# THE BENEFITS OF ADOPTING A MULTI-STREAM WASTE & RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR YOUR BUSINESS



ORGANIC WASTE



MIXED RECYCLABLES



**WHITEPAPER**



## SINGLE-STREAM WASTE RECEPTACLES ARE EASY AND CONVENIENT, BUT THERE MAY BE A SUPERIOR CHOICE FOR YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR CUSTOMERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Consumers continue to seek out businesses that are doing their part environmentally. The majority of consumers (55%) are willing to pay more for a product or service that is committed to making a positive environmental impact. The growing consumer loyalty to environmentally conscious brands brings more incentives and opportunities for businesses to choose earth-friendly alternatives in their day-to-day operations. One way to show this environmental commitment is to reexamine a process that is 50+ years old—single-stream recycling.

The traditional method of waste disposal offers one bin for trash or recycling and little else. Enter the world of sorting with multi-stream waste and recycling. This option involves a series of bins for different disposed items, such as compostable food waste, paper recycling or bins specifically for plastic and glass. While this approach may not be right for every business, it can dramatically reduce recycling contamination and waste sent to landfills. When contamination is reduced, more recycled materials can be sold back to retailers reducing costs.

What are the steps businesses should take to identify if this system is a good fit? And from there, how can your business implement a multi-stream waste and recycling program that is attractive to consumers, good for business and best for the environment?

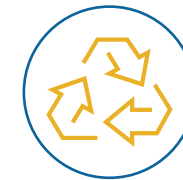
**It's not as difficult as one may think.**

## HISTORY OF RECYCLING

Recycling unofficially began in the mid-1900s as women's nylons, tin cans and [cooking fats were collected and reused for World War II](#).

In the 1960s, recycling programs were popping up but were inconsistent and often meant a trip to a recycling center.

The first widespread, curbside single-stream recycling program (meaning one bin for trash and one bin for all recycled materials) was adopted in the 1970s to reduce the waste stream of renewable resources bound for landfills. Though it took some time to catch on, program compliance rose over the years. Today, overall recycling compliance hovers around 35% in the U.S.



**50% OF 254  
MILLION TONS  
OF TRASH SENT TO LANDFILL  
IS RECYCLABLE**

*Source: Creditdonkey.com*

While single-stream recycling is simple, multi-stream recycling is superior. So much so that some states are passing laws to regulate businesses to adopt multi-stream set-ups. California [passed Senate Bill SB 1383 with the goal of reducing waste going to landfills](#) by 75% by 2025 by adding compost bins for organic waste like food and wood scraps.

## RECYCLING COMPLIANCE RATES BY YEAR



**THE U.S. HAS SET A NATIONAL  
RECYCLING GOAL TO INCREASE  
THE RATE  
TO 50% BY  
2030**

*Source: epa.gov*

*Image Source: rds-virginia.com*

## RECYCLING CONTAMINATION

To understand contamination, one must first understand the recycling process and where these items go after being placed in a recycling bin.

With a single recycling bin all waste, including papers, plastics, metals, glass and non-recyclable items, are sent to a sorting facility. These facilities offer a variety of human and machine-based sorting techniques to separate each material appropriately.

As recyclables move through these conveyors, it is common for glass bottles to break and embed in paper and cardboard products. This is a common form of recycling contamination and often causes glass particles and paper to end up going to landfills. This and other factors like unrinsed containers, greasy pizza boxes and plastic bags clogging systems lead to [25% of recycled items ending up in the recycling plant's landfill bin.](#)

Once properly sorted, non-contaminated materials are bailed into cubes and purchased by companies to be reused.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT MULTI-STREAM WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAMS

Multi-stream collection bins can be specific to your business needs. Offering separate bins for things like plastic, cans, paper/cardboard, compost and general landfill can require different, but less frequent, pick-ups.

## HOW CAN MULTI-STREAM WASTE & RECYCLING SAVE MONEY & THE WORLD?

When more recycled materials can be bailed and sold to the companies that need them, that cost savings can be passed on to customers of the collection service. While materials collected from multi-stream waste and recycling program systems still may go through some form of sorting, the amount of manual labor and equipment needed is minimal in comparison to single-stream sorting.



 **PAPER RECYCLING RATES ARE 68%,  
THE HIGHEST EVER ACHIEVED**

 **GLASS IS 100% RECYCLABLE  
AND NEVER LOSES PURITY**

 **60% OF THE GLASS THAT IS RECYCLED  
IN A SINGLE-STREAM RECEPTACLE  
CANNOT BE RECYCLED BECAUSE  
OF CONTAMINATION**



**SINCE 2020, ROTHY'S FASHION  
COMPANY HAS RECYCLED  
MORE THAN 50  
MILLION WATER  
BOTTLES TO  
REPURPOSE  
INTO NEW SHOES**

*Source: CNN.com*



**IT IS NOT JUST RECYCLABLES.  
WHEN BUSINESSES SORT OUT  
COMPOST (FOOD WASTE),  
IT CAN BE BROKEN  
DOWN INTO HEARTY,  
DESIRABLE "LIQUID  
GOLD" SOIL FOR  
GARDENS**

While recycling is good for business, it's also good for the environment. The more recyclables that can be properly recycled means fewer of those items will spend hundreds, thousands and up to [one million years](#) slowly decomposing in landfills. In one example, dual-stream recycling can [reduce contamination rates by 32%](#). The tonnage of collected recyclables has remained the same. This means the same number of recyclables are being recycled while drastically reducing the contamination rate.

Consumers feel good supporting environmentally conscious services and businesses. Research [shows that 55% are willing to spend more](#) on a product or service that makes a positive environmental impact.

In addition to customers, employees can feel a sense of pride and commitment to an employer that is doing more to save the planet with green initiatives.



**HOMES AND BUSINESSES IN LAKE WORTH BEACH FLORIDA**

**REDUCED CONTAMINATION RATES FROM 40% TO 7-8% BY SWITCHING TO DUAL-STREAM RECYCLING**

Source: Wastedive.com

**RECEPTACLES TO USE**

Not just any receptacle will do. To choose the right receptacles for the job, here are a few attributes to look for.

- ☐ Is the unit durable enough for the conditions and use?
- ☐ Is the receptacle the correct size based on the findings from my waste audit?
- ☐ Is the color of my receptacles easy to locate while meshing well with my brand and the environment?
- ☐ Does the receptacle have the correct style of lid opening to match the material it is collecting?
- ☐ Does the receptacle have a liner that prevents waste leakage?
- ☐ Can the receptacle be anchored to avoid tipping and trash blowing?
- ☐ Are the receptacles clearly labeled with words and pictures to help avoid confusion and contamination?

**6 STEPS TO ROLL OUT A MULTI-STREAM WASTE & RECYCLING PROGRAM**

**1 IDENTIFY RESOURCES**  
Depending on the business size or type, this task could be assigned to an internal team or an external vendor.

**2 AUDIT YOUR WASTE**  
Weigh and monitor your trash and recycling intake. As you are auditing, identify common items and materials.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

- Are customers using your waste and recycling bins?
- Are customers commonly littering?
- Are there enough receptacles in the correct locations?

**3 IDENTIFY WASTE HAULERS FOR SPECIFIC STREAMS**  
Compare costs and discuss frequencies.

**4 EDUCATE STAFF**  
This includes contracted janitorial staff to ensure collected materials are sorted correctly.

**5 RESEARCH AND PURCHASE THE RIGHT BINS**  
Ensure the correct size and type and that they are clearly labeled. Education is the first step toward compliance.

**6 CONTINUE TO MONITOR**  
Track compliance levels and contamination rates compared to previously collected data

- Landfill (general trash)
- Compost (food waste and organics)
- Glass
- Plastic bottles/ cans
- Paper/cardboard

**TRUST POLYTEC™ SERIES FOR MULTI-STREAM WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM SETUP**

With the PolyTec™ Series indoor/outdoor waste and recycling receptacles from Commercial Zone, there are endless possibilities for multi-stream collection. Made from recycled polyethylene, the PolyTec Series is durable, environmentally friendly and comes in a variety of styles.

In three easy steps, choose from multiple colors, lid/opening options and stone or stainless-steel panels. For a more custom touch, personalize the panels to include a brand logo, messaging or custom decal. Or for a truly custom product, check out custom creations—new products designed specifically for your business' unique needs.



## MULTI-STREAM CONFIGURATIONS ARE IDEAL FOR

- C-Stores
- Parks & Recreation
- Hospitality & Dining
- Property Management
- Arenas & Large Venues
- Commercial Office Buildings

Take the first step towards a successful multi-stream waste and recycling program. Commercial Zone provides site furnishing including waste receptacles, benches, planters, windshield stations and smoking posts built for a wide range of needs, environments and budgets. For more information about Commercial Zone, PolyTec™ or to get started on a quote, contact us today.

**CONTACT US**



**LET US HELP FIND A SOLUTION FOR YOU**

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