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Business Waste Reduction Project – Case Study Casino RSM Club

Background

The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a collective of local councils that have come together to share resources to help avoid and reduce waste going to landfill in the Northern NSW region. The NEWF collective not only provides support for participating local Councils in managing waste, but also provides support and advice to various commercial sectors on how best to implement sustainable practices that reduce waste generation, wastes landfilled, and promote the recovery of recyclable resources.

An initiative of the NEWF, The Business Waste Reduction Project (BWRP), began in April 2005 and focussed on developing Waste Reduction Action Plans for six businesses, ranging from hospitality, through to aged care facilities, correctional centres, a club facility and a large shopping complex. The following is a case study for Casino RSM Club.

Casino RSM Club



Casino RSM Club is a large complex comprising two bowling greens, a small shopping centre (incorporating BiLo, Target, and three speciality shops), a nightclub, function rooms, bars, bistros and kitchens. However, both Bi Lo and Target have their own waste services.

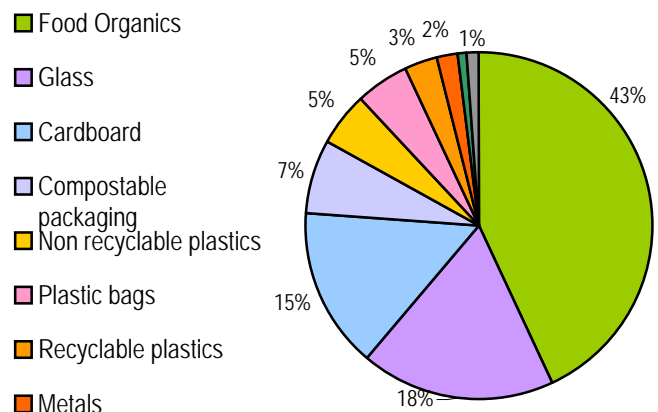
At the start of the BWRP, the club was generating just under a tonne of garbage each week, placed into a 1.5m³ trade waste bin that was emptied three times each week.

The Challenge

The main objective of the BWRP was to assess the efficiency of waste management practices at six businesses, characterise their waste streams and come up with waste management systems that would reduce the volume of waste going to landfill through waste avoidance, reuse and recycling and (if possible) save these businesses money in the process. These studies have now been completed. It is hoped that their outputs will serve as effective blueprints for improving waste management among similar businesses in northern NSW.

Waste Characterisation

A waste audit was conducted early on in the project to determine the main components of the waste stream, and to identify the main materials that would be the target of waste reduction efforts and activities.



Audit results revealed that food waste from the function rooms, bistros and kitchens comprised the bulk of material in the bins (43%), followed by recyclable glass (18%) and recyclable cardboard/paper (15%).

NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE



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Waste Reduction Action Plan

Prior to this study, the Casino RSM Club had virtually no waste reduction practices in place. All materials (recyclable and non recyclable) were sent to landfill, totalling just under 50 tonnes / year.

A Waste Reduction Action Plan (WRAP) was devised, which identified and prioritised the main materials where reduction efforts were to be concentrated.

Recycling

The results of the waste audit showed that approximately 33% of the waste stream was made of recyclable paper/cardboard and glass. Efforts were first directed towards recovering paper and cardboard, as they were relatively easy to collect and had the potential to dramatically reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. Staff had also indicated a willingness to recycle these materials, based on feedback from staff surveys. A suitable recycling contractor was engaged and segregated bins and stations were introduced. The Club monitored their new system by noting recycling and landfill bin levels over a period of time. This monitoring helps ascertain the appropriate time, if practical, to reduce the number of waste bin empties per week and confirms staff participation as well as the Club's recycling successes.

Food organics

The bistro, kitchens and dining areas were responsible for generating a large proportion of the Club's waste, with food organics contributing 43%. Food preparation procedures were investigated to ensure that food was not being unnecessarily wasted. Staff underwent training in portion control to ensure that food was not wasted due to overly large meals being served. Welfare organisations were also contacted in order to determine the potential for donations of left over food.

Other waste reduction initiatives included reviewing the distribution of straws with every drink and ensuring food deliveries be packaged in reusable boxes. The club also implemented paper waste reduction initiatives such as double-siding print and photocopy paper and recycling TAB sheets where possible.

Plastic bag usage was also discouraged, with Casino RSM Club introducing reusable bags with the Club's logo printed on the front. This served to promote the club, reduce plastic bag waste and displayed a clear message to the clubs patrons of their commitment to the environment and waste reduction.

Education

All waste reduction initiatives were accompanied by an education program and clear user-friendly signage.

Outcomes

The program proved to be successful, with a 28.3% reduction in the overall quantity of waste sent to landfill, equating to over 14 tonnes / year.

More than two thirds of the cardboard that was previously sent to landfill is now being recycled.

Food waste decreased by focussing attention on portion control. Overall food waste decreased by approximately one third.

Cost Savings

The Club has noted that better food preparation practices have saved around 3% of total gross profit. Other initiative such as setting printers and photocopiers to the double-siding default has helped in reducing the club's entire paper purchasing demands by 15%.

In addition, it is projected that the recycling of cardboard alone will save the club over \$1000 a year in waste service charges if they are able to reduce their bin empties once/week.

The Future

The next area of the waste stream to be targeted is 'glass' recovery. Although glass recycling was investigated in the early stages of this project, options are still being explored about the possibility of creating a recycling cooperative with similar businesses in the area, therefore making glass recycling more economically feasible.

Preparation and implementation of a waste reduction and purchasing policy will help confirm the continuation of their new practices.

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