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Business Waste Reduction Project Toolkit

Step 1: Committing to improving Waste Reduction in the Workplace

Where do I start?

This toolkit has been designed to lead you through a series of steps to help you achieve your waste reduction goals. As part of this resource kit, you should receive an introductory page, a six-step guideline, and all associated waste assessment and survey forms. We have included a toolkit checklist in **Appendix 1** that will help you keep track of the steps involved in your waste reduction plan. If at any stage you would like to discuss your plans or ideas with a NEWF staff member, please contact our BWRP self help line on (02) 6685 8016.

Step 1

Step 1 of the program: Commit to improving Waste Reduction in the Workplace, focuses on:

- **Obtaining support from senior management;**
- **Assembling a waste reduction team** to coordinate the program; and
- **Training and educating** staff members.

Generating support from senior management

Receiving support from senior management is the first step in the Business Waste Reduction Project. Senior management support will be essential if you are to implement change to existing waste management practices and it will also be much easier to receive cooperation from fellow work colleagues.

Some suggestions when approaching senior management:

- Compile a list of likely benefits, highlighting potential cost savings;
- Provide examples of case studies of similar businesses and the benefits they received;
- Provide a copy of the NEWF Business Waste Reduction Toolkit;
- Highlight positive public image and advantage over competitors.

If you are having difficulty acquiring encouragement from senior management, contact the North East Waste Forum for more ideas on generating support.



If you work in a small organisation, it may be worthwhile approaching neighbouring businesses to see whether they are also interested in starting a waste reduction program. Combining efforts with neighbouring businesses will make your program more appealing to recycling vendors whom you may want to contract for service.

If you're part of an office complex or shopping mall where waste services are organised by a central management body, contact either the leasing agent or property manager about implementing a Business Waste Reduction Program.

Assemble a waste reduction team

Depending on the size of your organisation, you will probably require the assistance of other staff members to help you coordinate the program. You can either arrange for senior management to formally introduce the program at staff meetings or in a newsletter, or you can circulate an email or place notices up in staff common areas requesting support and ideas from interested persons.

When you have received a few offers of assistance, arrange a team meeting to discuss the program in detail and the level and kind of support that will be required. It's a good idea to have one person act as a Team Leader to coordinate initial planning and liaise with senior management. Try to make team meetings a fun event. Consider holding them outside in lunch hours.

The kind of support that is likely to be required from your team will include things like:

- A team leader (someone with good organisational skills);
- A waste assessment team to visually inspect bins;
- Someone to compile waste assessment results;
- Signage for bins (someone with artistic talent);
- Reviewing waste management invoices;
- Assistance with educating other staff members;
- Reporting progress to senior management;
- Writing progress and update columns for circulation to staff, inclusion in newsletters and annual reports;
- Brainstorming sessions to identify systems that are working, and systems where improvements are needed.

Communication

Regularly communicating plans and progress to all staff members is fundamental to the success of the program. Staff need to be made aware of the importance of reducing waste in the workplace and the goals your organisation is hoping to achieve by participating in this project. A good way to gauge the level of interest from staff members, and their level of knowledge of current recycling systems, is to distribute a survey. A survey requesting current waste avoidance, reuse and recycling activities, willingness to participate and segregate materials, and any opportunities (or barriers) they can foresee with current waste minimisation initiatives are all valuable information. We have included a sample survey in [Appendix 2](#).

Education

Motivating staff to willingly separate their waste is probably one of the most challenging parts of the program. Often, this is because staff are unaware of which materials to place in which bin or the reuse / recycling bin is not conveniently located for easy use. Education is key here, and you can encourage staff cooperation by:

- Setting up practical and easy to use systems for reducing, reusing and recovering waste;
- Providing clear signage and pictures and lists of the materials to be placed in each bin;
- Educating staff on what materials can be placed in which bin;
- Conducting occasional compliance checks.

Other tips and suggestions

- Make the Waste Reduction Program an official part of company policy;
- Integrate environmental responsibilities into staff position descriptions;
- Train staff to undertake monitoring of environmental performance and to review your systems on a yearly basis.