

# FIVE STEPS TO GREATER RESOURCE PRODUCTIVITY AND RESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

This 'five steps' is taken from our *Lifting the Lid on Waste Guide*, which sets out the opportunities that rethinking resource and waste transformation can bring. Here we outline the practical steps to begin your journey to eliminating avoidable waste and turning 'waste' into 'wealth'.

## 1. GET INTERNAL BUY IN

Support at all levels, including senior managers, is essential to enable you to achieve your goals, and new recycling and waste programmes are often part of wider sustainability or business improvement programmes and policies.

It may help to link into existing wider initiatives, such as BITC's Waste to Wealth commitments,<sup>1</sup> building standards such as BREEAM or local recycling or environmental business networks. This can help you and your business feel part of a wider movement, build a clear business case (including social, environmental and business productivity benefits) and draw from the experience of others. Make sure you've identified the right people internally, such as your facilities managers, operations supervisors, caterers, etc. to ensure practical and lasting improvements.

Setting up a part of the business as a test environment, where you can assess employee reactions to changes (such as new waste hub configurations) and analysing impact and benefits before roll-out, will help in introducing new initiatives at scale. It also allows you to establish measurement mechanisms and estimate volumes of each new waste stream, which will help in discussions with new providers as you set up reuse and recycling arrangements.

## 2. UNDERSTAND YOUR WASTE STREAMS

Alongside getting buy-in, begin to undertake a waste audit. This will give you a detailed understanding of your waste streams, including where waste is being generated, how often and where it ends up. Measuring both the volume and weight of each material (paper, plastic, metals, etc.) provides a window into the composition of your waste and will help you to identify where you can have the greatest impact.

## THE ROUTE FROM WASTE TO WEALTH



From there, you can work with your procurement teams and waste management company to identify where those waste streams are coming from and going to. You'll need to look 'upstream' to identify whether you can reduce the quantity of the original product (in quantity and size), or potentially switch to a different more durable product; and downstream to ensure that your 'waste' is being kept at its maximum value.

Sainsbury's has developed a robust methodology for measuring and reporting their operational food waste by weight. The new approach allows them to analyse unsold food at a product level in near real time. This gives them a better understanding of why and where food waste is generated, allowing them to take timely and appropriate measures to reduce food waste.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. DEVELOP A COHERENT WASTE STRATEGY WITH BOLD GOALS AND TARGETS

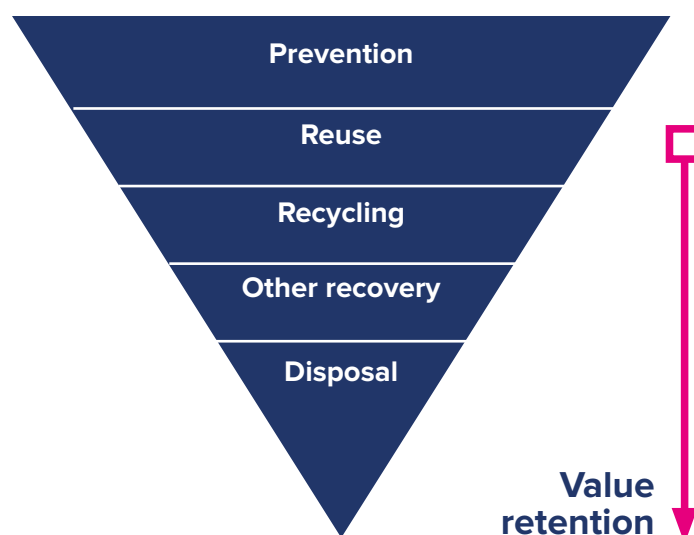
You then need to develop a coherent waste strategy to tackle the most significant waste streams and maximise your early results. Try and ensure that your strategy reflects the waste hierarchy, prioritising reduction then reuse and recycling.

Set yourself targets to help focus your organisation and colleagues on action and empower individuals to find solutions. You may find it helpful to set modest goals for the short term, whilst you test what's possible, and then increase the level of ambition. PwC began with a zero waste to landfill target for 2012 before setting a target of 100% reuse and recycling for 2017 and most recently sourcing circular solutions by 2022.

The Co-operative Bank has set an ambitious strategy to achieve zero waste to landfill by the end of 2020. Their aim is to recycle and recover as much material as possible, and then send anything not recycled to generate energy through incineration. By 2022 they aim to go further, by reducing the amount of waste they produce and eliminating incineration wherever possible.<sup>3</sup>

Sky are aiming to achieve zero waste to landfill at their main offices by 2020 by, for example, reducing the amount of paper used at their sites by increasing the use of multifunctional devices and paperless transactions and using 100% recycled office paper, recycling 100% of food waste at their main offices by composting and anaerobic digestion methods and being best-in-class with the efficient use of natural resources across their operations.<sup>4</sup>

### THE WASTE HIERARCHY



## 4. WORK WITH YOUR WASTE MANAGEMENT SUPPLIER

A good recycling and waste management company will work with you and advise on what can be achieved with your business. Like any good supplier, they should be open and transparent when it comes to costs, available services, standards of service and end destinations of waste streams. Importantly, they should share your ambition.<sup>5</sup>

Asking the right questions can help to challenge your business and your supplier to begin to progress from waste to wealth.

1. How can I reduce the amount of waste my business creates?
2. Can you work with us on a waste audit to identify best opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle?
3. Can we monitor/track what waste we are creating and where it is going for recycling or treatment?
4. How can you work with us to increase our recycling rates? Do you offer incentives to maximise recycling?
5. How many types of waste do you currently recycle?
6. Do your services include staff education, training and communications support?
7. Can our staff visit your Material Recycling or Recovery Facilities?
8. What accreditations do you hold?
9. What are you doing to minimise and reduce carbon emissions, and can you provide us with a carbon footprint of our waste management options?
10. Can you help me to work with my landlord/other tenants?



What to look for in a recycling and waste management provider – more information online here: [www.viridor.co.uk/siteassets/document-repository/brochures/vd041465-ebook-opt.pdf](http://www.viridor.co.uk/siteassets/document-repository/brochures/vd041465-ebook-opt.pdf)

## 5. COLLABORATE TO CREATE WEALTH FROM WASTE

Once you have identified what needs to be done within your business, the next step is to identify the people that can help you push forward change and best practice.

### Working with colleagues

Moving to a reduction and recycling-led system for your business waste will require support and engagement from people in specific roles, such as facilities or estates management, procurement, finance and cleaning teams. But there are also opportunities for wider employee engagement across the business. For example, engaging the right employees internally on waste, recycling, or material-specific (i.e. single-use plastics) audits and involving employees in the subsequent design, communication and implementation of waste

management strategies, can improve broader employee engagement and maximise the chances of successful change.

Increasing staff awareness or nominating 'recycling champions' as part of your wider sustainability programmes can have a huge, positive impact on changing waste culture by getting staff involved in designing waste management in the workplace.

As part of its efforts to reduce waste, Interface established the QUEST programme, focusing employee teams on reducing waste in their factories using team learning and sharing best practices. Setting aggressive targets tied to compensation, and encouraging teams to share knowledge, and the best ideas globally led to sustainability taking hold across the entire business. It also paid dividends financially. The cumulative impact of the QUEST programme halved Interface's manufacturing waste cost and saved millions in avoided waste cost.

Grundon Waste Management provides waste services to water filter cartridge specialist BRITA UK and between 2015-18 has recycled over 700 tonnes of BRITA's waste material. An early success was the setting up of a Green Team of waste champions. Five years on, the



BRITA Green Team is still going strong helping with further savings. Every year the company holds an annual waste training day for staff, which has included visits to Viridor's Energy Recovery Facility and award-winning education centre at nearby Ardley, Oxfordshire.

### Working with suppliers

As part of your responsible supply chain activities, engaging with suppliers to enable and encourage better waste prevention, reuse and recycling should be an important part of your waste to wealth plans.

As part of their Going Circular programme, PwC has collaborated with suppliers to buy items that are designed for disassembly and suppliers to remanufacture them.

### ALWAYS CHECK YOUR DUTY OF CARE FOR WASTE

Businesses need to ensure:

- Waste stored is safe and secure, and held in containers with lids to stop waste escaping
- Each container is clearly labelled with the type of waste contained within
- Different types of waste don't contaminate one and other
- Waste is passed/transported by a licensed waste carrier
- A waste transfer note is created every time waste leaves your premises
- Waste is disposed of at a licensed waste disposal facility

For more information visit: [www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview](https://www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview)



For example, in 2018, they teamed up with KI Europe to convert 2,200 old filing cabinets into new day storage lockers, reusing around 50% of the original materials, retaining 71 tonnes of steel and saving around 40% of the cost of buying new ones. Similarly, they have procured task chairs from OrangeBox for many years, enabling this staple of the office to be easily refurbished at the end of its first ten years, restoring it to excellent condition and re-guaranteeing it for a further ten years at a fraction of the cost of buying new ones.

PwC has also been working with Tier One asset management for over a decade, who securely data cleanse and refurbish their old laptops once they are no longer suitable for the firm's purposes, and resell them in the market, providing PwC with a revenue of up to £500,000 per year.<sup>6</sup>

### Working with communities

Getting involved in community recycling initiatives may help gain traction and engagement for your in-house recycling and waste management programmes. For example, linking up with local charity shops or enterprises may enable your employees to bring in pre-loved goods (such as toys, clothes, small electronics, or bric-a-brac) for reuse or resale (check that your scheme doesn't compete with local authority household recycling collections). Alternatively, there may be local business networks focusing on specific materials, such as office furniture refurbishment.

### FIND OUT MORE

The **Lifting the Lid on Waste Guide** is filled with case-studies, practical information, benefits and questions answered.

Find it here: [www.bitc.org.uk/report/a-guide-to-recycling-waste-management-and-resource-productivity/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/report/a-guide-to-recycling-waste-management-and-resource-productivity/)

The guide sets out the business case and gives practical steps to making rapid progress. It focuses specifically on reducing and better managing waste as part of a wider circular economy strategy, recognising that waste is value leaking from our economy. It draws on the experience of some of the UK's leading resource management companies, BITC's Circular Economy Taskforce and signatories to the Waste to Wealth Commitment.

#WastetoWealth

[www.bitc.org.uk/environment](http://www.bitc.org.uk/environment)

## ENDNOTES

- [www.bitc.org.uk/make-the-waste-to-wealth-commitment/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/make-the-waste-to-wealth-commitment/)
- [www.about.sainsburys.co.uk/making-a-difference/environment/waste](http://www.about.sainsburys.co.uk/making-a-difference/environment/waste)
- [www.co-operativebank.co.uk/news/2019/our-strategy-to-achieve-zero-waste-to-landfill](http://www.co-operativebank.co.uk/news/2019/our-strategy-to-achieve-zero-waste-to-landfill)
- [static.skyassets.com/contentstack/assets/blt9d8be1dee4d71382/591ab222a2dda6382f3c422f/environment-targets-to-2020.pdf](http://static.skyassets.com/contentstack/assets/blt9d8be1dee4d71382/591ab222a2dda6382f3c422f/environment-targets-to-2020.pdf)
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