

# Over 100 Waste Audits Conducted Nationwide Reveal What Businesses Are Really Throwing Out

## WASTE COSTS ARE ON THE RISE

Most offices today have traditional waste and recycling setups with bins at each workstation. This is inefficient. Our waste audits show that companies can reduce what goes into their waste stream by implementing strategic waste management initiatives that improve separation of waste materials. This can be as simple as implementing a centralized waste bin system that will reduce what goes into their waste stream, leading to cost savings and improved operations.

## Centralized Setup:



Existing waste bins are removed from individual workstations.



Larger centralized recycling and waste receptacles are stationed throughout the office floors.

## BENEFITS OF A CENTRALIZED SYSTEM

The average business is paying to dispose of commodities, thus losing value and paying more than they should for waste disposal.

### Resource Use Reduction

By moving to a centralized waste bin system, a company with 1,000 employees using one bin liner per day at \$0.4 each per unit could **save up to \$10,000 a year.**

### Waste Hauling Savings

The maximum market rate in NYC for hauling 1 ton of trash via a private hauling contractor is \$248. Separating materials from the trash stream can **reduce the weight of the trash stream by 77%.**

Hauling waste that's properly separated would lead to an overall price of \$159 — **a 37% price reduction.**

### Janitorial Labor Savings and Reallocation

Janitorial services in the U.S. average about \$28.50/hour. Janitorial staff would have to empty only 200 bins per night in an office with 1,000 employees with a centralized waste bin setup. At an average rate of 1 bin/minute, janitorial labor hours are reduced from 16.7 hours to 3.3— **an 80% reduction in service costs.**

A survey of over 100 waste audits conducted by Great Forest across the country provided some revealing insights into how many businesses are wasting money and resources. The waste audits were performed in 2016-2017 at office buildings in various U.S. cities including New York City and San Francisco. The data revealed that 77% of a typical office waste stream is NOT trash at all, but recyclable or compostable.



## WASTE AUDITS REVEAL LOST VALUE



Our waste audits consist of reviewing a facility or building's ongoing wastestream by collecting all or part of the building's trash and sorting by waste type. Sorted waste is then weighed. The same is then done for the streams designated for recycling.

A waste audit will not only verify what a building, business, or organization is throwing away, but the value it is losing.

## HOW TO IMPLEMENT A SUCCESSFUL CENTRALIZED SYSTEM

- 1. Conduct a comprehensive waste audit.** Regular waste audits will give your business a baseline to gauge the effectiveness of your current waste and recycling program.
- 2. Review your current office layout** to identify strategic locations for centralized bin stations. The optimal distance for employees to be from the trash/recycling/organics bins should be no more than 50 feet.
- 3. Notify all office staff** in advance of the program update, and provide education on the updated system. It is imperative for staff to understand how to effectively separate waste into the correct streams, and why it is important for them to do so.
- 4. Install signage** near and/or above all bins, and install labels directly onto all bins in order to remind all staff how to correctly separate all materials.
- 5. Conduct a follow-up waste audit** to assess the effectiveness of the program.
- 6. Review bin liner purchasing** before and after implementing the program to track cost savings.
- 7. Negotiate with your janitorial provider** to ensure that the reduction in labor is reflected in the service costs.
- 8. Consider renegotiating your waste removal contract** with your hauler to adjust pricing once you have evidence of an increase in recycling and reduction in trash.

### TYPES OF WASTE:

**TRASH**  
includes non-recyclable materials, including items made from combined materials, as well as plastics that are not collected by hauler or local municipality.

**PAPER**  
includes white and colored paper, soft cover books, mail, envelopes, manila folders, paper bags, smooth cardboard such as cereal and shoe boxes, cardboard tubes from paper towels, paper or cardboard cartons, such as egg cartons and produce trays.

**ORGANICS**  
includes food scraps, soiled paper, and plant trimmings; compostable plastics, but does not include liquids and textiles.

**E-WASTE**  
discarded or unusable electronic devices. This does not include items that have non-removable lithium ion batteries.

**GLASS/METAL/PLASTIC**  
includes materials made of glass, metal, and rigid plastics. (Type of rigid plastics vary by hauler and municipality).