



Business Recycling Case Study: Giant Eagle, Inc.

Organization: Giant Eagle, Inc.

Location: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Number of Employees: Approximately 32,500

Amount of paper recovered for recycling in 2008:

Giant Eagle recovered approximately 42,555 tons of paper in 2008 (555 tons of mixed paper and 42,000 tons of corrugated cardboard). Recycling volume has generally increased over the past 4 years with the roll out of the Utility and Recycling Initiative and mixed office paper recycling programs.

Year	Tons	
	Mixed Office Paper	Corrugated Cardboard
2008	555	42,000
2007	279	68,533
2006	*data not available	48,189
2005	128	44,730

Why was the Program Established?

In 1972 Giant Eagle recognized the need for a paper recycling program throughout its corporately owned facilities. That same year the corporately owned supermarkets began baling corrugated cardboard for recycling. After achieving marked success, the program expanded in 1986 to include computer paper at corporate headquarters. Today Giant Eagle recovers mixed office paper and corrugated cardboard at all of its offices, retail support centers, corporately owned supermarkets, and select fuel stations.

To further its commitment to recycling, Giant Eagle established the Utility and Recycling Initiative in 2007 to educate their supermarket team members on how to increase recycling volumes and reduce energy usage. Efforts to increase recycling volumes included capital expenditure technology improvements and a training and education program.

Technology Improvements:

Giant Eagle allocated funds for the installation of dedicated plastic balers in all but two corporate locations, which permitted the store's existing balers to be used exclusively for collection and baling of corrugated cardboard. A baler is a piece of equipment that Giant Eagle uses to compress corrugated cardboard and plastic film into cubes. This addition greatly simplified the process for store personnel.

Training and Education:

Over a six-month period in 2007, regional meetings were held to introduce the goals of the initiative to Giant Eagle employees. Store management was tasked with assigning a point person for each location, creating best practices, and completing weekly and monthly checklists. The initiative was further supported through e-mails and internal documents available on the Giant Eagle intranet.

How is the program administered?

Giant Eagle's recycling programs ensure that the company is in compliance with the Pennsylvania EPA Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act and the City of Pittsburgh Recycling Code.

In the Office:

Team members collect mixed office paper in desk-side recycling bins, conference rooms, and paper "toters" located on each floor. Special locked bins are placed throughout each building for confidential documents, and corrugated cardboard is staged for recycling in the kitchenettes. The cleaning staff collects materials from desk-side bins on a regular schedule and puts the paper into toters that are collected weekly. Corrugated cardboard is transported and baled at one of the two dedicated balers on the corporate campus.

In the Supermarket:

Throughout Giant Eagle's 160 corporate supermarkets, corrugated cardboard is the primary paper recovered for recycling, while office paper is collected in the offices, conference rooms, and pharmacies. As product is stocked, the corrugated cardboard containers are immediately broken down and placed into a dedicated baler. Office paper is collected desk-side and from paper recycling bins around the store and either shredded onsite or taken to a secure facility to be shredded, baled, and shipped for recycling.

At the Fuel Stations:

Some of the fuel stations collect corrugated cardboard for recycling in a dedicated front load container while others transport it to the nearby supermarket to be baled. Mixed office paper is shredded and placed with the corrugated cardboard for recycling.

At Retail Support Centers:

The corrugated cardboard from incoming shipments is immediately broken down and placed into a dedicated baler. Bales are generally staged outside and picked up on a schedule by a contracted recycler. One of the retail support centers has a dedicated trailer that when full is transported to a local paper mill.

How are employees educated?

Education of team members is conducted by the human resources department or other assigned personnel. At the corporate offices, new team members learn about recycling in the Environment and Community section of their new hire training. Recycling procedures are reinforced with signage above each recycling bin and on the company intranet.

At supermarkets, paper and corrugated cardboard recycling is included under the Utility and Recycling Initiative. Each store is assigned a point person responsible for ensuring paper and corrugated cardboard recycling practices are in place and communicated to team members. To assist the point person, best practices, images, signage and the monthly checklist are made available through KnowAsis. Best practices include not putting corrugated cardboard into the trash compactor, properly making bales, and placing do/don't signage on paper collection bins.

How is improvement tracked?

Improvements in the quantity of paper recycled are tracked through a utility software program. Refuse and recycling tonnage is entered into the program monthly. Other operational improvements include:

- Dedication of at least one store baler for corrugated cardboard recycling
- Assignment of a key holding manager as a point person for the Utility and Recycling Initiative
- Creating a company website for managers or point personnel to access information
- Creating 5-S signage for mixed paper recycling at both our offices and supermarkets clarifying the recycling process for team members

Additional Resources

Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Resources Council
Sustainable Pittsburgh

Contact:

Karen Andelmo (kandelmo@gianteagle.com)