

case study

CLASSIFICATION:

Waste

SUB CLASSIFICATION:

Operations

INSTITUTION PROFILE

FE

16,000 FE students

1050 staff

Urban

1 Main Campus

TITLE:

Waste reduction and recycling improvement at City College Norwich

DATE:

November 2010



SUMMARY

Following the publication of its five year Strategy, City College Norwich embarked on a project to improve its waste management activities. Concentrating on stimulating behavioural change as well as making alterations to the supply chain meant a number of activities were undertaken by staff and students including awareness campaigns and a student led pilot study.

EAUC COMMENT

City College Norwich recognised its responsibility as a leader in its community and embarked on its journey to sustainability. From the strategy down, the College took great pains to improve its waste management practises. Taking the time to survey its site meant that the right decisions based on actual needs and real constraints could be made for City College Norwich

THE PROBLEM

A sample study of the College's waste was carried out in 2009 which suggested that only 7.6% of the College's waste by weight was recycled. With the cost of waste to landfill rising and education budgets being cut action was needed to maintain reasonable waste management costs.

With the College being such a large part of the local community there was also a desire to show a visible commitment to the environment.

Finally the College's waste arrangements had grown organically over the years resulting in several arrangements with a number of contractors to provide waste management services to the College. This caused a large admin overhead and led to a higher number of contactors and vehicles on site than was needed.



THE APPROACH

In December 2009 the College launched its five year Strategy, this included the objective "To develop 21st Century environments which are conducive to student success and are environmentally sustainable" including "sustainable waste efficiency" and to contribute to improving the financial performance of the College.

The College developed an Environmental Statement to support the Strategy and formed a project team in January 2010 to investigate and deliver the actions needed to support the environmental aspects of the College Strategy.

The project recruited staff environmental champions (the name Eco Warrior was chosen) from each School and department across the College. Eco Warriors are leaders of best practice in their own area and are empowered to identify and encourage improvements. The Eco Warriors number more than 35 and were given the challenge of identifying ways to prevent, minimise, and re-use waste. Sponsorship was gained from a national supermarket and prizes were given to the best ideas. The top prize was given for creating a staff CPD programme.

The Student Parliament Environmental Executive Officer carried out a pilot study in one area of the campus to promote behavioural change in staff and students, to increase segregation of waste on site and to assess the impact of this segregation on the volume of waste that is sent to landfill and that which is recycled.

The College's waste streams were also examined as were the number of contractors involved in removing the College's waste. In conjunction with this, assessments of waste management facilities in the local area were carried out in order to understand what was available to the College.

OUR GOALS

All of the goals are in support of the College's Environmental Statement and ultimately the College's five year strategy, they are:

- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- Increase the amount of College waste which is recycled to more than 50%
- Reduce the net cost of the College's waste management activity
- Train staff and students
- Display a visible commitment to the environment
- Change the behaviour of our staff and students in order that the actions they take are with the Environmental Statement in mind
- Eradicate the need for a specific waste site on the campus

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

- Initial pockets of reluctance to change
- Inform staff operationally affected by the changes, a series of overview sessions were held with staff inviting all to raise concern and comment on proposals. Several changes were made following these discussions – food waste collections increased to every day and bins to be fabricated of metal to reduce fire hazard and to extend the life of the product.
- Removing the incumbent contractors
- Changing from a system where waste is segregated to some extent on site to one where the segregation is off site can look as though we are not committed to recycling, and therefore appropriate communication had to be delivered for this to be appreciated by staff and students.

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Recycling of College waste has increased from 7.6% to c.60% for all campus operations, and over 85% for general waste.

This increase has been achieved by transitioning the majority of our waste to Pearsons. Pearsons are a local recycling and waste management company, who have invested in developing a high performance recycling centre within 30 miles of the College.

On campus the College is now able to operate a simple system whereby there is no need for segregation of waste on site. Instead we can dispose of all waste into the same bins for collection. After collecting the waste from these bins Pearsons then take it to their recycling facility where it is all sorted by combination of manual and automatic methods.

This change to the College's waste management not only helps towards reducing the impact the College has on the environment, but the rationalisation of waste contractors has also led to lower operating costs for the College. These savings are in the region of 20% of those before the project.

By streamlining the waste activity there is now less vehicular traffic on campus thus reducing the risk of injury to staff and students.

The campus is now tidier due to less bins/containers around the site.

Segregating waste off site means that waste processes on site are simpler for cleaning staff, staff, students and visitors.

LESSONS LEARNT

There is a huge appetite from both staff and students to be involved in reducing the impact the College has on the environment.

Whilst segregation of waste at source is a hugely beneficial way of managing the waste in many organisations; the pilot study carried out illustrated that this would be unlikely to be the best method for City College Norwich.

Whilst big improvements have been made, the involvement of the staff Eco Warriors and the information gathered from local organisations has led to other avenues to pursue and also other organisations to collaborate with for future projects; the College will now be looking at ways of using food waste to ultimately power electrical vehicles.

There are a huge range of solutions for managing waste, many of these are not financially viable to the College at the moment, but over time options will become available for the College to make further steps.

Contact

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