

Work collection and recycling guide

Aim of the guide: for more businesses, office blocks and places of work to become environmentally aware and start taking responsible steps towards the preservation of the environment.

Introduction

Corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility is a term used to describe a company's role in or responsibility towards society. Collection and recycling at the office is not only a form of Corporate Social Investment but you can reap the rewards with green credentials, like carbon credits and enterprise development.

So, let's take a look at how to add collection and recycling in the office to your social responsibility agenda. Establishing an office recycling initiative won't just reduce your carbon footprint, but it could also save your business money. Contributing to a cleaner environment and a better life for all by collecting recyclable materials is easy.

Collection and recycling programmes are often only a small part of a broader workplace programme to encourage sustainable business practices, especially if you're looking to save on costs, combining your recycling programme with efforts to reduce office waste and reuse existing products can be a smart business strategy.

Getting started

Ready to get up close and personal with your office waste?

It is essential to reach out to your building management or landlord to notify them of your recycling initiative, so that you can check if they already have a system in place that you can plug into, and if not, then how should you go about setting yours up to plug into existing infrastructure.

Next, you need to survey your workplace and figure out exactly what's going into the bins. Then, you can figure out which products are recyclable and which ones you want to include in your workplace recycling initiative. The easiest way to do this is by reaching out to whoever collects your recyclable materials, whether it's your municipal waste management programme or your building management and asking them exactly what they recycle and what they don't.

It generally makes sense to start small.

Paper, plastic, glass, and cans are a good place to start. A few months after the launch of your program, as employee participation and awareness increase, you can move on to other larger recyclable materials such as ink cartridges, computers, and other electronics.

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Whatever you decide to recycle, you'll need to appoint a coordinator, a successful recycling initiative needs to come from the top down in order to motivate employees to participate.

Encouraging Participation

Even if you've found the perfect programme coordinator, a successful recycling initiative needs to come from the top down to motivate employees to participate. People tend to respond more strongly when the CEO encourages and motivates the team. Be strategic about your placement of recycling bins. They need to go in places where the most waste is generated, like copy rooms, near printers, board rooms, and in staff cafeterias.

They also need to be easily identifiable, with clear signage indicating that they are for recyclable materials only. (Make sure to specify which material goes into which bin.) Besides handy bins, another way to encourage employees to participate is through consistent communication. Make sure every worker in the office is aware of the programme and its goals.

Training Staff

You can do everything you can to educate employees and make it easier for them to contribute but don't assume that for the rest of the process, those that you can't see, the employees are going to get it right. You need an ongoing education programme that lets your employees know the details of collection and recycling, and what they can and cannot recycle.

Arranging for Collection

One of the most important aspects of the process is deciding how to collect and dispose of recyclable materials. There are many different types of paper products like printer paper, magazines, cardboard, and construction paper. You can separate each specific type, which can make your recyclables more valuable if you're disposing of them at a drop-off centre and could increase employee awareness about the specifics of recycling.

You can choose to have separate collection bins for paper products, plastics and cans, for example. In this method, you would place all paper products in one bin, plastics in another and cans in another. While this approach requires more effort in sorting and more space, it helps prevent contamination and ensures that each material can be recycled efficiently. However, it is not necessary and one "recycling" bin will suffice.

Some businesses are located in municipalities with collection and recycling services or are located in office complexes where the management is responsible for waste disposal. Contact whoever takes care of your waste to arrange for proper disposal and pickup of recyclable or non-recyclable materials too.

You may have to hire an outside service. This will depend on the size of your company, as many commercial recyclers require a particular volume of waste that could be more than your company generates.



Consider partnering with other companies, hiring smaller companies, or arranging to drop off recycling at collection points.

Please see the collection and drop-off sites on the Petco website.

Another viable option is donating to charities. Many local organisations will offer to come and pick up materials, particularly electronics. It's another way to encourage employees by creating a sense of goodwill.

Track progress in public by counting recycled materials and letting everyone know what they've helped to accomplish. You might even try adding incentives or rewards.

Additional Considerations

1. Space requirements

Identify a possible site in or near the office where the recyclable materials can be stored during the collection phase. The site should be secured and not be in the way of anyone. Most recyclables are filled with air, and they take up a large amount of volume. If a method is available to squash the items e.g. plastic bottle or can; it is advised as this would save space and more could be collected for one load. This would not only make the collection easier but also lower the carbon footprint of the programme.

2. Drop-off or collection

Recyclable materials need to be collected in large volumes for it to be viable for the collector to cover transport costs.

a. Large volumes:

- i. Hire a company to come and collect recyclables.
- ii. Municipal drop-off sites do not pay for recyclables but if you collect significant volumes, you can contact a buy-back centre close to you for rates and delivery/collection options.
- iii. Liaise with the building management to join in on their collection system.

b. Small volumes:

- i. Best for an employee to deliver the materials to the closest drop-off point (buy-back centre or a municipal drop-off. A current list of drop-off sites is available on www.petco.co.za.

If you want to maximise the recycling programme in your office and become a local drop-off site, you can advertise the service to other offices near you and they can deliver their recyclable materials to you for collection and recycling.

3. Education

Inform all staff of the collection programme ensuring that they understand what type of recyclable materials are being collected and recycled, as well as the steps that are to be followed. See below for the types of materials to look out for during the collection process e.g. this is a helpful [video](#) about the PET recycling process.



Who is Petco and how can we help you?

Petco, a Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) in South Africa, offers practical support to offices aiming to enhance their recycling initiatives. Incorporated in 2004, Petco administers Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for various packaging products. As a national organisation, Petco focuses on driving collecting and recycling activities, guiding product design, conducting outreach and awareness activities and supporting the development of local recycling infrastructure.

Petco's proven track record in giving advice and connecting relevant role players positions the organisation as a valuable resource for offices seeking to implement collection and recycling initiatives. Petco can provide practical support, including guidance on waste minimisation measures, linking offices with relevant service providers and potential sponsorship of recycling equipment. By collaborating with Petco, offices can benefit from a tailored and pragmatic approach to waste management, tapping into the organisation's industry expertise and dedication to advancing sustainable practices in South Africa's packaging sector. Workplaces interested in starting or enhancing their recycling systems can reach out to info@petco.co.za for support.

Useful Contacts

Visit www.petco.co.za for a list of collection points, drop off sites and buy-back centres.

You could also contact some other industry bodies for general assistance or information about other material streams. Here are some of them:

- Institute of Waste Management www.iwmsa.co.za
- National Recycling Forum www.recycling.co.za
- Packaging SA www.packagingsa.co.za
- Plastics SA www.plasticsinfo.co.za

Contact Petco

Call toll free: 011 615 8875 (JHB)/ 021 794 6300 (CPT)
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