

Waste Wise Speech for Cr Risstrom

Audience: Businesses who may be interested in becoming waste wise

Time: 10minutes

Aim: To outline the process of becoming a waste wise organisation – the issues, key objectives and benefits, way ahead

Mode: Dot point, Visuals as well

The City of Melbourne's experience of becoming a more 'Waste Wise' organisation

1. WELCOME

2. BACKGROUND (3 MINS)

- Our journey to become a waste-wise organisation commenced about two and a half years ago.

Formulation of the Environment Coordination Committee [picture of ECC]

- In late 1997 City of Melbourne set up an Environmental Coordination Committee. It's role is to:
 - Establish an organisational culture of environmentally sustainable behaviour,
 - Provide a coordinated approach to the environmental management of Council's operations,
 - Influence and advise Council Branches about how they can make their core operations more environmentally sustainable.
- There is cross council representation on the committee.
- The waste task group (WTG) was one of five project teams that were established under the banner of the Environment Coordination Committee to address particular aspects of environmental management within council operations.
- The work of the Committee mainly applies to the four buildings where most Council staff are based – Council House, Commonwealth Bank Building, Melbourne Town Hall and 506 Elizabeth Street (parking & traffic officers).
- A compelling reason for the work of the Committee is Council's overall role in encouraging the municipality to be more sustainable – we knew we had to practice what we preach; to lead by example.

Initial Research [picture of staff doing audits].

- A priority action was to establish a better idea of the City of Melbourne's waste stream and people attitudes and level of knowledge about existing services
- A full waste audit was conducted on all levels in Council House. Staff from work areas volunteered to help with the waste audits

Identification of targets

- Based on the audit results and available opportunities for approval the WTG developed the following targets:
 - 'Reduce paper consumption per capita by 10% in the first year and 25% over three years (down to 45kg per person)
 - Reduce the amount of office waste sent to landfill by 75% over a three-year period.

Developing plan of attack

- As a result of research a *Waste Plan 1999* was developed. The plan included actions, responsible areas & time lines and was endorsed by senior management.

Some of Our Initiatives

- Since early January 1999 the WTG has been implementing the plan. Some of our initiatives include:
 - Introduction of comprehensive recycling services across council. Bins have been placed in all Council tea-rooms where staff place glass, plastic and liquid paperboard.
 - The development of a notepad exchange service in which paper is reused to make staff notepads [picture]
 - The Eco-Mug project: allocation of eco-mugs for people who buy take-away drinks. At the moment 375 staff have eco-mugs. The names of the staff who have eco-mugs have been recorded for future monitoring purposes
 - Recycled paper trial. The Council is currently trialing three different sorts of recycled paper with a view to extending its use across the whole of Council.
 - Participation in EcoRecycle's Buy Recycling Program where Council is developing an environmental purchasing policy.

THEMES (5 MINS)

The journey to becoming a Waste Wise organisation has been a learning process for all involved. I want to give you an overview of what we have learnt.

1. The Need for Organisational Support

- In order to ensure that staff time and budgets are allocated to the WTG initiatives, the activities of the group need executive support. Senior management are also informed of any significant WTG activities and the 1999 Waste Plan was submitted to a senior management group for endorsement.
- City Plan (CoM's Municipal Strategic Statement) - has a 'Sustainable City' component that, amongst other things, commits the council to improving the environmental sustainability of its operations. Documents like this are needed to develop a whole-of-organisation approach to waste reduction and to position the WTG within the organisational structure.
- More recently the WTG was reconstituted to ensure a relevant membership. The managers of their work area elected the members of the WTG.
- Participation in the WTG is increasingly being viewed as part a core activity rather than a 'luxury' activity by staff and management.

2. The Need for Education and Communication

- Waste reduction involves more than putting in recycling bins. People need to be taken along with the process. This involves ongoing communication and education.
- Trials are part of the education process. As part of the introduction of the paper and drink container recycling service across council a trial was conducted in one work area. The use of the service was monitored on a weekly basis and notice boards were set up. Results were communicated to staff via the 'wastometer' [picture] and used to convince 'facility management' to extend the service throughout the organisation.
- A very effective tool to getting messages across to all staff has been the development of the 'environment champions' program. Each work area in council has an environmental champ. The main role of the champ is to disseminate information to people in their work area and to provide feedback on any office-based environmental initiative. For example the champs have been instrumental in establishing and monitoring the trial of recycled paper which is currently being conducted in some work areas [picture of champ notice board].
- A champ chat e-mail group has also been developed which allows champs to share ideas and solve problems.

3. *The Importance of Monitoring and evaluation*

- Monitoring and evaluation is crucial to proving the legitimacy of the WTG to management and staff at the Council,
- A paper monitoring and drink container recycling monitoring program is occurring on an ongoing basis. This is quite a resource intensive activity so a student has been employed to undertake this task.
- Since the drink container recycling service was rolled out across council 781m cubed of recyclables have been diverted from landfill.
- Results of evaluation and monitoring are communicated back to all staff via the Intranet.
- They are a continuous improvement tool helping us to identify new opportunities.

THE FUTURE (2 MINS)

- The seventh and final commitment to becoming a Waste Wise organisation is ‘continuous improvement’ Hence council is now developing the 2000/01 Waste Plan.
- This plan is structured around the 7 steps to becoming a Waste Wise Business,
- Now that recycling is largely in hand the waste plan is focusing more on reuse and reduction initiatives
- Although still in draft form the new waste plan includes:
 - extension of the environmental purchasing policy to cover capital work projects and contracts
 - establishing reuse trays in all photocopy machines
 - investigation of an organic waste recycling program for council
 - establishment of a trading post facility on the intranet

CONCLUSION

Becoming a Waste Wise Organisation [picture of Cr Lee receiving award]

- In acknowledgment of council’s commitment and efforts to waste reduction within the organisation EcoRecycle awarded the CoM with the title of was “Waste Wise Organisation” earlier this year.
- Thank-you for listening to me this morning and enjoy the rest of your breakfast.