

Q&A Transcript

Transitioning Towards Effective Resource Management

*All answers are shortened for your convenience.

*The time in the video where each question can be heard is located after each question number.

*The full recording of the webinar can be found at this web address: <http://youtu.be/D9DwXhZlukE>

Question 1 (45:00)

Cornell has a strong supplier management program. Can you tell us a little more about what that program entails?

Spring Buck: Our supply management program evaluates our suppliers using a scorecard and recognition program. It evaluates selected suppliers based on five categories: service quality, pricing, order components, customer satisfaction, and social responsibility. Last year it also expanded to include customer satisfaction surveys, collective action plans, and an annual narrative from suppliers. They provide quality reports to support their performance results. Our procurement and service department reviews these and grants awards at two levels: a top recognition and honorable mention. Out of 10,000 vendors that currently serve campus, we pick about 22 to participate. Casella has been participating in the scorecard program since it started and they have achieved top recognition every year.

Question 2 (46:35)

The next question we have is for Erica. How have students been engaged with resource management and waste diversion changes on campus?

Erica Spiegel: Usually, students come up with project ideas, and staff and administrators figure out the details. In addition, there are many service-learning classes at UVM. This is a great way to work because students can take part in a systematic, semester-long project. They are held accountable by a professor and get a deep understanding of complex issues. One environmental studies class studied and implemented a switch to reusable take-out containers throughout a semester. They tested each part of the process and wrote a report on it.

Question 3 (48:22)

Andy: Is the gain for Casella to support the diversion of waste from landfills captured in the resale value of recyclables? Is that the value for investing in programs like this?

Andy Treby: It's hard to look at value like that, since zero-sort recycling has a different value and a different cost structure from municipal solid waste. The value for us comes from changing spending on MSW and recycling - more recycling and less MSW with gain shares pushes the increased recycling at the company.

Question 4 (50:03)

The next question we have is for Spring. If I can only focus on one area of resources on campus where should the starting point be?

Spring Buck: Procurement. I'm starting to work more with the procurement department and review policy that would impact purchasing decisions, because what we get rid of in the end is what we purchased.

Question 5 (51:00)

You have a great relationship with your procurement team and you interact with them regularly. Do you have any suggestions for folks who may have a different relationship with their procurement teams?

Spring Buck: Not only are there different procuring teams, but different procuring structures. At Cornell, there is an overarching procurement department that manages contracts, handles vendors' insurance and other information, provides education, and uses an online procuring system. Other colleges may be more or less centralized, with different limitations. The first step is to identify how the procurement system works and who are the decision-makers. These are the people to focus on. I found it useful to create some campus-wide teams so that users, buyers, and vendors can brainstorm improvements.

Question 6 (52:45)

The next question is for Erica. As we make progress towards zero waste, our overall generation will go down. For example, reusable food containers replace compostable products, which will reduce our overall composting. How do you keep morale high while doing actions that will reduce your recycling and compost rates and tonnage?

Erica Spiegel: Anecdotal sharing captures much of what happens. Five years ago we eliminated the printed telephone directory on campus and reduced our waste by 29 tons of paper - that's 29 tons not in the waste stream that was there the year before. But you can't keep counting it year after year. I wouldn't say there's a morale issue, because people understand that having less waste is better than having a large amount of recyclables.

Question 7 (54:48)

Andy, in your experience what is the best way to create or implement a performance-based contract with a company or service provider that has never created one before, or who doesn't have the same services or messages as Casella or your partners?

Andy Treby: First, a new program or contract needs buy-in from senior leadership. This is critical when working with many departments and people. Next, it is important to identify each stakeholder in the organization that generates trash and recycling that is part of the team. If the current provider does not have the bandwidth for a resource management program, I would look at the waste information on the EPA website. There is a lot of good information there that can help with resource management methodologies. Casella can act as a resource as well.