



2017 RecycleMania Case Study Competition

Campus Engagement – Awareness Campaign Submission Template

1. Contact info

Aimee Cooper
Purdue University
Intern for the Department of Master Planning & Sustainability
Coope138@purdue.edu
(765) 702-1330

2. Focus of campaign

(25 words or less. Ex: support of RecycleMania participation; Explain what can be recycled / reduce contamination; Encourage reusable mug use, etc.)

The focus of this campaign was to raise awareness about the amount of packaging waste generated on campus and encourage the use of reusable drinkware.

3. Type of engagement / awareness campaign (Check all that Apply)

- ✓ Activity / Event
- ✓ Display
- ✓ Social media / mobile app
- ✓ Poster, banner, other print display
- ✓ Communication outreach (print, radio, email, etc)
 - Video
 - Other

4. General description of the engagement / awareness campaign:

(300 words or less)



Everyday our on-campus Starbucks goes through approximately 100 gallons of milk a day, generating a lot of bottle caps. When factoring in the bottle caps produced by our entire dining system and the caps that are used from student's consumption of soda and milk, the amount of bottle caps that are produced on campus are estimated to be high. At Purdue, a project centered around the concept of bottle caps collection was started to educate the students about separating bottle caps from bottles before recycling and to engage our dining system and students in an awareness campaign about waste generation. This project started off centered around the idea of turning old bottle caps into a park bench made from recycled plastic. The original project started small, focusing on collecting caps from just the on-campus Starbucks locations, but it branched into a campus wide engagement campaign. As the project grew, several campus partners became invested in the collection and engagement efforts.

Our overall goal was to collect 400 pounds of bottle caps, which is approximately equal to ten 55 gallon bags worth of bottle caps. The rationale behind setting this goal was that we wanted to make the impact of this engagement project last longer than just a few weeks. If we collected 400 pounds of bottle caps, a company local to Purdue could recycle the bottle caps into a park bench that we could use as an education figure on campus. This would have a lasting impact on our campus because not only would the plastic on this bench be durable enough to last for many years, but the educational value of the project could help shape the ideas and ambitions of future generations of Purdue students to push higher in their sustainability efforts.

5. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

List out in bullet format each of the steps involved in planning. Example: Requesting special funding, recruiting volunteers, administrative permissions required, Building displays.

- Initial idea suggested by student to the Department of Dining and Catering of Purdue
- Planning meeting between the Department of Dining and Catering and the Department of Master Planning & Sustainability
- Coordination of weekly bottle cap pick up from on campus dining courts and retail dining facilities
- Outreach to campus partners. This includes a sustainability class in the school of Hospitality and Tourism Management and campus organizations such as Purdue Student Sustainability Council, Eco-Reps, Boiler Green Initiative, Environmental Science Club, Purdue PETA, and Engineers for a Sustainable World
- Creation of "Earth Week" agenda which includes a "Residence Hall vs Greek Life Bottle Cap Collection Drive" with displays and information about recycling and greener sourcing of products.
- Recruiting volunteers to help put of Earth Week fair
- Collection of bottle caps during Earth Week
- Shipment of bottle caps to recycling facility to be made into a park bench
- Design of educational materials to accompany bench



6. Resources and stakeholders involved

Explain what budget or in-kind resources where needed, what if any campus dept's or groups supported the effort, what staff or volunteers were involved.

The main departmental support for this project came from the Department of Master Planning & Sustainability and the Department of Dining and Catering, but it was also supported by many campus organizations such as Purdue Student Sustainability Council, Eco-Reps, Boiler Green Initiative, Environmental Science Club, Purdue PETA, and Engineers for a Sustainable World. A few classes in the school of hospitality and tourism management were also involved as part of the class curriculum. Most of our volunteers came from within these departments and organizations.

It is also important to point out that this project could not have been possible without the support of the Evansville, IN based company Green Tree Plastics' which has provided the "ABC Program" that donates schools park benches if they collect the required amount of bottle caps. This made it so that the budget for this project was low. We only had to budget for the promotional materials for the collection drive and the education support signs.

7. How was this effort new or different from similar campaigns at others schools?

While this effort is not new to the Indiana area because of the generous donations made by Green Tree Plastics', we believe that we made this project uniquely our own. Through our incorporation of our large scale dining facilities and our campus organizations, we turned this recycling project into a community engagement and awareness campaign. Many of the students that we interacted with were not aware of the importance of separating bottle caps from a bottle before recycling and they surprised to find out how many milk jugs our campus Starbucks produces daily. This sort of community engagement has not only allowed the community to come together and produce a new park bench, but it has also encouraged our community to think about what they recycle, incorporating the spirit of RecycleMania into our project.

8. Describe the Results of the Initiative

- a. General results of the initiative (*ex: attracted attention of campus president, campus paper did a news story on the event, etc.*)



Our collection drive during campus Earth Week attracted the attention of the campus newspaper (link below) and as a result we estimate that approximately 250 students attended our events of the week. However, through our outreach with campus organization our impacts became much greater. By creating the residence halls vs. greek life collection drive, we could target the 12,000 students that live in the residence halls and the 6,000 students that are involved with greek life. The presidents of our residence halls and greek life were helping our cause by talking to their members about our initiatives and helping to coordinate collections.

- b. Specific measurable impact figures (*Ex: Reduced contamination rate 13%, Gathered 316 pledges to recycle more, etc*)

Through our efforts with Earth Week we collected approximately 200 pounds of bottle caps with our residence hall vs. greek life drive, which was much more than we expected to bring in during the 5 short days of Earth Week. With our continuous partnership with the Department of Dining and Catering the other 200 pounds that we need are quickly coming in. However, we believe that the real value of this project came from the focus on educating and engaging the community. As described above, we had a broad reach for this project. By targeting such two broad groups of students, our project was able to achieve our goals quicker than expected.

9. What would you do differently in the future?

If we were to pursue doing this project again the first thing we would do is begin to track data on a weekly basis. When I was discussing this project with a professional in the Department of Dining and Catering she mentioned to me that she really didn't know how many bottle caps were coming from our dining facilities each week, she just knew that they were producing a lot of bottle caps. One of the reasons that dining suggested making this revision is so that they could do an audit on their recycling practices. They know approximately how many containers that they order that have bottle caps, but they are curious of if these bottles and caps are being properly recycled like they trained their employees to do.

10. What advice would give to another college that wanted to do a similar project?

If another college or university wanted to pursue a similar project I would advise them to first sit down and evaluate where the bottle caps on their campus are used. If you can track where these products are used then this would be the best place to focus your engagement project at. For our campus, the best



location we had was between a Starbucks and a small market that sells soda bottles. This is a high traffic area where a lot of people either buy bottles or order a drink that used milk.

Once you have found a location, it is important to know your audience. Understanding the engagement rates that your campus already has for recycling is important. Take a look at your past RecycleMania rates and evaluate the recycling practices in your community. By looking at your campuses recycling trends you can better understand how to engage with your community.

11. Photos, Screen Shots, Graphics

Please copy and paste photos, examples of social media posts, posters or other graphics related to the project. Include captions where necessary.

Campus newspaper – “Student Events to Celebrate Earth Week”

http://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article_2e61104c-9cd7-5381-8c86-2165faf88e86.html

Sustainability website - Outline of Earth Week activities, including the bottle cap drive.

<https://www.purdue.edu/sustainability/news/getinvolved/EarthW2017/index.html>



BOTTLE CAP CHALLENGE **RECYCLING WEEK AT THE UNION**

MONDAY

APRIL 17, 2017

3 P.M.
PURDUE MEMORIAL UNION

DISPLAYS AND INFORMATION ABOUT
INITIATIVES FOR RECYCLING AND
GREENER SOURCING WILL BE AVAILABLE.



RESIDENCE HALLS VS. GREEK LIFE – A WEEKLONG COMPETITION
TO SEE WHO CAN COLLECT THE MOST BOTTLE CAPS.

**THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT 11 A.M. ON FRIDAY, APRIL 21
IN THE PURDUE MEMORIAL UNION.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.PURDUE.EDU/SUSTAINABILITY

If additional information is needed or you require an accommodation or special assistance due to a disability, email sustainability@purdue.edu or call (765) 494-2481.

Flier used for social media posts to advertise for the collection drive.



PURDUE UNIVERSITY
EARTH WEEK
APRIL 17-21, 2017

STRONGER TOGETHER
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY FAIR

Student Organizations:

- Purdue Student Sustainability Council
- Eco-Reps
- Boiler Green Initiative
- Environmental Science Club
- Purdue PETA
- Engineers for a Sustainable World

BIKE TO CLASS
STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY ARE ENCOURAGED TO BIKE TO THIS EVENT

BIKE TENT
Minor Repairs
Tire Inflation
Information

EXPLORE INTERACTIVE DISPLAYS BY CAMPUS GREEN GROUPS AND PARTICIPATE IN SUSTAINABILITY GAMES AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

Photo of the collection during our "Stronger Together Environmental Activity Fair." Shown here, volunteers engaged with students in the fair educating them on recycling while community members had the opportunity to drop off bottle caps and learn more about how they can get involved with environmental groups.