

COMPANIES: SuperValu

a large grocery operator in the US, owning and operating 2,400 stores, and servicing approximately 4,300 other retail stores through their supply chain.



PRACTICE

SuperValu aims to send Zero Waste to Landfill, saves money, finds new revenue streams

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE

SuperValu regularly audits its trash stream to identify areas to reduce waste and/or tap the waste for value as a new revenue stream. Supervalu finds opportunities by encouraging associates and store directors to “know their garbage.” By understanding everything in the waste stream, associates begin to recognize the potential. Through operational changes such as requiring various departments in stores to source separate, and a commitment at the store-level, 90 percent or more of the “waste” from a typical grocery store can be reused, donated to feed people in need or recycled. What initially may have been a bothersome operational practice quickly became the “new normal” in how “wastes” are viewed and handled.

To minimize waste, SuperValu’s sustainability department collaborates with procurement to identify suppliers (farms and other food suppliers) where it can see big wins. Together, the teams can re-think packaging and shipping methods that use less material and/or leverage reusable packing methods (like reusable plastic crates). By changing buying practices, SUPERVALU is attempting to create a waste (resource) stream that is 100 percent reusable or recyclable.

One example is that SuperValu worked with their grape producer to develop smarter shipping packages (reusable crates, versus polystyrene, which is not a universally recycled material) that reduced materials and still protect the grapes.

RESULTS

By working methodically to identify opportunities in waste, SuperValu now has 200 stores that are 90% waste aversion, which has dramatically reduced their cost of disposing of waste.

Through their efforts, they will see about \$3 million in bottom line savings on waste disposal, as well as over \$30 million in revenues from recycling materials that used to be sent to landfills, including recycle hard and soft plastics, cardboard, organic waste, etc.

Supporting a zero waste to landfill goal has spread to other areas too, including their adopting zero waste policies for energy and water. In the final analysis, Supervalu believes in valuing everything and wasting nothing.

RELEVANCE TO COCA-COLA

By looking at areas of waste with suppliers and in their own operations, Coca-Cola can find opportunities for recycling, reusing, and generating revenue from waste.



RESOURCES

- Zero Waste Program - www.supervalu.com/sustainability
- Carpinteria Store – All Natural Refrigerant Store - <http://www4.eere.energy.gov/challenge/showcase/supervalu/albertsons-carpinteria-remodel>

