



## Going Green Makes Sen\$e

### How To Start A STAR Program At Your Office



#### What is a STAR Program?

STAR is an acronym for **Sort Trash And Recyclables**. Some call it a mini bin program, mini trash can program, trash can diet, etc. It increases awareness about what we throw into our trash and results in higher recycling and composting rates.

#### How Does it Work?

Staff separate trash from recyclables at their desk into small collection containers. They empty what they collect at their desk into community collection containers. Community containers are spread around the office in high traffic areas. Staff empty their containers on their way to other places - no special trips are needed.

#### What do we need to do to get a STAR program started at our office?

Get support from management to make participation mandatory. Have several small containers for each employee (approx. 1 quart size) for trash, food scraps or other item. A clear plastic container for trash is preferred. You can reuse containers you normally recycle or dispose—like a quart yogurt container or you can purchase them for about 25 cents each. Trash cans turned in from staff can be repurposed as community collection containers.

#### How do we introduce the STAR program to our employees?

Have a “Turn in Your Trash Can Day” or some kind of fun event. Each employee turns in their regular trash can and is given the small containers they need. Put up signs to clearly mark which materials go into which community collection containers. Some staff may keep their trash can with permission if they produce high amounts of trash as part of their job. Put information about the program on your internal website.

#### How do we involve the cleaning staff?

Arrange with building management to communicate to maintenance staff to start emptying only the community collection containers only. The time they save can be used for other cleaning tasks.

#### Why do small collection containers work?

The small containers help people to realize most of what they produce is recyclable. They take away some of the convenience of throwing things away without thinking about if they can be recycled or composted. Clear trash containers also allow people to see what they are throwing away.

#### What kind of results can we expect?

Diversion rates typically increase to at least 50% in offices without a recycling program in place already. Increases are more modest where voluntary recycling has already been in place. DEEP’s pilot resulted in an estimated 20% increase in diversion rate.

#### Where can we find more information?

A number of very good articles have been published about the success of “STAR Programs”:

- Washington DC Public Works - Mini Bin Recycling Program, <http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/tVhZWVg20061211124114.pdf>
- CalRecycle - Mini Trash Bins Case Studies, <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/LGLibrary/Innovations/MiniBins/Program.htm>
- NY Times - Dartmouth Mini Bins, With Tiny Cans a New Trash Equation, <http://blogs.hbr.org/leadinggreen/2008/06/tiny-trash-can-reduces-office-1.html>
- Harvard Business Review - How Tiny Trash Bins Create Big Change, <http://blogs.hbr.org/leadinggreen/2008/06/tiny-trash-can-reduces-office-1.html>

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