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# WASTE NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF MINNESOTA WASTE WISE

**MINNESOTA  
CHAMBER of  
COMMERCE**

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

To be successful in any environmental sustainability effort, a long-term commitment is required. An organization-wide environmental policy is one way to define this commitment, which sends a clear message to employees, vendors, and the community at large that environmentally sustainable practices are a priority within the organization. An environmental policy defines and advances a company's environmental goals. Factors to consider when creating an environmental policy include products and services offered by your company and costs, product quality, and availability of environmentally friendly products.

Beyond an organization-wide environmental policy, a company should also consider creating an environmentally preferable purchasing policy, including the same factors in the organization-wide environmental policy. They need to cover a wide range of products and services, and establish a price preference. Increased costs can usually be offset by changing practices at your company, such as double-side printing and reducing the number of printers being used. An environmentally preferable purchasing policy will help ensure environmental practices continue with employee turnover.

Both types of policies define an organization's environmental goals, and provide value to investors who view environmental policies as evidence of long-term planning and risk management. When creating policies, companies need to tailor them to meet company standard. Environmental priorities to consider when creating a policy are:

- o Clearly define environmental goals
- o Involve staff at all levels
- o Obtain strong commitments from senior executives
- o Educating and training of staff
- o Tracking, measuring and documenting goals
- o Highlight that progress is made through long-term commitment

To learn more about how to create an organization-wide environmental policy or an environmentally preferable purchasing policy contact Minnesota Waste Wise at [lgolightly@mnchamber.com](mailto:lgolightly@mnchamber.com).

## Resources:

<http://www.nrdc.org>

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BIZWASTE/FactSheets/Policy.htm>

<http://www.resourcesaver.org/file/toolmanager/CustomO16C45F54320.pdf>

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BIZWASTE/FactSheets/Policy.htm>

<http://www.resourcesaver.org/file/toolmanager/CustomO16C45F54320.pdf>



## COMMUNICATING YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

The concept of green business has flourished over the past several years. But what does being a 'green' business really mean? And how do you effectively communicate your environmental efforts to your customers? Minnesota Waste Wise has been helping businesses take practical steps to reduce solid waste, conserve natural resources, become more energy efficient and purchase environmentally sustainable products for fifteen years. In the past, some of these steps meant more costs to a business. Not today. A business that embraces sustainability can save money and grow its customer base by properly communicating its efforts.

An effective way to communicate 'green' is to share company successes through a Corporate Sustainability Report (CSR). Providing specific data on waste reduction, recycling, environmentally sustainable purchasing, energy efficiency and other efforts is the most accurate way to communicate your company's activities. In fact, some larger corporations are now requesting CSR's from vendors and giving preferential treatment to those vendors that are implementing waste reduction,

energy efficiency and other initiatives. Minnesota Waste Wise can help your business create a CSR and provide the technical assistance to implement environmental sustainability, expand existing efforts and track the data necessary. To successfully communicate green efforts it's important to track. By providing measurable data you eliminate any doubt from your green claim.

Being green is often more practical than business owners realize. You don't have to buy a wind turbine or purchase huge quantities of carbon offsets to consider your business green. By implementing the basic strategies of reduce, reuse, recycle, and add a few others such as save energy and purchase environmentally sustainable products through your supply chain, your company can have a positive impact on the environment and earn the right to be considered a green business, which might just be the marketing edge you need for today's environmentally-minded consumer base.

# SPREADING YOUR COMPANY'S GREEN MESSAGE WITH AUTHENTICITY

Companies today who can effectively advertise their "green" products and services often have an advantage as compared to their "non-green" counterparts. Although environmentally friendly products and services are not a new concept, the last several years have brought a new awareness to consumers who are seeking out more green options. However, the global market is seeing many different shades of green, as well as those who claim to be green but in truth are not.

"Greenwash" is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible image." Although it's true that companies today are taking a variety of steps, big and small, to show their commitment to the environment through their company practices, products and services, the motivation for greenwashing seems to have become stronger than ever. The targeted "green" audience has grown considerably, and products/services that can prove their "greenness" generally have an advantage over their non eco-friendly counterparts. However, as this awareness has grown so has the skepticism of consumers over which companies' claims are the "real thing."

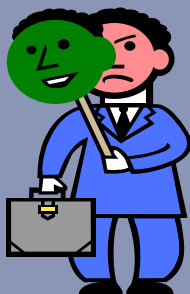
Companies are becoming increasingly hesitant to step into the 'green trap': Advertise green efforts and risk being labeled a 'greenwash', or don't advertise and the company's commitment to the environment is questioned. Despite all of the negativity, the reality is that today's corporations can be vehicles for doing good things and satisfying the consumer conscience, while still remaining competitive and profitable in the global marketplace.

Sara Rich, author of the Business Week article "Are You Being Greenwashed?" (March 29, 2007) suggests three general categories of green branding. First, are those who do not create their identity around environmental sustainability. Rather, sustainability shows up as if it was one aspect within the bigger picture of the cutting edge brand. Second, there are those who are 'just green'. Taking green a step further, it is suggested that the third category of green branding focuses solely on dematerialization, a more progressive approach that is possibly the future of the green market. This green approach focuses on sharing rather than owning items, such as cars and office space, while remaining productive. With respect to these three "green branding" categories, Rich suggests that the most successful companies today do not focus their identity solely on sustainability. Rather the positive social and environmental attributes of their products are present as an integral part of that brand.

So, what does all of this say about how to effectively market green? Environmentally responsible products and services marketed with authenticity will capture an attentive and loyal audience. In addition, transparency in your green message will provide the opportunity for consumers to verify the product's authenticity while empowering the consumer to learn more. And to create the most lasting message, it is important to reflect this environmental commitment in various ways throughout the company operations, supported by management and embraced by employees.

For more information or assistance with "greening" your operations, contact Minnesota Waste Wise at (651) 292-4662.

Visit [www.mnwastewise.org](http://www.mnwastewise.org) for more resources on greenwashing and communicating an authentic message.



## UPCOMING EVENT

### "Business Sustainability: It's Not Perception, It's Reality"

Thursday, April 23, 2009

7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Saint Paul Riverfront

Learn how you can implement sustainability practices in your organization regardless of the size of your business. In today's rocky economy, there is no better time to begin implementing measures that will save costs, improve productivity, and attract customers and future employees.

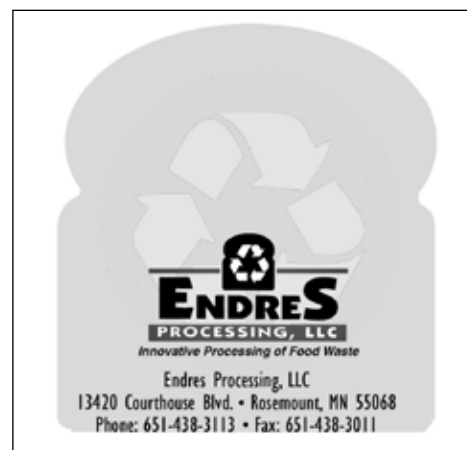
For more information or to register, visit [www.mnwastewise.org](http://www.mnwastewise.org) or email [kworley@mnchamber.com](mailto:kworley@mnchamber.com).



It's in the Bag is a Twin Cities-based plastic bag and film recycling program managed by Minnesota Waste Wise.

Consumers may deposit clean and dry plastic bags in specially designed It's in the Bag collection bins found at participating locations. Work crews from Merrick, Inc., a local nonprofit that works with adults with disabilities, will collect and transport the material to a processing facility where additional work crews sort and bale the material. The material is then shipped to Trex Company, Inc. where it is recycled into composite lumber used in the construction of decks and railings.

For more information on the It's In the Bag or to participate in the program, contact Minnesota Waste Wise at (651) 292-4662 or [mnwastewise@mnchamber.com](mailto:mnwastewise@mnchamber.com)



# SUCCESS STORY: SUPER RADIATOR COILS

Minnesota Waste Wise member, Super Radiator Coils, has taken many steps in becoming more conscientious about implementing sustainable business practices over the past few years. After an environmental sustainability assessment conducted by Minnesota Waste Wise, Super Radiator Coils was able to identify waste streams and whether to reduce, reuse, or recycle them. Not only were waste streams identified, resources to recycle or reduce these streams were provided.

After the waste streams were identified, Super Radiator Coils next step was to make a recycling program that would be sustainable and would encourage the employees to recycle. Super Radiator Coils informed their employees they were going to start a recycling program, and one employee designed and created a bin system that allows to collect recyclables, trash, and serves as a clean-up station as well with a holder for a broom and dustpan. These recycling centers provided a fresh start for the company, and indicated Super Radiator Coils was serious about the program. Jim DeWitt, Vice President of Operations, believes, "ideas are on the floor," and the bin center creations is one example of this.

The waste streams Super Radiator Coils started to recycle include wood scraps, pallets, plastic containers, aluminum, and paper. Wood scraps account for about 20-25% of the waste stream, and Super Radiator Coils now recycles approximately 40% of their total waste stream. Although production has increased in the past three years by 50%, the landfilled waste output has not increased. The program cost about \$7,000 to start-up, but saves Super Radiator Coils \$5,000 a year.

Another initiative Super Radiator Coils took on was their changing out their lighting. They changed out their lighting to better efficiency and lighting in the shop area; receiving a rebate from their utility, and had a payback in energy savings in less than two years.

Going forward, Super Radiator Coils is looking to apply further programs such as lean practices, stretch wrap recycling and other energy savings such as the Vending Miser device. Applying lean practices within their fabrication process will save approximately 30,000 lbs of metal. They would also like to see more progress on paper reduction, and other waste reduction.





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Great River Energy  
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Target Corporation  
Tennant Company  
Waste Management of Minnesota

### PATRONS (\$1,000+)

American Chemistry Council	MedtronicWorldHeadquarters
Andersen Corporation	MinnesotaBeverageAssociation
Best Buy Corporation	Minnesota State Colleges & Universities (MnSCU)
Consolidated Container	Minnesota Power
Dakota Electric Association	Novartis Medical Nutrition
GE Commercial Financial Fleet Services	SUPERVALU INC
IBM Corporation	TREX
Kowalski's	Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
LDI Fibres	Xcel Energy
Lunds/Byerly's	

### BENEFACTORS (\$500-\$999)

AGSI Recycling	Liberty Carton Company
Almsted's	Liberty Paper
Asset Recovery Corporation	Lindsay Window & Door
Aurora Product & Services	Lloyd'sConstructionServices,Inc.
Bergquist Company	MaterialsProcessingCorporation
The Bernick Companies	Midwest Coca Cola Bottling
Boston Scientific	Minnesota Shredding, LLC
Bueckers City Sanitation	Northwest Airlines
Choice Plastics	Ocean Tech
City of Duluth	ONSITE Recycling Services
Cooper's Stores	Randy's Sanitation
Covanta Hennepin Energy Resource Company	ResourceRecoveryTechnologies
Endres Services	Rohn Industries/Shred Right
Falk Paper	SANIMAX
Gold'n Plump	Sebesta Blomberg
GopherResourceCorporation	Southside Wood Recycling
Green Lights Recycling	SWDI
Hayfield Window and Door Company	Thompson Reuters
Hutchinson Technology	Twin City Pallet
Jerry's Foods	Unisys Corporation
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	Ver-Tech, Inc.
	Viking Coca-Cola Bottling Co
	Viracon

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Celestica	Modernistic, Inc.
CIMA Labs	Polaris Industries, Inc.
City of South St. Paul	Process Displays
College of St. Scholastica	Recycling Association of Minnesota
CustomProductsOfLitchfield	Rock-Tenn
DecoPac	Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge
Earth Tech	Star Tribune
General Mills	Sylva Corporation
Goodrich Sensor Systems	Thomas Engineering
Gruber Pallets	Waltek, Inc.
Modular Office Solutions	

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Albert Lea Medical Center  
ARC Environmental Inc  
Aurora Product and Services (MSOCS)  
AVI Systems, Inc  
BASF  
Belair Excavating  
Cenveo  
Champlin Park Senior High School  
Dole Explosives  
Dunwoody College of Technology

Elden's Food Fair  
Hammel, Green & Abrahamson Architects & Engineers (HGA)  
Harmony Foods  
Irresistible Ink  
Minnesota Environmental Initiative (MEI)  
Minnesota Waste Wise  
Multi-Clean  
Northern State Bank/Thief River Falls  
Park Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

Partners & Hunt Creative Group (P&H)  
Pierz Foods  
PJW Automotive Inc  
Preston Foods  
Rushford Foods  
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce  
Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce  
Tamarack Habilitation Technologies, Inc.  
Tennant Company  
Turtle Lake Elementary