

## Chapter Eight

# Master Recyclers & Community Outreach

### 1. Introduction

Nine in ten adults (87%) report that they recycle, though only half recycle every day, according to a national survey of over 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Yesterday's News in 2011. Roughly a third tend to recycle less frequently, while 13% admit that they never recycle.

Those surveyed see a variety of benefits of recycling— that it helps to reduce landfills (81%), saves trees (69%), and conserves energy (62%).

Though many acknowledge the many benefits of recycling, they cite a variety of barriers that prevent them from recycling more, with the top reason being that it is not accessible or convenient where they live (25%). Others report that it is too time consuming (10%), that they forget (10%), that they aren't sure what is recyclable (8%), or the cost is too high (6%). At the same time, a majority (52%) reports that none of these barriers prevent them from recycling.

As Master Recyclers you are able to supply people with much of the information they need to practice waste reduction.

However, information is not enough. Current research into recycling behavior shows that two other factors are important in motivating people to recycle. The first is an awareness of the consequences of action (or inaction). The second is a sense of personal responsibility--the feeling that action makes a difference.

When speaking to people it is important to stress that if they have the power they must also share in the responsibility of change.

The rest of this chapter provides resources and some communication and motivation tips.

### 2. Master Recycler: Educator and Resource

As a Master Recycler, part of your job is to spread the word about the personal and social benefits of recycling, composting and earth-wise shopping. You will help people find out what steps they can take to reduce the amount of waste they put in the trash and increase recycling. You will provide information based on your own experience and on what you learned in the training.

When you volunteered to become a master recycler, you made a commitment to work actively to make the world a better place. It is the responsibility of your training and support team to provide you with the resources to help you fulfill your commitment and to offer feedback.

### 3. Master Recycler: Motivator

Many of you will be called upon to speak to groups as part of your outreach commitment. Others will talk with people at outreach events or while organizing and carrying out special projects. As a Master Recycler, part of your job is to motivate people to change their ideas and behavior relating to waste. This is a big job. To do it effectively, it is helpful to keep certain ideas in mind.

The following communication guidelines are particularly useful for planning a presentation, but they are basics that also can be used effectively in one-on-one communication.

**A. Give People A Reason to Care.** If you are going to motivate people to change you will need to give them a reason to care. When you talk about the results of our consumption-based lifestyle, appeal to their feelings of fairness, their responsibility to future generations, or to their dislike of waste. Place the wasteful (or non-wasteful) behavior of an individual within the larger scheme of things. Appeal to the emotional as well as the factual side of the individual.

Seldom does just one thing motivate people. An individual's primary concern may be to save money on the garbage bill. Other concerns, however, may be to save Brazilian rain forests, have less toxic waste in the environment, or have fewer waste facilities to pay for.

**B. Use Concrete Examples.** When talking about the consequences of actions, don't talk about millions of tons of garbage and abstract facts. Set the stage with images listeners can see, feel or specifically imagine. Talk about the number of truck loads of garbage sent to the Coffin Butte daily. Help listeners to think about the resources involved. Avoid technical overload. Abstract information does not motivate people.

**C. Address Listeners' Concerns.** Everyone has felt trapped by a speaker who talked on and on about interesting things that were not personally useful. A presenter who is actively listening will learn from partners in conversation what is important to them. A good presenter will then zero in on the information that matters and acknowledge that learning is a two-way street.

In a larger group it is possible to make a guess about interest areas by knowing the membership of the group. Parents who attend elementary school PTA meetings will have different interests than people attending a discussion at a Senior Center. Talking about packaging school lunches with the parents is appropriate, while talking about effective food storage with the seniors will be more useful to them.

**D. Tailor Information To The Knowledge Level Of Your Audience.** In a day of outreach there will be varied levels of awareness and action. Some people will already be working on recycling projects in their homes and offices, and others will think that recycling is something that can only be done to newspapers (and only then by fanatics)! Be flexible and present the information in an understandable way.

**E. Empower Listeners.** After providing background information, empower listeners by letting them know that they can make a difference. Stress that the choices they make as consumers and voters have a direct impact on the producers. Consumer power in the marketplace is an important tool to change the use of re-

sources. That tool is available every time people shop, reuse or recycle.

**F. Promote Active Involvement** in problem solving or information exchange. Help people generate and share ideas about actions they presently take or might take to affect their area of interest. Encourage whatever positive steps they are taking. If they have an objection to a line of activity, help them think of alternatives. Encourage creativity.

**G. Suggest Specific Actions** to reduce waste, lower costs or influence manufacturers--whatever the area of interest may be. Stress simple, low-cost and immediate actions.

## 4. Communication Guidelines

Public speaking trainer Dale Carnegie said, "The way you say it is as important as what you are saying." Be aware of communication styles with people when doing outreach. Some general guidelines for effective outreach communications include:

**A. Take initiative to start conversations** with people at events. It is hard for some people to break the ice, but a simple lead-in such as, "Do you want any information about recycling or composting?" can get people started.

**B. Be aware of body language.** People often make assumptions from non-verbal clues. For example:

- ◆ Looking people in the eyes tells them that you are interested in what they are saying.
- ◆ Open, upright posture signals that you are confident in your knowledge. Slouching indicates that you are bored. Arms folded across your chest signals that you are defensive.
- ◆ Attentiveness to people and activities around you shows that you are eager to talk. Reading a book or otherwise ignoring people at an outreach event signals that you don't have anything to share.

**C. Show an interest.** Even if it's the hundredth time the same question has been asked

today, it's the first time for the person asking it.

**D. Be honest and sincere.** Don't wing it. Guessing the answer to a question can do more harm than good. Remember, it's okay to say, "I don't have the answer to that one, but I'll find out," or telling them where they can find the answer. If appropriate, take the person's phone number and call back with the information as quickly as possible.

## 5. Outreach Plans

You have committed to payback 30 hours of outreach. Activities can include:

- ◆ Giving waste reduction presentations to small groups
- ◆ Setting up a recycling program at your place of work
- ◆ Staffing display booths at events or fairs
- ◆ Devise a totally new activity. You can work individually or with a group of other Master Recyclers who have similar interests or complementary skills.

### The choice is yours!

You may have a special project already in mind. If not, the Master Recycler Program Coordinator will be able to help you generate some ideas or can schedule you for activities that are already in process. Please remember that the activities you choose should be things you feel comfortable doing. It is always good to stretch and try new things, but if speaking in front of a group terrifies you, don't tie yourself to a schedule of speaking engagements. You should experience success in your outreach and enjoy doing it.

To be happiest with your participation, it is important that you develop a plan to clarify your goals and help you reach them. The coordinators are more than happy to help you develop your own outreach plan. It will be tailored to your interests and level of energy. It will state the who, what, how, when and where of your 30 hours of community activity. This plan will act as your guide, but don't allow it to limit you.

## Stretching and extra enthusiasm encouraged!

The Outreach Plan (see the second-to-last page of this chapter) will include:

- ◆ Goal Statement - What you would like to accomplish.
- ◆ Activities - Specific things you would like to do.
- ◆ Work Plan (if applicable) - A plan with timelines and activities that will help you reach your goal.

All Outreach Plans must help the Master Recycler Program accomplish the following:

- ◆ Provide community outreach and education.
- ◆ Enhance the waste reduction knowledge and action of Master Recyclers.
- ◆ Provide Master Recyclers with skill-building outreach activities.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for staff and Master Recyclers to work for greater program effectiveness.
- ◆ Collect feedback from Master Recyclers and others about program effectiveness.
- ◆ Provide a rewarding, effective and informative program.

## 6. Payback Guidelines

To fulfill the goal of the Master Recycler program, payback activities must meet the following criteria:

1. Implement a system or program that diverts materials from the waste stream, **OR**
2. Provide one-on-one educational contact, **AND,**
3. Provide a meaningful educational and/or skill enhancing experience for the volunteer.

Payback activities can be self-generated in the form of an individual project created by the volunteer and approved by the Coordinator, or they may be generated by the Coordinator working in conjunction with other volunteers and with local educational and solid waste programs.

Prep/infrastructure hours contribute significantly

to the quality and effectiveness of the program, but to not meet either #1 or #2 above. Prep time includes the creation or gathering of materials for presentations, workshops, or general distribution and training for specific outreach activities. Infrastructure time includes activities that serve to enhance the Master Recycler or any other existing solid waste programs: grant writing, developing an educational activity, working on the Master Recycler Newsletter, or coordinating volunteers, for example. The amount of time for these activities that will count toward payback will be determined on a case-by-case bases by the Coordinator.

## 7. Reporting

Reporting is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Information required includes:

- ◆ Number of outreach hours
- ◆ Location of activities
- ◆ Approximate number of contacts

You are responsible for reporting your payback hours and information to the Program Coordinator after each of your outreach activities. This information can be submitted via email or hard-copy. This information will be included in a report prepared by the Program Coordinator.

**Thank you for your  
commitment!**

## 8. Certification

To receive the Master Recycler certification, each volunteer must attend the training sessions and contribute 30 hours of community outreach over a twelve-month period. During this time you will be responsible for staying in close contact with the Program Coordinator. Display material and supplies are available for your use, but you must reserve display materials in advance and check them in and out through the Program Coordinator.

This formal training is just the beginning. Your outreach efforts will determine the impact of this educational program. In the end, you are the one who will make a difference--and shape a better world for us all.

## MASTER RECYCLER OUTREACH PLAN



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (What I want to accomplish with my outreach activity):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Outreach Activity Interests:

(Only 1/4 of required payback hours can be spent in research, writing or other program support activities. You can, of course, do more than the minimum 30 hours of payback!)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

Check out the other side for a few ideas!

## MASTER RECYCLER PROGRAM PAYBACK POSSIBILITIES

Possible payback options are outlined below. Please list the ones that most interest you. You will be contacted for scheduling as the payback opportunities become available.

Don't forget that you can develop your own Special Project. It could be major (like building your own Recycled materials demonstration house) or it could be a little less grand - like helping your apartment complex or workplace start a recycling program. It could even be as simple as getting organizations you work with to start printing their newsletters on recycled paper. If your projects educates, reduces waste, or creates markets - it's a winner!

### Speaking Opportunities:

- Composting
- Vermicomposting
- Alternatives to Household Hazardous Waste
- Recycling Opportunities and Preparation in Linn or Benton County
- Buy Recycled, Less Toxic, Durable, Reuse, etc.
- Waste Prevention, Packaging Reduction, etc.
- Waste Free Gift Giving, Holiday Gift Ideas, etc.
- Making Crafts With "Garbage"
- Sustainable Building
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

### Staff Booths/Displays

- Trade Shows / Fairs / Festivals
- Environmental Events / Earth Day Events
- Workplace Events (Environmental / Health Fairs)

### Event Recycling

- DaVinci Days, River Rhythms, etc.

### Self-Initiated Gatherings/Activities

- Hold a neighborhood Compost Education party
- Conduct an 'Alternatives to Buying New' Field Trip (shopping spree)
- Form a Tool Bank with neighbors/friends
- Help a local restaurant begin food waste composting
- Organize a Waste Awareness Day in your workplace, apartment or place of worship
- Other fun ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

### Help With The Master Recycler Newsletter, Tabloid, or Newspaper Inserts

- Research and write articles
- Illustrate or photograph

### Help Create A Display

- Booth
- Presentation kit
- Learning activity
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Have FUN!!