

THE 2 MINUTE
FOUNDATION



The 2 minute guide
to reducing waste:

FOR BUSINESSES





Picking up plastic litter around the workplace is one way of helping to clean up our oceans. It stops it from being washed down rivers to the sea, takes it out of harm's way, stops it from breaking down into microplastics and becoming toxic.

But preventing it in the first place is better.

Every business has a duty to reduce the amount of waste it produces. Not only can this help to reduce costs but it can also be good PR. Good environmental practice is vital for the wellbeing of workforce, customers and planet.

And it's good for business.

FOR BUSINESS: THE 2 MINUTE GUIDE

to reducing waste.

Adam Hall, 2 Minute Foundation Trustee, POW UK Trustee and Head of Sustainability at Internet Fusion Group, gives his views on the plastic crisis and what you can do about it from within your organisation. After all, business has a huge part to play when it comes to cleaning up the planet. Adam implemented a plastic reduction strategy at Internet Fusion that has seen the £100million turnover online retail company reach 99.81% plastic free outbound packaging, made up of 94.44% recycled content and with 94.04% recycling rates. This strategy is now directly influencing the 800+ brands stocked, stipulating they reduce and eliminate plastic and non-recyclable or non-biodegradable packaging.

Given what we know about the state of the oceans, our failed recycling system and the overuse of plastic, isn't it time to tackle the plastic waste your organisation is responsible for?

It really is.

It's a common narrative used by some of the world's biggest polluters (carbon and plastic) to divert attention away from themselves to the individual, highlighting that personal choice will 'Save the planet'. But time is up. Systematic change needs to happen now and every day that goes by we are wasting time, destroying the eco systems that all life relies on.

We have to make changes for a wide range of environmental issues we are causing.

One of the easiest and most solvable is plastic pollution. That's the good news..

Businesses today have the greatest opportunity to deliver systemic change and stop the plastic pollution crisis in the shortest possible time. After all, its business that are manufacturing, buying and supplying plastic. Also, just as an aside, it has been well documented that organisations that 'do good' tend to be more successful than those that don't.

WHERE DO YOU START?

Right here, right now! Even though every organisation is different, even though you maybe the CEO or the apprentice We all start in the same place and that is simply to recognise the problem. Simple.

RECOGNISE THE PROBLEM

You're here so you already recognise the need to reduce plastic pollution, but you (as an individual) need to make sure key individuals in your organisation recognise it too. Right from the outset you have a decision: are you going to do it the hard way or the easy way? Creating systemic change and resulting plastic reduction is always simpler with sign in from the boss and the top-down approach will always yield more meaningful results quicker.

That's not to say the bottom up approach doesn't work, gaining a groundswell of support amongst the organisation to implement change has been proven time and time again. But it can take longer.

Either way, you'll need tools to help others recognise the problem in order to streamline develop a project to reduce your plastic output and consumption. This can

be done by outlining a plastic map.

(NEED HELP? Contact nicky@2minute.org for help with presenting to stakeholders)

THE PLASTIC MAP

Mapping the journey and amount of plastic in your organisation will help you and the stakeholders of your organisation understand the wider plastic pollution crisis, where you fit and what the opportunities are to take action. Create yours by considering the following:

- Find some key facts around the plastic pollution crisis
- Work out key plastic facts that are specific to your organisation (plastic cutlery in the catering industry or plastic bags for clothing in the retail industry for example)
- Present a business case for reducing plastic and understand the benefits of taking action
- Create a basic outline which highlights the major sources of plastic within the organisation. But go further than 'we no longer use plastic water cups in the canteen' While this is great we need to look deeper. What about the hundreds of thousands of products that are shipped in plastic from the same business? Map it all out.
- Highlight the sources that are easy to fix.

It's simple to do this, can be very visual and can be quick to get a great overview. But you'll now need to make a decision: do you go for big wins or longevity?

(NEED HELP? nicky@2minute.org helps organisations build their plastic map.)

BIG WINS VERSUS LONGEVITY

Each organisation is different and you will be best placed to know or understand what works best for your organisation. Which will help you at this 'fork in the road'? You will be faced with the decision to either take out the largest quantity of plastic in a whole hearted attempt at reducing your impact on the environment. Or tackle the more popular, perhaps more high-profile elements in order to build and maintain momentum. If you are lucky the element you choose will be both. A claim like 'we removed a hundred tonnes of plastic from our operations' will have your marketing department licking their lips!

But the decision is yours, on impact longevity. It may be wise to create a popular project that has a greater impact over a longer period, than a 'big bang' that you cannot sustain. We can help you best combine both elements through a concise strategy.

Now is the time to get the numbers, decimals and sift through the dizzying array of alternatives.

THE COMPLEX PART

Now you need the numbers and they need to be in an understandable form. You need to create a comprehensive list of all the plastic materials (and if you are feeling ambitious - all materials) your organisation deals with. You'll need to know what they

are, who orders them, from where, the cost, the quantity and weight. This is where everything becomes clear and you will be able to hone in on your reduction possibilities.

Once you have this, all with the cooperative help from your colleagues, it's time to highlight and prioritise elements to tackle and the alternatives available to you. To help you decide the process going forward you need to jump right into the 'can of worms' that is the myriad of alternative options to plastic.

Gain pricing for each plastic alternative to help make a decision based on:

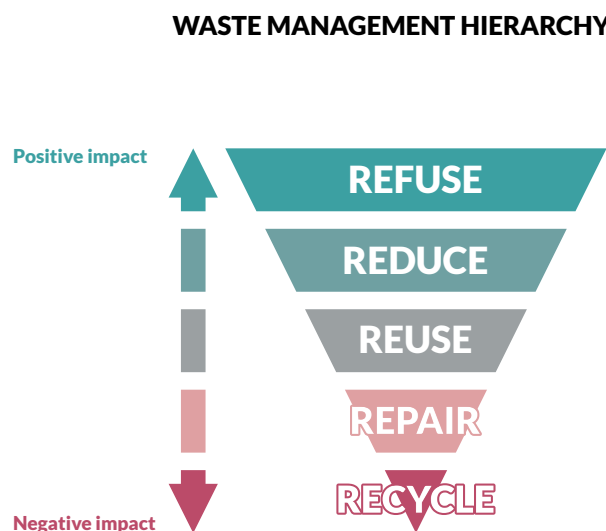
- Environmental performance
- Operational performance
- Cost
- Availability
- Stakeholder acceptability

This isn't easy ... at all!

The key to this process is threefold - take advice (we can help), question everything multiple times before you make a decision, understand that every option has an effect.

It's vital you realise that you will not find a 100% perfect solution environmentally, but not to be put off by it. Don't let that stagnate your progress (as the saying goes 'Perfect is the enemy of the good') and when you read a piece that attempts to debunk a solution, always question who wrote it and who funded that piece! Which takes us back to the first point; take advice!

Every organisation is different with a multitude of scenarios, so there is no 'silver bullet' here. You may have to use a combination of elements from the waste hierarchy:



PITFALLS TO AVOID...

You're here to take positive action so remind yourself of that at every opportunity throughout your plastic journey. No one will thank you for a token gesture ... a 5, 20, 50% reduction? Your CEO will shrug their shoulders, your customers will continue browsing, the marketing team will be left scrabbling for inspiration.

Go about the task as if the planet depended on it.

Don't 'Greenwash'... Just don't. It's simply going in the wrong direction (and wearing a sinister disguise) We all have to look the next generation in the eyes at some point. Greenwash always comes out in the wash in the end and you will be exposed.

Beware of 'Greenwash' with the upsurge in awareness of the destruction of the planet, there are many choosing to capitalise on an 'opportunity'. Question everything. List out your criteria and ask those same questions every time. Keep pushing until they are answered before you make a decision on a 'solution'.

Question who might be behind a solution and what their agenda might be.

Is 100% recyclable good enough when facilities to recycle aren't widely available?

Is it certified 'Biodegradable' ... under what specific conditions?

How does it react in a variety of environments, including a stomach?

There are, of course many more questions!

You are not alone

Remember this. There is a wealth of advice out there and case studies from almost every industry.

We are here to help, so talk to us if you need our help. Our employees, volunteers and trustees have experience in a wide range of plastic reduction strategies.