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Title: Improving Commercial Compost Collection in Seattle Neighborhoods

Date (Quarter/Year): Spring 2009

D.P. Advisor: Alison Cullen

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Abstract:

This research project is designed to study how a community organization can create and implement an effective neighborhood outreach campaign to encourage businesses to compost their food scraps. The research also discovers the barriers that businesses face which prevent them from composting their food scraps and organic waste.

IMPROVING COMMERCIAL COMPOST COLLECTION IN
SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOODS: DESIGNING EFFECTIVE
COMMUNITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS FOR LOCAL
NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

by Grayson Court

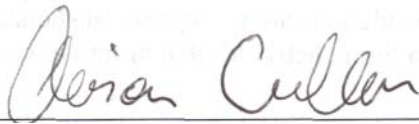
A degree project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Public Administration

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May 27, 2009

Approved by _____

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arian Cullen", written over a horizontal line.

Executive Summary

This research project is designed to study how a community organization can create and implement an effective neighborhood outreach campaign to encourage businesses to compost their food scraps. The research also discovers the barriers that businesses face which prevent them from composting their food scraps and organic waste. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations have been provided to Sustainable Magnolia, other community groups, Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture to improve educational outreach strategies to local businesses in Seattle neighborhoods.

Main Findings

- Owners and managers are most concerned with space issues and the logistics involved when establishing a compost collection system at their business.
- Most owners and managers who do not compost food scraps at their business lack knowledge of basic composting services available to businesses.
- Most business owners and managers who do not compost food scraps at their business do not understand the costs savings associated with composting.
- Previous experience composting at past workplaces influences owners and managers to begin composting at their current business. However, composting at home does not seem to influence business owners and managers to begin compost collection at work.
- Businesses that currently compost believe they have a competitive advantage over their competitors because they are seen as “green” businesses.
- The majority of owners and managers acknowledge and support the positive environmental impact that results from composting.

Recommendations

Sustainable Magnolia

The following recommendations are to improve Sustainable Magnolia’s current outreach campaign in addition to future activities that promote environmental sustainability.

- **Evaluate performance:** Wait for businesses to research collection services available to them after being approached by volunteers. Conduct follow-up interviews with businesses two months following the first meeting, or set a September 2009 deadline before approaching all businesses at once.
- **Coordinate waste reduction and recycling workshops:** Sustainable Magnolia should continue to look for ways to set up a waste reduction and recycling workshop with Seattle Public Utilities, Resource Venture, waste haulers, etc.
- **Future campaigns:** Conducting one-on-one meetings with participants is an effective strategy in communicating the message of an outreach campaign. In

addition, provide participants with “community pledges” that promote sustainable behavior.

Other Community Groups

The following recommendations are designed for community groups that wish to begin a commercial composting outreach campaign similar to the campaign conducted by Sustainable Magnolia. These recommendations are based on extensive literature review and best practices learned during Sustainable Magnolia’s outreach campaign.

- **Approach the business community correctly:** Make a list of all businesses that will be approached, notify the business community about future outreach activities, then wait two weeks before scheduling interviews. Do not immediately engage in outreach through walk-ins or cold-calls.
- **Coordinate waste reduction and recycling workshops:** Community groups should look for ways to set up a workshop with Seattle Public Utilities, Resource Venture, and waste haulers to educate businesses about their recycling options.
- **Design effective outreach material:** Avoid information overload and invest in high-quality outreach material.
- **Include a community pledges:** Determine who your audience is and what your message will be. Incorporate a “community commitment” into the pledge that commits the participant to adopt sustainable behavior along with other members of the community.
- **Provide public acknowledgement:** Community groups can coordinate with organizations such as Resource Venture and Cedar Grove to publicly recognize businesses that adopt sustainable practices. Recognition material can be provided to businesses such as window stickers or fliers which honor sustainable behavior in the community.
- **Train volunteers:** Practice communicating all aspects of the campaign’s message before approaching businesses.
- **Measure performance:** Make sure to keep one primary database that tracks all performance indicators through the duration of the project. In order to ensure consistency, make sure there is a standard framework for information gathering so the right data is being gathered and is being interpreted correctly.

Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture

The following recommendations are strategies that Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture should adopt in order to better provide educational outreach to local businesses in the Seattle area.

- **Approach small businesses:** Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture should work more closely with community groups that are willing to do outreach for the City of Seattle. In addition, Seattle Public Utilities should facilitate waste

- reduction workshops with Resource Venture, waste haulers and other stakeholders to educate businesses about their recycling options.
- **Re-design outreach material:** The most significant concerns that face business owners regarding compost collection are space and logistical issues. However, none of the educational material provided by Seattle Public Utilities or Resource Venture addresses these concerns. In order to successfully encourage participation, SPU and Resource Venture should redesign their educational material to *specifically* address how Resource Venture and Cedar Grove Composting will provide free consulting services to assist businesses with space and logistical issues. Educational material should also address the “ick factor” to businesses and describe how easy it is to begin a food scraps collection program without the process becoming “icky”. In addition, educational material should highlight the competitive advantage that results from composting. Finally, information about the similarities between food scraps collection at home and at work should be presented.

Conclusion

This study discovered that business owners and managers are aware of their impact on the environmental and do have an interest in environmentally sustainable operations. The research finds that the majority of respondents do in fact act sustainability in some way, such as composting at home, reusing food scraps, minimizing food waste and other personal behaviors. In addition, the majority of owners and managers acknowledge and support the positive environmental impact that results from composting. However, they have little knowledge about how to participate in a food scraps collection program at work. This is due to several reasons; (1) Seattle Public Utilities does not have enough funding to target low-volume waste generators, (2) space constraints and simple logistical problems discourage businesses from approaching Resource Venture or Cedar Grove to begin a compost collection program, and (3) community groups do not have the proper resources, support and direction to conduct aggressive outreach campaigns in the community to address these issues. By designing effective outreach campaigns, community groups can better provide educational services to these businesses and promote sustainability in their neighborhoods.

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Chapter 1: Introduction – Commercial Compost Collection in Magnolia

This research project is designed to study how a community organization can create and implement an effective neighborhood outreach campaign to encourage businesses to compost their food scraps. The research also includes discovering the barriers that businesses face which prevent them from composting their food scraps and organic waste. The Magnolia neighborhood in Seattle, Washington is the location of this research project. Based on the findings of the study, this report will determine the outreach strategies which prove to be effective in approaching businesses and recommend how other community groups can use these findings to design effective outreach campaigns in the future. In addition, the results of this study are especially important for public agencies that provide resources and services to the business community, such as Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, and Resource Venture. The recommendations at the end of this report will also include suggestions to these organizations to improve their service delivery to small and local businesses within Seattle neighborhoods.

To avoid confusion, the term “composting” in this report refers to commercial compost collection which is a service provided by Seattle Public Utilities, rather than private on-site composting.

Sustainable Magnolia

Sustainable Magnolia is a non-profit organization composed of community volunteers who work together to plan and manage environmental projects in their neighborhood. The organization is part of a larger association called “SCALLOPS” (Sustainable Communities ALL Over Puget Sound), a network of similar neighborhood environmental groups that are committed to improving sustainability in their communities. “SCALLOPS” creates networking opportunities for member groups, and provides a forum for community members to share their ideas and strategies on developing sustainability projects in their neighborhoods. The association hosts a website linking all groups together and holds four summits a year to provide an opportunity for the diverse groups to come together. As of May, 2008, SCALLOPS includes 63 different neighborhood groups, all at different stages of organization and development.¹

Sustainable Magnolia has been functioning for over one year and just recently obtained registered non-profit status, allowing the organization to submit several grant proposals to the City of Seattle to finance its outreach activities. The organization is split up into several sub-committees focused on environmental issues, including: Local Food, Energy Efficiency, Urban/Green Building, Transportation and Recycling. In mid-November 2008, Sustainable Magnolia submitted a grant proposal to Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to fund its community outreach campaign called “We CARE-2!” (We Can All Recycle Everyday, Everywhere!). The campaign focuses on improving recycle and compost

¹ Sustainable Communities All Over Puget Sound (SCALLOPS), *Driving Sustainable Change through Community-to-Community Organizing*

collection through education and outreach to businesses, non-profit organizations, schools and youth groups. The outreach intends to cover large community events in the neighborhood and target sidewalk disposal through neighborhood waste collection activities.

The Business Recycling project is the most aggressive project out of the “We CARE-2!” campaign. Along with its grant proposal to SPU, Sustainable Magnolia submitted a request for a student consultant from the Evans School of Public Affairs to design and administer the business outreach activities with the assistance of community volunteers. As part of the relationship with Sustainable Magnolia, I was able to dedicate myself to the project for a six-month time span until I graduated. Due to the time constraint for the project, the business outreach campaign narrowed in scope to focus specifically on commercial compost collection in the Magnolia neighborhood.

Chapter 2: The Role of Composting as a Waste Reduction Strategy

Composting food scraps and organic waste is a solution to municipal waste management issues by reducing the volume of post-consumer waste ending up in landfills or being exported to other jurisdictions. In 1983 and then in 1986, the last two landfills used by City of Seattle closed, limiting the options Seattle had to dispose of its waste. Seattle began hauling waste to King County-owned Cedar Hills Regional Landfill raising customer rates by 82%.² Due to the increase in rates from high tipping fees at Cedar Hills, Seattle now exports garbage by rail to reduce costs.³ Nevertheless, even if Seattle continued to use the Cedar Hills landfill to dispose municipal waste, the 920 acre landfill is projected to reach capacity between 2012 and 2014.⁴

In 1998, the City responded by creating an action plan to eliminate waste to the greatest extent possible. By passing a solid waste plan called *On the Path to Sustainability*, the City created goals and programs to reduce waste generation and increase recycling within its entire jurisdiction. In 2007, the City committed to a 60% recycling goal by 2012 and 70% by 2025, adding new recommendations and opportunities for businesses and residents to reduce their waste stream.⁵

Businesses in Seattle are regulated by several laws banning the disposal of certain products. The disposal of paper, cardboard and yard waste are banned from commercial garbage. As of January 1, 2009, Styrofoam containers including “clamshells”, bowls, plates and beverage cups have been banned. The disposal bans are steps to improve the recycling rate in the commercial sector to meet the overall benchmark goal of 60% by 2012.

In 2007, the overall recycling rate in the commercial sector was 52.8%, an increase of 15% since 2003.⁶ Commercial compost collection is a new and emerging waste reduction strategy the City is pursuing to improve the commercial sector’s “recycling rate”. Currently, 37% (64,000 tons) of organic waste generated by Seattle businesses is thrown away into the solid waste stream, equaling around \$7.8 million in savings if this waste were instead diverted to compost. Through outreach campaigns by Seattle Public Utilities, 230 food waste accounts were opened since Seattle began its composting program⁷, leading to expectations that commercial compost collection programs will drastically improve the commercial sector’s “recycling rate”.

² Seattle Public Utilities, *History of the Garbage System*

³ King County Solid Waste Division, *Landfills*

⁴ King County Solid Waste Division, *Landfills*

⁵ Seattle Public Utilities, *City of Seattle Recycling Rate: 2007 Update*, 2

⁶ Seattle Public Utilities, *City of Seattle Recycling Rate: 2007 Update*, 8

⁷ Resource Venture, *Food and Organics*

Chapter 3: The Process of Composting Organic Waste – A Quick Overview

Composting organic waste can be done at a variety of levels. Households can compost food scraps using worm bins in the backyard if they generate the right amount of organic waste over a month. Composting can also be done at large, centralized composting facilities such as Cedar Grove Composting. While municipalities and large composters take greater steps to improve the safety and efficiency of its composting process, the composting process overall is similar in terms of the biological sciences involved.⁸

Science Involved

Composting is the true form of recycling post-consumer waste; the process takes entire volumes of food and organic waste and turns it into high grade compost that contains large amounts of nutrients for healthy plant growth. Organic waste in large composting facilities is piled 3-5 feet high and 10-15 feet wide into what are called windrows.⁹ In windrows, small microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi break down the organic matter and produce carbon dioxide, water, heat and humus (the end product of composting which is reused as the natural fertilizer previously mentioned). Through the process, windrows must be periodically turned over to allow oxygen into all parts of the pile which is essential for the microorganisms to survive. In order for the microorganisms to work effectively, composters must ensure that the correct carbon/nitrogen content is balanced, the proper temperature is set and the pH level is regulated at a particular range. Maintaining enough moisture during the process is also important to stimulate the right level of bacterial activity. The composting process takes several months to complete, and when it does, the fully composted material becomes a dark coarse soil with an “earthy” smell.¹⁰

Market Value of Compost

As mentioned before, compost is a high quality soil that can be used without adding fertilizers to lawns and gardens. It is a natural alternative to synthetic lawn care and is in high demand. Post-consumer compost can be sold in a variety of ways, such as straight compost, topsoil, garden mulch blends, potting soil and other mixes for gardens. Compost blends are also sold to businesses that must leave work sites with good soil content as regulated in King and Snohomish Counties. The following products sold by Cedar Grove Composting, the large centralized composting facility that serves the majority of the Northwest, are priced as followed (pricing as of January 19, 2009)¹¹:

- Compost (soil amendment) = \$18.45 per Cubic Yard
- Two Way Topsoil = \$20.45 per Cubic Yard
- Potting Soil = \$32.45 per Cubic Yard

⁸ Cornell Composting, *The Science and Engineering of Composting*

⁹ Sustainable Urban Landscape Information Series, *Selecting Commercial Compost*

¹⁰ Cornell Composting, *The Science and Engineering of Composting*

¹¹ Cedar Grove Composting, *Current Pricing* (January 19, 2009)

- Vegetable Garden Blend = \$21.45 per Cubic Yard
- NW Garden Mulch = \$20.50 per Cubic Yard

80-85% of the compost sold from Cedar Grove is for yard or landscape use. Cedar Grove products are marketed as the perfect soil that can grow organic food in the backyard, targeting not only long-time “green” buyers but mainstream consumers who are indifferent to soil types and a willing to trying organic planting. Cedar Grove’s market for bulk sales stretches up to 60 miles from the Everett and Maple Valley facilities, selling approximately 250,000 cubic yards per year. Smaller volumes of compost are sold in states across the Pacific Northwest including Alaska, Idaho and Oregon. Cedar Grove products are sold through large retailers such as Home Deport and Lowes selling over 600,000 bagged products annually.¹²¹³

Due to its marketability and end use, compost derived from food scraps is not only a waste reduction strategy, but a process that truly represents sustainability. Food scraps generated by businesses end up as high quality, natural soil that is used by local farmers, residents and even the businesses themselves. It protects the environmental by promoting natural alternatives to care for gardens and lawns, and educates generators and buyers about the natural process of turning waste into new products.

¹² Cedar Grove representative, tour of Cedar Grove’s Everett facility, February 11, 2009

¹³ Cedar Grove Composting, *Company History*, fact sheet provided to visitors

Chapter 4: Compost Collection in Magnolia

As mentioned previously, compost collection in Seattle is a new strategy for the City to reduce its overall waste stream. Food waste can be generated by various types of sources, thus the City has separated food/yard waste collection into two compost collection programs: residential and commercial.

Residential Compost Collection

Residents in Seattle have the option to compost their food scraps and yard waste through the City's Residential Food & Yard Waste service. Residents have the option to use several different sizes of collection bins that will be collected every other week, the same day as garbage is picked up. (See Figure 1 to view all sizes of composting containers available to both residents and businesses) This service requires homeowners to have their containers on the side of the street by collection day in order to receive service. As part of the City's aggressive actions to reduce the solid waste stream, Seattle Public Utilities provides and bills for one 13-gallon composting container to all residents in Seattle that do not already pay for Food & Yard Waste service.¹⁴ Residents can easily make changes to their accounts covering Food & Yard Waste services, allowing them to increase or decrease the size of collection containers to meet their needs. As a result, every Seattle resident participates in the City's residential composting program.

Commercial Compost Collection

Due to the limited amount of food scraps that is diverted from businesses, Seattle Public Utilities has begun focusing on commercial compost collection programs. The majority of outreach done by Seattle Public Utilities focuses on large-scale generators due to the limited funding for outreach activities while trying to maximize total waste diversion.¹⁵ Magnolia is an example of such outreach activities. The majority of businesses generating organic waste in the Magnolia neighborhood are small to medium sized waste generators, such as coffee shops, small restaurants, bakeries, etc. There are some large scale restaurants and businesses that contribute large volumes of food scraps to the waste stream, however most of the neighborhood businesses are "off the radar" when it comes to public outreach by Seattle Public Utilities.¹⁶

Collection Opportunities

Businesses in Seattle can use the City's Commercial Compost Collection service that accepts all food scraps, food soiled paper, waxed cardboard and yard debris. The City of Seattle regulates the commercial compost rates, which by volume is much cheaper than solid waste. Businesses in Magnolia that wish to use the City's service need to contact the garbage service provider that is contracted with the City to provide service within

¹⁴ Seattle Public Utilities, *Food and Yard Waste at Your House*

¹⁵ Tom Gannon (January 14, 2009)

¹⁶ Tom Gannon (January 14, 2009)

their particular neighborhood. The City of Seattle has a contract with CleanScapes to serve businesses in the Seattle area containing the Magnolia neighborhood. Thus, Magnolia businesses need to contact CleanScapes to begin participating with the City's Commercial Compost Collection service.¹⁷

As an alternative, businesses can use other haulers of their choice not contracted with City of Seattle in their neighborhood, such as Cedar Grove Organics Recycling, Inc. (subsidiary of Cedar Grove Composting), Waste Management or Rabanco/Allied Waste. The private sector controls the majority of compost collection in the City, dominated by Cedar Grove Organics which opened 400 new accounts last year, compared to 50 new accounts by Allied Waste and Cleanscapes combined. Waste haulers not contracted with the City are not required to charge the same fees as under the City's Commercial Compost Collection service. Businesses will receive a quote by private haulers and be charged the fees agreed upon by the two parties.¹⁸

On March 30th, 2009, businesses were given the option to take advantage of the City's Residential Food & Yard Waste service. Like households, businesses have the ability to receive compost collection services and pay \$8 per 90-gallon container per month. Businesses that wish to participate in the residential program will have to contact SPU's residential Customer Service line, set up an account, and wait for the composting containers to arrive at their business. Similar to residential households, businesses will have to move their compost containers to the side of the street on collection day.¹⁹

Consulting Services Available

Consulting services to improve compost collection are also available to businesses to increase the volume and quality of food scraps and organic material. Resource Venture, a consulting group owned by Seattle Public Utilities and managed by Cascadia Consulting, provides resources and tools for businesses to improve their compost collection programs. The organization provides free staff training, signs and technical assistance to businesses that wish to begin or improve their composting behaviors.²⁰ However, due to the budget shortfalls faced by the City of Seattle, Resource Venture will experience a reduction in funding which will affect the services they can provide businesses. Businesses do have the ability to call the organization to receive assistance over the phone about beginning a compost collection program, as well as best practices to engage in business composting. Resource Venture also provides public recognition for those businesses that are involved with composting in their area.

Businesses can also use Cedar Grove Composting to provide free staff training and other consulting services. Cedar Grove representatives will provide a site assessment for the business, propose private hauling services if requested, train employees and provide

¹⁷ Tom Gannon (January 14, 2009)

¹⁸ Tom Gannon (January 14, 2009)

¹⁹ Tom Gannon (January 14, 2009)

²⁰ Resource Venture, *Food and Organics*

containers for the collection service.²¹ Businesses that begin compost collection programs receive a package of materials promoting their membership in the “Green Scene”, a public acknowledgment that honors businesses that engage in composting around the Puget Sound.

²¹ Cedar Grove Composting, *Green Scene*

Chapter 5: Switching from Waste to Compost

The City of Seattle is recognized as having one of the most effective recycling programs in the United States. The City's success hinges on its fee structure, charging citizens and businesses by volume for the amount of trash they generate. (See Tables 1 and 2 to view commercial garbage and composting rates) Instead of paying a flat fee, residents and businesses internalize the direct cost of waste disposal. Not only does this reduce the amount of waste generated by the City, but also reduces the fees charged to the majority of clients by changing their waste disposal behavior. When households and businesses are charged a flat fee, they can dispose as much waste as desire without the consequences of raised fees. If the business decides to double the waste generated from the facility, the fee stays the same. Compared to a fixed fee, a fee based on volume charges consumers directly for the amount of waste they generate. The incentive to reduce waste generation is based on consumer choice theory; the consumer in his/her own best interest will determine the optimal cost of generating waste.²² Thus, there is a greater incentive to cut down the amount of waste by the consumer because it saves money.

As mentioned previously, the ability for post-consumer compost to be resold for a profit reduces the need to charge higher fees per volume for the collection of organic material. Cedar Grove's tipping fees (price per ton of organic waste entering Cedar Grove) that are charged to collectors, which are incorporated into the disposal fees for businesses, are approximately 50% lower per ton compared to tipping fees at landfills.²³ Due to lower tipping fees for organic material, collectors can justify lowering the disposal fee charged to businesses and still make a profit. Compost collection is also not subject to utility taxes charged by the City of Seattle, further reducing costs for collectors.²⁴

Cost Savings

The cost savings for a business can be quite large if it can divert enough organic waste from its solid waste stream. For example, the monthly garbage fee for one 90-gallon container would be^{25,26}:

- Monthly account fee = \$14.75
- Weekly pick-up = \$65.80
- **Total = \$80.55**

²² Browning and Zupan, 132-134

²³ Cedar Grove representative, tour of Cedar Grove's Everett facility, February 11, 2009

²⁴ Tom Gannon (January 14, 2009)

²⁵ Seattle Public Utilities, *Commercial Garbage Container Rates*

²⁶ Seattle Public Utilities, *Commercial Compost Rates*

In comparison, the monthly composting fee for one 90-gallon container would be as followed:

- Weekly pick-up = \$44.75
- **Total = \$44.75**

For businesses that take advantage of the City's Residential Food & Yard Waste service, the monthly composting fee for one 90-gallon container would be:

- **Total=\$8**

On average, businesses can save an estimated 30% in waste disposal costs by using the City's Commercial Compost Collection service and even more through the City's Residential Food & Yard Waste service.²⁷ The increase in savings also assumes that when a business consults with Resource Venture or Cedar Grove, it could further downsize its trash container when it reassesses its waste collection needs. For example, the business that downsizes its 1.5 cubic yard trash container to a one cubic yard trash container and 96-gallon compost container could further reduce the trash container to 96 gallons. With the help of outside organizations, and the participation by owners and manager, businesses can realize considerable cost savings by adopting composting programs.

Success Stories

Resource Venture has collected various success stories of businesses introducing food scraps collection as part of their waste reduction efforts. These reports from businesses around the Seattle area help illustrate the benefits that can be realized by composting organic waste. Resource Venture uses these stories to encourage other business owners to compost food scraps by incorporating them into the organization's educational material. Below are examples of the success stories compiled by Resource Venture which can be found online²⁸:

Starbucks Café – Magnolia: Magnolia's Starbucks Café generates up to 200 gallons of coffee grounds and food scraps every week, achieving a 100% composting rate for coffee grounds, food-soiled paper and cardboard.

Canlis Restaurant: Canlis, a large restaurant overlooking Lake Union, composts about 580 gallons of fruit and vegetable trimmings, bread and pasta, table scraps, meat and dairy per week. As a result, Canlis saves roughly \$80 per month by composting.

PCC Natural Markets: Collectively, PCC's five Seattle-area grocery stores compost approximately 10,100 gallons of food waste and food-soiled paper per week. By composting, a medium-sized grocery store can save about \$300 per month.

²⁷ Seattle Public Utilities, *Commercial Compost Collection*

²⁸ Resource Venture, *Food and Organics*

Essential Baking Company: In addition to two cafés in the Wallingford and Madison Valley neighborhoods, the Essential Baking Company (EBC) has a full bakery and processing facility where they compost about 6,000 gallons of food waste and food-soiled paper every week, saving about \$500 per month.

Chapter 6: Community-based Social Marketing

Community-based social marketing is a type of outreach campaign designed to encourage sustainable behavior through methods which have been influenced by studies on sociology and psychology. Rather than handing out simple fliers to promote a message, community-based social marketing is designed to commit individuals to changes in behavior which they otherwise would not do without intervention. The goal is not just to provide resources, but to change a hardened way of thinking to one that is environmentally sustainable and beneficial to the recipient. Community outreach in this fashion is to identify barriers that hinder a particular action and find strategies to overcome those barriers. Doug McKenzie-Mohr, author of *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-based Social Marketing*, argues that "...if environmental programs are to be effective, we need to deliver programs that remove these barriers and enhance the benefits for large segments of the population."²⁹ Benefits of the targeted action is highly sought after and emphasized in the outreach campaign, promoting the incentives that act as the "carrot" for the individual to strive towards.

The overarching framework of community-based social marketing lies within several assumptions. The reason that some people do not engage in an activity is³⁰:

- People do not know about the activity
- People who do not know about the activity may perceive that there are significant difficulties or barriers associated with engaging in it
- People may perceive that they benefit most from continuing to engage in their present behavior, even if they feel that there are no significant barriers associated with an activity.

Assumptions about behavior change include³¹:

- People will naturally gravitate to actions that have high benefits and for which there are few barriers
- Perceived barriers and benefits vary dramatically among individuals
- Adopting one behavior frequently means rejecting another (i.e. composting versus putting food scraps in the garbage)

Thus, one effective strategy is to engage in a public outreach campaign that focuses on changing a behavior through more active means of outreach. This requires a greater amount of resources and time commitment, but its effectiveness has proven to be true in observational studies and "open experiments" which included providing outreach to experimental and control groups using different types of outreach methods.

²⁹ Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 2

³⁰ Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 2-3

³¹ Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 3

Relevance to Sustainable Magnolia

Several aspects of community-based social marketing are attractive for Sustainable Magnolia because it creates a greater bond between the organization and the business community. This type of outreach is designed to promote social norms and generate public value towards composting food waste and organic material. As a member of the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce, the organization sees this as an opportunity to build a strong relationship amongst owners and managers as a community while striving to make changes. Importantly, the Chamber had demonstrated interest in the organization's proposed outreach activities which represent a willingness to actively change together as a group. Due to this window of opportunity, Sustainable Magnolia's outreach campaign will adapt several aspects of community-based social marketing into its outreach activities.

Chapter 7: Sustainable Magnolia's Outreach Campaign

Sustainable Magnolia's outreach campaign consists of two main features; outreach activities based upon social marketing strategies and personal interviews. Each business in Magnolia that generates organic waste is approached to schedule a one-on-one interview with the owner/manager and a representative from Sustainable Magnolia. After the interview questions are complete, the representative from Sustainable Magnolia provides the owner/manager with the outreach material educating the business representative about commercial composting opportunities. There are approximately 35 businesses in Magnolia that generate organic waste which fall under the scope of Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities.

Questionnaire

The interview process consists of several questions that ask about current composting behavior, attitudes towards food scraps collection and perceptions about the process of beginning a collection program. The questionnaire used for this study was designed by the author and partially influenced by sample questions suggested by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, author of *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-based Social Marketing*. The questionnaire is designed to ask similar questions to both composters and non-composters in a method that is relevant for both types of businesses. (See Figure 2 to view the full questionnaire) For example, take the following question that is presented to composters:

Based on your past experiences, why do businesses that generate food waste choose not to compost?

In order to ask non-composters the same question but in a different way, the question is rearranged. For example, the previous question for non-composters is reworded as followed:

Would you please describe the most important reasons why you don't compost?

The survey is also designed to rate responses on a scale of 1 to 5 in order to measure the perceptions that business owners/managers have towards composting. Although open-ended questions provide great insight to the true issues businesses face with composting, questions rated on a scale offer further information about a business' attitude towards composting. For example, businesses are asked the following question:

*(On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)
It is convenient to collect food scraps at your business*

The intent of the questionnaire is to help design future outreach campaigns for community groups to effectively promote commercial composting in their

neighborhoods. As mentioned earlier, the questions asked are designed to elicit responses that represent attitudes and perceptions towards barriers and benefits to composting food scraps. By examining the responses to this questionnaire, I seek recurring themes which should be incorporated into future outreach projects in order to deal with the primary barriers identified in the study. For example, based on a study conducted by graduate student Sheryl Belcher at the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, one common reason that some people in King County do not compost is due to the “ick factor”, referring to the unpleasantness of composting which is associated with molding, insects and smells. In the study, Belcher discovered that while non-composters perceive compost collection as “icky”, those who currently compost have a high tendency to believe in the opposite; that the collection process is not “icky”.³² Another common response is that starting a food scraps collection program is too much of a hassle to justify the costs savings, especially when the business is a small-medium sized organic waste generator. If responses such as these consistently arise during the interviews with businesses, then it is important to identify what future outreach materials should be distributed to business that addresses these issues.

As demonstrated above, the questionnaire is designed for businesses that started food scraps collection programs before Sustainable Magnolia’s intervention. These responses are even more important to our study because they identify the motivation for a business to begin composting without external persuasion. Interview questions for these businesses also include the transition to composting, realized costs savings and suggestions to make composting more convenient for non-composters. With this information, future outreach activities can highlight the suggestions and strategies identified by these businesses to create an effective social marketing campaign.

First-person interviews are used to obtain data in this study for several reasons. First, the study is about personal behavior. In order to fully understand why a business does and does not compost, the interviewee needs to be as candid as possible. Since the study is about promoting social norms (environmental sustainability), there is reason to believe owners and managers would not be as forthcoming as if they were surrounded by their peers. For example, before this study began, two business owners were interviewed in order to get a sense of the interview process and learn how to properly approach business representatives. The first owner said his business did not compost because it was too much of a hassle to begin a system with having so little food waste being generated. In the interview with the second owner, he responded by saying that it was “just the right thing to do”, never giving it a second thought. Now imagine that the two owners were together in a focus group being asked the same question, “Why do or don’t you compost your food scraps?”, and Owner #1 answered first. Would Owner #2 make such a remark as he did in the private interview if he was to follow after Owner #1 in a focus group? The private interview removes this uncertainty; thereby allowing the interviewer to ask the difficult questions with candid responses that otherwise would be restricted.

The second reason to stick with private interviews is to provide outreach material to the owner/manager directly. Instead of placing fliers on doorknobs and under doormats, the

³² Belcher, 1

outreach campaign can be more effective by scheduling appointments with the immediate staff member that can make the decision to compost. As a member of the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Magnolia is looking to create a strong connection with its business contacts by conducting its outreach activities in a less formal fashion. By acting as a partner rather than as an outside group, Sustainable Magnolia can create a greater level of trust with the business in order to spread its message successfully. Furthermore, community-based social marketing is based around one central principle; promoting public value for a community-recognized social norm. Approaching businesses as an “associate” to discuss composting as a community value, businesses may receive Sustainable Magnolia’s intervention in a more welcoming fashion and be more apt to seriously consider the organization’s message.

Outreach Activities

Outreach campaigns can be conducted in a variety of ways. From handing out fliers to holding community training sessions, marketing sustainable behavior requires one basic element: providing information. This information is meant to be educational; it must inform the recipient about the benefits of the behavior, the opportunities to become involved and the costs to participate. Sustainable Magnolia’s outreach campaign is designed to provide this basic information to businesses that generate organic waste by designing an aggressive community-based social marketing campaign.

The term “aggressive” should not imply that the outreach materials are pushed onto the owner without regards to their concerns and interests, nor should it be misconstrued that the outreach campaign entails volunteers demanding business owners to adopt sustainable behavior with the threat that they will be publicly chastised for not composting food scraps. “Aggressive” simply entails putting greater effort into approaching owners beyond handing them a flier. It requires speaking directly with business owners to fully explain the options they have to reduce their waste generation. Furthermore, an effective community-based social marketing campaign hinges on building strong relationships with businesses in the community in order to generate public value towards sustainable behavior. The outreach campaign is focusing on individual, private behavior. Thus, in order to modify behavior, Sustainable Magnolia must be able to build trust amongst the businesses in the community to create real change.

Approaching the business community in a process that slowly introduces Sustainable Magnolia’s outreach activities is an important step. Before this study began, business owners were approached directly without scheduling meetings in advance; volunteers simply went to the store, requested to speak with the owner/manager, and proceeded to ask them about their composting activities. From this experience, Sustainable Magnolia quickly learned that owners and managers are busy people and have little time for on-the-spot interviews. Furthermore, approaching business owners without prior notification then asking about composting behavior comes across as quite intrusive and overbearing. Through this experience, it became quite apparent that approaching the business community in the correct manner may play an instrumental role in communicating Sustainable Magnolia’s outreach campaign.

Announcement to the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce

Before approaching businesses on an individual basis, Sustainable Magnolia presented its outreach campaign at a board meeting for the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce about the outreach activities that businesses should expect in the near future. The meeting was attended by 10 board members including the President and the Executive Director of the Chamber. The presentation notified board members about Sustainable Magnolia's intention to contact businesses for an interview and outlined the outreach activities Sustainable Magnolia would implement. Each board member was provided a memorandum detailing the outreach activities and was invited to pick up one of the educational fliers at the end of the meeting before leaving. (Please see Figure 3 to read the memo) After the meeting concluded, the memorandum was sent to the Executive Director which she distributed to owners of restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries and supermarkets in order to prepare them for Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities.

Presenting in front of the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce achieves several objectives; (1) the business community is well informed about Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities before the program begins, (2) the presentation captures high-profile members from the Chamber which may encourage greater buy-in from the business community as a whole, (3) owners that want to be proactive in commercial compost collection can approach Sustainable Magnolia themselves, and (4) the presentation may create a sense of unity amongst Chamber members because they are participating together as a community rather than on an individual basis. As mentioned before, an effective outreach campaign must be designed to encourage community involvement, and by approaching the Chamber as a member speaking to other participating members, Sustainable Magnolia can create trust in the business community.

Recycling Workshop for the Business Community

Sustainable Magnolia has the opportunity to pair its outreach campaign with an informational session that can educate the business community about their waste reduction and recycling options. Tom Gannon, the Commercial Compost and Recycling Manager at Seattle Public Utilities, has expressed interest in working with neighborhood organizations to provide workshop for businesses to learn about their recycling options they have with the city and private vendors. The session will include members of the Chamber of Commerce and representatives from Seattle Public Utilities, Resource Venture, Cedar Grove, city-contracted waste haulers and Sustainable Magnolia, covering a variety of waste reduction topics including commercial composting. Other environmental issues will be discussed, such as:

- Paper and plastic waste
- Commercial, construction and landscaping (CDL) waste
- Water usage, grease collection, etc.

Although commercial compost collection will not be the primary issue being discussed, the event will bring attention to the importance of waste reduction activities which may encourage greater buy-in from businesses to adopt composting programs when they are approached by Sustainable Magnolia.

In order to effectively combine the recycling workshop with Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities, the timing of the event must coincide with the timeframe in which the business interviews are conducted. Timing the workshop before the individual interviews would be preferred because it allows enough time for business owners/managers to fully consider their waste options before they are approached by Sustainable Magnolia volunteers who are promoting commercial composting. Furthermore, holding a community event that promotes sustainable waste reduction may influence business representatives to be more susceptible to Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities because they may recognize that their community has developed expectations for their business to engage in sustainable behavior.

Timing the event during the outreach campaign has its problems because it may overload owners and managers with too much information in such a short time period.

Furthermore, it may take owners longer to consider adopting commercial compost collection because they perceive that they do not have enough information until they attend the workshop to make a decision. However, when the workshop is scheduled in the middle or near the end of the outreach campaign, Sustainable Magnolia will be much more successful in recruiting owners and managers to participate in the workshop when the organization approaches individual businesses. The recycling workshop may simply turn into another resource for businesses which Sustainable Magnolia will promote during its outreach. Depending on the timing of the workshop, Sustainable Magnolia must be careful to integrate the event into their existing outreach activities.

Outreach Material

Building trust between Sustainable Magnolia and the recipients of the outreach campaigns is consistent with various marketing strategies used in the private sector. While there is limited research on marketing strategy for non-profit organizations to promote sustainable behavior, there is a wealth of information for business marketing strategies that analyze consumer behavior and market segmentation. The lessons learned from marketing strategies in the private sector can, to an extent, be used for community-based social marketing campaigns to encourage sustainable behavior, especially marketing strategies that target environmentally-conscious business owners and managers.

Study on Business Marketing Strategy

A study on "ecologically-conscious consumers" can provide insight to how people perceive their individual actions on environmental outcomes. In 1999, a study conducted by Robert Straughan investigated the role "psychographics" play in

influencing environmentally-friendly purchasing behavior.³³ In other words, rather than relying on demographics to determine market segments, Straughan studied how businesses market to what people want, not just based on standard demographic characteristics such as age, race, sex and physical location. Along with key demographic variables (age, sex, income, education), Straughan tested characteristics such as “political orientation”, “altruism”, “perceived consumer effectiveness” and “environmental concern” to determine whether “psychographics” have an impact on purchasing “green” products.³⁴

Through statistical multivariate regression analysis, Straughan found that altruism³⁵, environmental concern³⁶, and perceived consumer effectiveness³⁷ play a very important role in determining the purchasing behavior of an individual.³⁸ Most importantly, however, is that perceived consumer effectiveness plays a larger and more significant role in environmental purchasing behavior compared to “environmental concern” or key demographic variables³⁹. Thus, the research discovers that an environmentally-conscious individual is more willing to buy an item when he/she believes their purchase will be effective in protecting the environment, not just because they exhibit concern for the environment. From the results of the study, Straughan suggests that “green marketing” should be designed to explicitly show how choosing “green” products directly improves and preserves the environment.⁴⁰

Straughan’s green marketing strategy parallels the goals which Sustainable Magnolia is trying to achieve. As in the private sector, Sustainable Magnolia is trying to effectively market sustainable behavior, except that the “product” that is being “sold” is a service rather than a product. “Green marketing” campaigning is consistent with Sustainable Magnolia’s outreach goals because Sustainable Magnolia is trying to alter a behavior. Whereas a corporation is attempting to influence purchasing behavior, Sustainable Magnolia is attempting to influence sustainable behavior. Even though the two types of behavior are not directly related, the behaviors are similar in terms of the role “psychographics” have in influencing individual decision-making. Therefore, based on Straughan’s suggestion that marketing should be designed around “perceived consumer effectiveness”, Sustainable Magnolia’s educational campaign could be very effective if designed around outreach that explicitly states how composting directly improves the natural environment.

³³ Straughan, R. and James Roberts, 558

³⁴ Straughan, R. and James Roberts, 559

³⁵ $\beta(\text{Altruism}) = 1.024$, p-value = 0.015

³⁶ $\beta(\text{Environmental Concern}) = 0.404$, p-value = 0.027

³⁷ $\beta(\text{Perceived Consumer Effectiveness}) = 3.880$, p-value = <0.001

³⁸ $R^2 = 0.434$, $F = 17.837$, p-value < 0.001, df = 8, 186

³⁹ $\beta(\text{Age}) = 1.238$, p-value = 0.001; $\beta(\text{Education}) = -5.358$, p-value = 0.008; $\beta(\text{Income}) = 0.137$, p-value = 0.748; $\beta(\text{Sex}) = -2.086$, p-value = 0.396

⁴⁰ Straughan, R. and James Roberts, 568

Fact sheets

Three fact sheets that highlight the benefits and importance of composting organic waste are provided to owners and managers during the individual interviews. In order to stay consistent to the message that is delivered by Resource Venture and Seattle Public Utilities, the outreach material given to businesses is provided by Resource Venture.

“Recycle Food Scraps at Your Business” outlines the cost savings and positive environmental impacts from composting. The fact sheet describes the cycle of the composting process and how a business’ post-consumer waste ends up back in local gardens and farms. Contact information and details of Resource Venture’s free consulting services are included, along with a short discussion of water conservation as a result to composting food scraps. (See Figure 4 to view “Recycle Food Scraps at Your Business”)

“Look Who’s Composting” is a compilation of success stories about businesses switching to commercial compost collection. The fact sheet highlights the cost savings realized by business firms and the positive environmental impacts as a result from composting food scraps. Consistent with Straughanm’s environmental marketing strategy, the fact sheets that are distributed to owners and managers highlight the direct environmental impacts and financial benefits that result from composting. (See Figure 5 to view “Look Who’s Composting”)

“Commercial Compost Collection” is a food waste handout that identifies the appropriate material that can be collected from businesses including food scraps, food soiled paper and plant/wood scraps. The brochure is critical for business owners and managers who are not aware of composting issues and may not think that the waste generated at their location is categorized as compostable. Identifying compostable material allows businesses to justify changes in their disposal habits because they understand that the switch to composting can create larger gains than they previously expected. (See Figure 6 to view “Commercial Compost Collection”)

Community Pledge

Marketing sustainable behavior requires greater effort than just distributing outreach material. The effectiveness of the outreach campaign is not just measured by the number of individuals approached, but the number of individuals that adopted sustainable practices. Doug McKenzie-Mohr discovered that encouraging recipients to commit to sustainable behavior dramatically increases the probability that the recipient will effectively change behavior as a result from the intervention.⁴¹ In a study about increasing curbside recycling in Salt Lake, Utah, researchers discovered that participants who made a written commitment to adopt recycling behavior were more likely to adopt sustainable behavior compared to receiving a flyer, a telephone call or personal contact.⁴²

⁴¹ Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 49

⁴² Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 52

Commitment techniques are effective because it alters the way the participant perceives themselves. By committing to compost collection, the participant feels that he/she must meet the expectations that result from the agreement. Consistency as a character trait results from the assumption that those who behave inconsistently are perceived by society as untrustworthy and unreliable. Those who make a commitment and follow through with their actions are perceived as honest.⁴³ Another example which McKenzie-Mohr cites is a study conducted by researchers in New York who staged radio thefts at a New York City beach. The “participants” who were asked by a confederate to “watch my stuff” pursued the “thief” 19 out of 20 times. In comparison, “participants” who were not asked by the confederate to watch out for his personal items pursued the “thief” only 4 out of 20 times.⁴⁴ From this example, commitment seems to play a role in influencing participants to change behavior, especially behavior that is not traditionally the participant’s natural activity.

In order to use commitment strategies in this outreach campaign, participants are provided a “composting pledge” after receiving the fact sheets that educate them about the environmental and financial benefits of composting food scraps. The pledge, “Take the Composting Pledge Today!”, outlines how an owner/manager can take action to establish an effective compost collection program at their business. At the bottom, before signing the pledge, the business owner/manager read the following:

“I pledge, along with other businesses in my community, to compost food scraps and other compostable material at my business in order to reduce waste and promote sustainability in my neighborhood.”

Signing the pledge can be done at the point of contact or during the owner/manager’s own time in order to think about the decision. Due to the financial impact that results from switching to composting, the owner/manager might not have the ability to sign right away or must speak with corporate managers before making such a decision. The form, with the signature of the owner/manager, is then sent to Resource Venture to track the number of businesses that began compost collection in Magnolia. (See Figure 7 to view the community pledge)

A second important aspect of the pledge is wording the content so the business is committing to a sustainable behavior *along with other businesses in the community*. Group commitment, as studied by McKenzie-Mohr, can be more effective when the participants are members in a well-established group in which individuals care how they are viewed by other members of the group.⁴⁵ The Magnolia Chamber of Commerce plays such a role with businesses in the Magnolia neighborhood. Since the Chamber was approached in a variety of ways, the business community was aware of the outreach campaign as well as the opportunities afforded to all organic waste generating businesses. Furthermore, by pushing compost collection at Chamber meetings and gatherings,

⁴³ Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 48

⁴⁴ Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 49

⁴⁵ McKenzie-Mohr, 54

composting might begin to be viewed as a social norm which brings with it expectations that businesses adopt the sustainable behavior, encouraging businesses to sign the pledge and follow through with their commitment.

Public Acknowledgement

Public acknowledgment is one of the most important aspects of committing to sustainable behavior. Celebrating the success of a business is a powerful incentive to reward their behavior change because it provides the quick feedback from the community that acknowledges that the business is acting environmentally conscious and promoting a social norm. Public acknowledgement acts as the reward for participation, a reward which further encourages businesses to participate when they may otherwise avoid. The community pledge that is signed by the owner/manager provides the steps which businesses can take to share their results and be recognized. On the pledge, businesses are encouraged to calculate their initial waste disposal volume, and then compare the number to their final volume of waste generating which they can share with Resource Venture. Any additional information can be shared as well, such as costs savings, hints and best practices. Once Resource Venture receives the business' results, the business is featured on the organization's website that honors and advertises the business' activities.

Cedar Grove Composting also provides public acknowledgment for businesses that open accounts with their company. Since the majority of accounts in Seattle are opened up through Cedar Grove, Cedar Grove's recognition is practically a "composting certification". As mentioned before, businesses that begin compost collection programs receive a package of materials that promote their membership in the "Green Scene", a public acknowledgment that honors businesses that engage in compost collection around the Puget Sound. The Green Scene is the membership program that all businesses become a part of when they open accounts with Cedar Grove. Businesses that work with Cedar Grove are listed as partners on Cedar Grove's website, providing businesses another form of advertisement free of charge when they switch to composting.

Window Sticker from Cedar Grove

As part of the promotional material provided to businesses in the "Green Scene", businesses can receive window decals that they can display on their storefronts which market their commitment to composting. Similar to their advertisement of Cedar Grove's "Green Scene" website, the window decals can be used to advertise their participation that can be recognized by the community. Especially with compost collection, the business' participation in the "Green Scene" is practically invisible to community members outside the store. Even customers within the store may not be fully aware of the business' composting activities. By providing businesses a method to promote to the community about their composting behavior, community members can "observe" the company's commitment to composting food scraps. As more businesses begin to advertise their participation in the "Green Scene" in Magnolia, composting can begin to build itself as a social norm which influences community members to adopt as a part of their business activities. Individual behavior is very much influenced by the behavior of

those around them to determine how to respond to different issues.⁴⁶ Thus, by promoting composting as the behavior that businesses should be involved with, non-composters may begin to see themselves as not participating in a socially accepted behavior which is expected from businesses. As a result, there may be greater involvement by the business community to become proactive in participating in composting behavior. Hopefully, the business community would become more susceptible to other sustainable behaviors such as improving recycling, reducing energy consumption and reducing water usage.

Training Volunteers

In order to manage an effective outreach campaign, a training session was organized to educate Sustainable Magnolia volunteers how to conduct the questionnaire and distribute outreach materials to business representatives. The training session included mock-interviews in which each volunteer had the opportunity to act as an interviewer to practice their interviewing skills. “Interviewees” were encouraged to imitate a range of characters that volunteers might approach during their outreach. After each mock-interview, volunteers discussed different techniques to employ in order to elicit constructive responses from business representatives and craft an effective campaign message. The experience also provided a method to tease out awkward questions and inconsistencies hidden in the questionnaire. Training volunteers is an important aspect to designing a successful outreach program. Not only are volunteers learning the skills to effectively approach business representatives in the short run, but developing proficiencies in outreach campaigning that can be taught to other volunteers in the future.

⁴⁶ McKenzie-Mohr, 72

Chapter 8: Measuring Performance

In order to determine the effectiveness of Sustainable Magnolia's outreach campaign, Sustainable Magnolia's performance is tracked based on several criteria that are indicators of success. Since the outreach campaign is in its pilot stage, the performance metrics that have been designed are not based on target goals or benchmarks, but created in order to understand what exactly Sustainable Magnolia can achieve. (See Figure 8 to view performance indicators)

Performance measurement is more than just analyzing the responses from program participants; it is an evaluation tool that tracks the activities implemented by Sustainable Magnolia in order to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of its community outreach. Each aspect of the outreach campaign is analyzed; from the number of volunteer hours available to the organization to the final amount of organic waste that is diverted from the solid waste stream. Based on the final performance data, Sustainable Magnolia will have a detailed account of all the effort that was put into their project along with measurable achievements that resulted from the outreach campaign.

By testing this evaluation tool, Sustainable Magnolia can identify the important measurement indicators that proved to be essential for evaluating program performance. As new knowledge is obtained during this pilot phase, additional performance indicators that are also important for program evaluation may be realized. Hopefully, an effective method for measuring performance will be discovered that can help design future outreach campaigns for Sustainable Magnolia and other neighborhood organizations.

Resources and Capabilities

Resources and capabilities are the inputs that limit or expand Sustainable Magnolia's organizational capacity to conduct its outreach campaign. The following are performance indicators that measure Sustainable Magnolia's resources and capabilities:

- Total number of employees/volunteers
- Total hours of employee/volunteer time
- Total number of dollars budgeted for outreach activities
- Timeframe to conduct outreach campaign

Inputs are significant in order to assess the efficiency of Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities. Measuring inputs provides insight to what is possible with the resources and capabilities the organization starts with at the beginning of its project. For example, Sustainable Magnolia may, at the end of its outreach campaign, divert 1,000 pounds of organic waste from the solid waste stream each month using a couple volunteers and no funding. This analysis can be significant for future grant purposes or for other community organizations that are considering outreach activities but are limited in staff, volunteers and funding.

Outreach Activities

Outreach activities represent the products and services that are delivered by Sustainable Magnolia. Such outputs refer to the actual activities that are conducted by the organization; it is a measurement of what employees/volunteers have done.⁴⁷

Measurable outputs that can be tracked include:

- Number of volunteer training sessions conducted
- Number of community events that were organized to promote commercial composting
- Total number of businesses approached
- Total number of businesses interviewed
- Total number of fliers, fact sheets and community pledges distributed to businesses
- Total employee/volunteer hours spent interviewing businesses and providing outreach material

Reporting output information is common for most organizations; it is easy and an indicator of good management because it keeps track of an organization's activities. Compared to resources and capabilities, monitoring Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities can assess the *effectiveness* of the campaign's impact on the business community.

Intermediate Outcomes

Intermediate outcomes achieve only part of Sustainable Magnolia's overall vision to entirely remove organic waste from the solid waste stream. Such outcomes lead to a desired end but are not the final outcome that an organization wishes to achieve. For example, the following intermediate outcomes are tracked during Sustainable Magnolia's outreach campaign:

- Total number of community members that participated in waste reduction and recycling workshops
- Number of businesses that begin a composting program

These measures are not considered final outcomes because businesses can participate in community activities and create an account with Cedar Grove to collect their compost organic waste, but there is no indication that food scraps are entering the composting bin. Thus, the reduction of organic waste entering the landfill is not being tracked, only that the business has taken the first step to collect compost.

Importantly, these outcomes must be measured as a direct result of Sustainable Magnolia's outreach program. For example, in order to track the number of businesses

⁴⁷ Hatry, H. *Performance Measurement: Getting Results*, The Urban Institute Press, 2006 (Washington, DC), 15

that begin compost collection programs, volunteers can visually count the number of new composting bins that magically appear in their neighborhood next to businesses. However, assumptions based on observational studies are not as strong as direct indicators of the organization's outreach activities. Effective measurements can be done by tracking the number of "community composting pledges" that are sent to Resource Venture. The pledges represent the business owners' intent to begin compost collection programs written on the exact form that was provided to them by Sustainable Magnolia volunteers.

Final Outcomes

The final outcomes are a result of all the inputs, outputs and intermediate outcomes that lead to the actual reduction of organic waste from entering the solid waste stream. The following outcome represents the goal that Sustainable Magnolia envisions for a perfect, sustainable world.

- Total amount of organic waste diverted from the solid waste stream

As mentioned previously, Sustainable Magnolia's success can only be measured by the amount of organic waste being diverted from the solid waste stream, not based on the number of composting accounts that were opened throughout the neighborhood. Waste diversion can be tracked on the "composting pledge form" that is sent to Resource Venture. On the pledge, Resource Venture encourages businesses to track the amount of organic waste diverted from the solid waste stream once businesses have established a stable compost collection program.

A secondary final outcome also exists which is important for Sustainable Magnolia to monitor:

- Total cost savings for businesses that began composting organic waste

Cost savings may not sound like a goal encapsulated by Sustainable Magnolia's vision of sustainability. However, economic savings play a very significant role in sustainable initiatives because they represent the well-being of a community at large. The "environment" does not have to be limited solely to natural spaces and resources, but can include the community members that work and reside within the environment. Therefore, improving the "natural environment" while improving the quality of life for community members can be a shared goal that Sustainable Magnolia can strive towards.

Chapter 9: Summary of Findings

The following chapter will summarize the findings from this study and synthesize the results into a descriptive narrative of the business community and the impact of Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities. To view the detailed results and findings from this study, please see "Figure 9: Findings" in the appendix of this report.

Success of Outreach

Approaching Businesses

Two Sustainable Magnolia volunteers dedicated 300 hours to implement the community outreach campaign over the period of 5 months without any funding source. Sustainable Magnolia's outreach program targeted 35 businesses in the Magnolia neighborhood and was able to successfully contact 27. Contacting business owners consisted of emails, phone calls, and/or direct contact (walk-ins). A business was considered contacted when a volunteer approached a business owner/manager and received a written or verbal response that acknowledged Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities. During the outreach campaign, Sustainable Magnolia was unable to coordinate a waste reduction and recycling workshop with Seattle Public Utilities.

Interviews

Out of the 27 businesses that were contacted, Sustainable Magnolia was able to interview 16 owners/managers. Volunteers spent a total of 5 hours and 10 minutes interviewing businesses, averaging 21 minutes for each interview. A total of 51 fliers, factsheets and community pledges were distributed to businesses during the one-on-one meetings. Sustainable Magnolia discovered that 5 out of 16 businesses currently collect food scraps and other organic material for composting, compared to 11 out of the 16 businesses which did not compost organic waste.

Impact of Sustainable Magnolia's Outreach Activities

At this moment, there have been no businesses that have contacted Resource Venture as a result of Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities. In addition, without information from Resource Venture, there is no way to estimate the total amount of organic waste and financial savings that resulted from Sustainable Magnolia's community outreach campaign.

Responses from Questionnaire

Businesses that Currently Compost

Previous Experience at Work and Home

Previous experience composting food waste at another company seems to be a common reason why an owner/manager initiated a composting program at their work place. In addition, owners and managers reported that they have always known about composting opportunities, perhaps as a result to prior composting experience at work or at home. An interesting trend realized in this study indicated that internal pressure either through corporate management or employee demand also influenced businesses to begin composting at their locations. This may be due to employees' experience at home, raising expectations that their company should also adopt composting behavior.

Changing Collection Service

Businesses have split opinions about the ease of changing their collection service with their waste haulers; three indicated that it was very easy to work with their waste hauler while two reported the process being difficult. Opinions on costs savings were also fragmented. Whereas one owner reported cost savings as very important, the other four were either indifferent to cost savings or did not find it important to their business.

Reasons for Beginning Compost Collection

Business owners respond similarly when asked why they began a composting program at their business and the benefits that resulted. Most businesses reported that environmental sustainability was the essential reason why they compost at their facility. In addition, businesses also mention corporate responsibility as a primary reason why composting is encouraged by their business (3 out of 5 businesses). This is interesting because these two responses are repeated when are asked about the benefits to having a composting program at the business. Based on these responses, it seems that composting food waste can be seen as a form of competitive advantage over other companies that do not compost organic waste. Similar to the previous discussion on "green marketing", businesses that compost may have identified a consumer base that expects companies to act "green".

Business owners/managers that compost their food scraps do understand the environmental impact that composting contributes to reducing the waste stream. In the open-end questionnaire, 4 out of 5 businesses indicated that reducing the waste stream was an important reason why they compost their organic material. When asked if waste minimalization was an important issue that influences businesses to compost, 100% answered that it was "very important" to them. This may be a result of the owner's/manager's knowledge about the amount of organic waste that is currently being diverted through composting, ranging from 25-80% of their waste stream. The

environmental impact of switching away from synthetic to natural fertilizer was also recognized by the majority of business owners that currently compost food waste.

Challenges to Composting

Inconvenience does not seem to be a difficulty that current businesses face when composting their food scraps and organic waste. Most businesses that compost agree that composting food waste at their business is convenient and do not mention logistical or administrative problems with implementing a composting program. The most agreed upon challenge to composting food scraps is educating employees about how to compost organic waste (3 out of 5 businesses). In addition, external issues seem to be the other complication that hinders compost collection, such as uncooperative waste haulers, supply vendors, and negative public opinion. The issue of unwanted odors, rats and flies that can be associated with collecting food scraps does not seem to be a significant issue. Businesses either see composting as no problem or are indifferent to the “ickiness” of collecting old food scraps; however one business owner did perceive compost collection in a negative light.

When asked why non-composters decide not to compost their food scraps, current composters replied that the lack of awareness and perceived inconvenience prevents businesses from starting a composting program at their location. Inconveniences ranging from space limitations, wasting time, and complexities involved and employee training were some of the barriers mentioned that prevent businesses from composting. The size of a business seems to play a role in whether its managers perceive composting as complex. As a company becomes larger, managers will develop greater concern towards the logistics of collecting food scraps. Current composters emphasize that non-composters must realize that there are increasing environmental expectations from customers and staff which should influence non-composters to adopt sustainable behavior and consider composting at their locations. In order to cross the mental barrier, non-composters must learn about the environmental impacts that result from composting organic waste which can validate the claims that composting is important for business.

Businesses that Currently do not Compost

Perception of Inconvenience and Unpleasantness

The majority of non-composters reported that they did not perceive composting as an inconvenient and/or unpleasant activity. In fact, most businesses interviewed agreed that it would be convenient or very convenient to collect food scraps at their facility given that they had the resources to start. Businesses were split when asked their opinion about changing their collection service with their waste hauler to collect food waste. Three reported the process being very easy while three reported the process being very difficult, with the others reporting indifference or simply not knowing.

Although the majority of businesses reported that composting would be convenient to implement, there was considerable evidence that suggests that businesses inherently

perceive compost collection as a complex process to undertake. Answers to open-ended questions indicate that business owners are concerned with the complexity of beginning a collection system, logistical issues due to the size of the company, and even hiring more staff to collect food scraps. One owner responded that adopting compost collection at his business would require creating an action plan. Additional criticisms about creating a collection system include issues such as the long distances they would need to travel to compost material, lack of access to alleyways where the compost bins would be located, the weight of filled compost bags, and homeless raiding trash cans for food at the end of the day.

Lack of knowledge towards composting opportunities available to businesses

The research shows that the majority of non-composters are not aware of current composting opportunities available in the Seattle area, or at least not for business operations. When asked if they were aware of commercial composting opportunities available to them, 4 out of 11 responded “no”. Furthermore, three businesses answered in an open-ended question that lack of awareness was the most important reason why they do not currently compost. Several businesses have responded stating that they compost food waste and yard debris at home, which indicates their understanding about compost collection in general. However, when asked what the City of Seattle needs to do that could encourage businesses to compost food waste, several responses indicated a lack of knowledge about current collection opportunities and collection systems. Such responses included suggestions that the City of Seattle should make composting available, make composting a law, reduce compost rate below garbage rates, and provide centralized drop-off locations for businesses.

Space Limitations

The most significant factor that prevents businesses from starting a composting program is the lack of space inside and outside. When asked the most important reason why they do not compost, businesses primarily mention space issues; three businesses replied that limited space outside was a barrier to composting while three businesses replied that limited space inside was a barrier. To begin a composting program, businesses indicated that the kitchen bins need to be small enough to fit in tight corners of the restaurant, but even with the small size of the container, there would still be not enough room to place them anywhere. From personally observing the food preparation areas in several of the businesses that were interviewed, the concern about space is well justified. Most food preparation areas were designed for efficiency and maximizing space, additional food scraps bins would surely get in the way of a company’s operations. As one respondent mentioned, “Each square foot of kitchen space is critical in order to operate successfully, and adding another collection bin will only trip up employees.”

Financial Costs

The financial costs associated with compost collection are a perception barrier for businesses to begin a food scraps collection system. Several responses indicate that the high upfront costs prevent them from composting food waste, along with the high costs associated with weekly collection offered by the City of Seattle. In addition, the cost of compostable bags and other compostable material was too high, especially compared to standard, cheaper items that can be bought in bulk at low prices.

Several owners/managers mentioned that the cost savings in garbage fees does not justify the start-up and operational costs as a result of composting food scraps. However, the majority of businesses polled indicated that the reduction in waste fees was “very important” for business. For most owners who agreed with that statement, the rationale was that any cost-cutting method improves their business.

The “Ick Factor”

Businesses that do not compost were split when asked if composting is an “icky” method of waste disposal. When asked to respond to the statement: *Composting food scraps attracts unwanted odors, rodents and/or flies*, businesses responded in several ways. 5 disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 4 agreed or strongly agreed, one was indifferent and one did not know. In addition, there were a few responses to the open-ended questions that indicated food scraps collection as “icky” and gross, including: “birds and rats are attracted to rotting food waste” and “food scraps cannot be stored inside very long”.

Overall, the impression is that business owners and employees are accustomed to being surrounded by food, from the preparation stage to waste management, and they perceive food waste in a different light as the majority of citizens. As one manager said, “I’ve been surrounded by food my entire life, dealing with food scraps is just a normal part of my job.” However, there still exists a negative perception to “composting” which may be due to their inexperience. As mentioned previously, the majority of businesses that do compost do not think of composting as “icky”. Therefore, the simple act of composting food scraps, just as a trial run, may be enough to break the perception barrier that exists for non-composters.

The findings in this study are consistent with Belcher’s study *Overcoming the “Ick” Factor* which focused specifically on residents in King County. Those who have no experience composting food scraps had a higher tendency to perceive composting as “icky” compared to those who currently compost.⁴⁸ Similar to residents, the experience of composting for businesses alters the negative perception of food scraps collection because the process has been tried and the “ickiness” that resulted was not a big deal. Therefore, simply having the experience composting should be enough for businesses to overcome this perceived barrier. However, this study discovered that many business

⁴⁸ Belcher, 1

owners and managers who did not compost were already aware of composting at home (probably due to Seattle's aggressive residential composting program), therefore already having some sort of experience with composting in general. It seems that composting at work is a different issue and is perceived in a more negative light than composting at home. Based on the results of these two studies, community members may not realized the similarities between the process of collecting food scraps at home versus composting food scraps at work.

Compost Collection and the Environment

One of the most repeated responses from business owners and managers was their appreciation towards food scraps collection as an environmentally sustainable activity. There could be several reasons why owners/managers responded so positively to compost collection, one being a result of the questionnaire containing value statements about compost collection. This may have enticed non-composters to act defensively and demonstrate that they do share similar values, but cannot implement such collection systems due to the complexities, costs, etc. For example, two value statements were read to non-composters, asking if they agree or disagree: *The following reason is why some businesses begin composting. How important is this reason to you?: Composting can reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill*, and *The following reason is why some businesses begin composting. How important is this reason to you?: Composting creates nutrient-rich soil*.

The majority of businesses strongly agreed with these statements, indicating that they understood the impact composting food scraps has on the environment. Although the responses may be biased due to the wording in the questionnaire, integrating the value statements into the questions and asking business owners/managers to respond adds to the educational proponent of Sustainable Magnolia' outreach.

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they had any additional opinions about composting that could assist this study. The majority of responses were positive statements about composting, indicating not only their understanding of the process and resulting environmental impact, but appreciation for the collection opportunities that were available to businesses and residents. Several respondents replied that composting was good for the environment and beneficial to business. In addition, respondents mentioned the sustainable activities they actively support such as minimizing their use of useless food, reusing unused food for other dishes (e.g. using carrot ends for soup stock), and recycling grease.

Chapter 10: Recommendations

Sustainable Magnolia

The following are recommendations to Sustainable Magnolia in order to continue its outreach campaign and achieve successful results. Also included are recommended strategies for future outreach campaigns that targets other environmental issues.

Track Outcomes

At the time of this writing, Resource Venture has not received any community pledges from businesses that were contacted through Sustainable Magnolia's outreach activities. This may be a result from: (1) the length of time it takes businesses to switch to food scraps collection, (2) non-participation, or (3) businesses that begin composting have not reported to Resource Venture. The following are steps Sustainable Magnolia should take to track outcomes from its outreach campaign:

- **Wait:** Sustainable Magnolia should wait a couple months for businesses to learn more about starting a composting program, contact Resource Venture or Cedar Grove, and speak with their waste haulers to begin food scraps collection. Sustainable Magnolia should contact Resource Venture in August to determine the number of businesses that have sent in their community pledge. In addition, Sustainable Magnolia should expect an additional 1-2 months for all businesses to turn in their paperwork to Resource Venture. By September 2009, Sustainable Magnolia should expect that all participants will have made up their mind to sign the community pledge and send information to Resource Venture.
- **Schedule follow-up visits:** Another method to track outcomes, as suggested by Pam Lewis at Sustainable Magnolia, is to schedule a second visit with participants to see if they changed their services with their waste hauler. This can be done two ways:
 - Volunteers can revisit participants a month after their last meeting to encourage owners/managers to sign up and send information to Resource Venture.
 - Volunteers can revisit participants in September 2009 as a final evaluation and track outcomes during those meetings.

The second method is the preferred option because it gives owners more time to make their decision and volunteers can receive more detailed information from businesses once the owners/managers have a firm understanding of their waste management strategies. In addition, the second method allows Sustainable Magnolia to reach those businesses that have begun composting programs but have not sent in their information to Resource Venture.

Sustainable Magnolia should evaluate the performance of its outreach campaign based on the template that is provided earlier in this report. Volunteers should identify the

indicators that evaluate performance and make sure they track their progress throughout the duration of the campaign.

Coordinate Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Workshops

Sustainable Magnolia should continue to look for ways to set up a workshop with Seattle Public Utilities, Resource Venture, waste haulers, etc. The workshop could be the best way for Seattle Public Utilities to reach small businesses that are currently being underserved by SPU's current outreach activities. The most probable reason why the workshop was not organized initially may be due to Seattle's extension of its recycling program at the end of March which would have taken up a great deal of time and resources to coordinate. However, now that the March 30th switch is complete, organizing the workshop now may be easy for SPU to educate businesses about their recycling and composting options because the department has a more clear understanding of how waste collection will be coordinated in Magnolia and the new services available to businesses. Tom Gannon at Seattle Public Utilities did express interest in a neighborhood workshop, so this is a good opportunity for Sustainable Magnolia to approach Seattle Public Utilities.

Seattle Public Utilities may also be able to provide partial funding for the workshop. If approached correctly, Sustainable Magnolia may also be able to encourage the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce to coordinate a community workshop for businesses to attend.

Future Outreach Campaigns

The business composting campaign has not yet proven to be successful in terms of achieving the stated goals and outcomes. However, this experience has been good to train volunteers about new ways of conducting outreach which can be used for future campaigning on new issues. In the future, Sustainable Magnolia should incorporate the following strategies that proved most beneficial to this outreach campaign:

- **Conduct personal meetings with participants:** The personal one-on-one meetings proved to be very successful. Volunteers were able to speak directly to owners and managers who represented each business in order to clearly communicate Sustainable Magnolia's campaign and ensure participants fully understood their message.
- **Provide participants with a community pledge to commit to sustainable behavior.** The community pledge was a great addition to the outreach campaign because it required participants to acknowledge the outreach material that was provided to them and demonstrate their commitment to act environmentally sustainable.

Whereas the sustainable behavior in this study was encouraging businesses to change their waste hauling services, other community campaigns incorporating a community pledge, such as energy conservation or water usage, can be effective when the behavior can be changed within a day.

The limiting factor in this study was the difficulty in changing the entire way businesses conduct their operations, such as the logistical complexities and financial investments. These worries in the commercial sector require greater time for participants to alter their behavior compared residents. Therefore, using similar outreach strategies for other campaigns may prove much more effective than the results from this study.

Other Community Groups

As mentioned previously, this outreach campaign focused on a particular demographic with particular needs. Even though the final outcomes were not achieved as according to plan, the strategies to approach community participants can still be applied to various campaigns that educate the public about environmental sustainability. This report was written not only as a summary of the outreach activities that were conducted over the length of the project, but also as a guide to explain how and why strategies were implemented in order to conduct a successful outreach campaign. Organizations that wish to design outreach activities around sustainable behavior should read this report and integrate the strategies and lessons learned into their environmental campaign.

Approach the Business Community

Approaching businesses in the correct manner may be the most important take-away from this study. As indicated in this report many times, there are numerous concerns for business owners and environmental sustainability is not at the top of the list. Sustainable behavior is perceived more as a hassle than as essential to business operations, so approaching businesses to speak about sustainability must be carefully crafted in order to present a message that can be well received.

- **Approach the Chamber of Commerce:** Sustainable Magnolia was in a position to address the Chamber of Commerce directly since it was already a member, thus the organization had much better access to businesses than most neighborhood organizations. This allowed Sustainable Magnolia to address the business community about the outreach activities before the campaign began, giving businesses plenty of background information and warning before Sustainable Magnolia contacted potential participants. Community groups that do not have the same type of access could use different routes to notify businesses before campaigning, such as distributing fliers within the neighborhood to potential participants.
- **Make a list of the businesses that will be approached:** Community groups should take the time to list the businesses that will be contacted and receive the names and work phone numbers of owners/manager who they can contact. This allows programs managers and volunteers to effectively track their outreach activities to ensure participants are not being skipped or approached repeatedly.
- **Schedule interviews a couple weeks after notifying the businesses community:** Once the notifications have been sent, allow two weeks before contacting businesses to schedule interviews. This provides them the time to

prepare their thoughts and answers, and also schedule a chunk of their time dedicated only to your interview.

- **Do not immediately engage in outreach through walk-ins and cold calls.** Owners and managers are very busy and do not have the ability to immediately stop their activities and sit down for ten minutes. This was tried before the outreach campaign was designed and did not prove successful. Without proper notification and warning, owners/managers will not be as willing to fully participate, will not provide you with their full attention, and may demonstrate annoyance with the process.

Coordinate Waste Reduction and Recycling Workshops

Community groups should look for ways to set up a workshop with Seattle Public Utilities, Resource Venture, waste haulers, and other vendors to educate businesses about the services available to them. The workshop could be the best way for Seattle Public Utilities to reach small businesses that are currently being underserved by SPU's current outreach activities. Sustainable Magnolia's outreach campaign was unable to schedule a workshop in the Magnolia neighborhood, most likely because Seattle was expanding its recycling program during this campaign which would have distracted the Department from coordinating non-essential community activities. However, organizing the workshop now that the switch-over is complete may be the best time for SPU to educate businesses about their recycling and composting options because the department will have a more clear understanding of how waste collection will be coordinated in Seattle and the new services available to businesses. Tom Gannon at Seattle Public Utilities did express interest in a neighborhood workshop, so this is a good opportunity for community groups to approach Seattle Public Utilities and suggest coordinating an informational workshop. Seattle Public Utilities may also be able to provide partial funding for the workshop to ease the costs to community groups and businesses.

Design Effective Outreach Material

Community groups that wish to design and implement similar commercial composting outreach programs are encouraged to use the outreach material provided in the appendix of this report. Below are recommendations on how to use outreach material effectively:

- **Avoid information overload:** The outreach material provided to businesses was the appropriate amount of paperwork required for the campaign. Any additional material would have been too much information at one time, overloading recipients with too many details leading them to ignore the educational pitch. Try to cut down on the material as much as possible, especially if the outreach campaign is directed towards residents.
- **Invest in high-quality outreach material:** If the budget allows, make nice copies of outreach material for the campaign. If not enough funding is allocated to the project, try at least to print the material in color rather than black and white. This makes the outreach material more attractive to recipients who will be more likely to preserve the document rather than throwing it away.

Include a Community Pledge

In addition to the outreach material provided in this appendix, community groups are encouraged to use the community composting pledge found in the appendix of this report as a template for future outreach campaigns. Below are recommendations on how to design an effective community pledge for any type of outreach campaign.

- **Determine who your audience is and what your message will be:** The community pledge can be designed differently depending on what the educational campaign is designed around. As mentioned previously, the community pledge can be easily signed by participants if they are agreeing to purchase compact fluorescent light bulbs or reduce their water usage. However, if the pledge requires greater commitment where large financial decisions are to be made (e.g. purchasing Energy Star appliances, buying hybrid cars), then the pledge may not be as appropriate to be signed right away, or at all.
- **Incorporate a “community commitment” into the pledge:** The most important aspect of the pledge is the participant’s commitment to adopt sustainable behavior “along with other members in my community”, a promise that ties the recipient to the actions and social norms that other community members are willing to adopt.

Provide Public Acknowledgement

Public acknowledgement is difficult to integrate into an outreach campaign if it is not coordinated with a larger entity. Below are strategies to take advantage of programs and services that are available to community groups that wish to publicly recognize community members who adopt sustainable behavior.

- **Coordinate activities with Resource Venture:** Resource Venture is willing to assist community groups and may be able to develop a strategy that publicly recognizes participants throughout the campaign. However, privacy concerns must be considered before implementation, especially when targeting households and individual participants.
- **Provide recognition material to participants:** Tools such as window stickers or signs that signify participation may be an appropriate form of public recognition which rewards participants by creating a symbol the public can recognize as sustainable behavior. Organizations such as Resource Venture, Cedar Grove and Seattle Public Utilities have these materials and may be willing to collaborate with community groups that are engaged in outreach.

Train volunteers

Volunteer training is important both for ensuring the outreach message is consistent amongst volunteers and the campaign message has all the kinks worked out before it is presented to the public.

- **Practice communicating the message:** When volunteers are practicing outreach, be sure to notice what part of the message is difficult to communicate and which issues need to be expanded or contracted. When practicing, use other volunteers to imitate a range of potential recipients in order to train volunteers to communicate their message in different ways. This ensures that all volunteers gain the knowledge they need about the campaign in order to approach community members and speak effectively.

Measure Performance

Make sure to keep one primary database that tracks all performance indicators through the duration of the project. With several volunteers gathering information all at one time, it will be easier to send information to one central location where it can be store for others to see. In order to ensure consistency, make sure there is a standard framework for information gathering so the right data is being gathered and interpreted correctly.

Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture

Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture should use the findings in this study to redesign its outreach material to address the issues and concerns that are most pressing to small, local businesses. In addition, this report should provide insight to how Seattle Public Utilities should approach the business community to provide critical educational material to underserved business owners and managers.

Approach Small Businesses

Small businesses have not received the adequate information and services through outreach by Seattle Public Utilities or Resource Venture. As the findings reveal, there is a misconception about the recycling and composting services currently provided by Seattle Public Utilities. When asked “*What would need to happen for you to consider starting a composting program at your business*”, the majority of responses have been critical of the services provided by the City of Seattle, some of which are not accurate. For instance, several responses indicate that businesses expect the City of Seattle to make commercial compost collection a law, lower the cost of compost collection (below garbage rates), increase the frequency of pick-ups to once per hour, and provide centralized drop-off collection points across the city. These findings suggest there is little knowledge about how the City provides compost collection and limited access to educational resources. This may be a result of Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture engaging in passive outreach to neighborhood communities which requires

individuals to take the initiative themselves to become educated about the opportunities available to them.

Below are several recommendations that Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture should adopt in order to reach these small, neighborhood businesses.

- **Work Closely with Community Groups:** Community groups are the best vehicles to perform outreach for underserved, small businesses. There are many associations in the community that are willing to do this outreach for the City, all they need is a bump in the right direction plus a little assistance in the form of material, resources, and/or leadership. For example, the SCALLOPS network is constantly looking for community partners to help educate citizens about environmental sustainability. There is a “Sustainable Magnolia” in each neighborhood of Seattle waiting to receive support from Seattle Public Utilities. Use these groups to become more aggressive in providing resources that businesses need to adopt sustainable practices. This is a low-cost, high impact policy option which Seattle Public Utilities must consider.
- **Coordinate Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Workshops:** Workshops act as a perfect, one-time outreach strategy which can target a high number of participants with little time commitment. Seattle Public Utilities is in the perfect position to coordinate stakeholders and organize a single meeting of representatives from all positions in waste management that can discuss the opportunities available to businesses. This is the type of meeting that business representatives need; a place to learn about opportunities, ask questions and voice concerns about their waste services. Not only is critical information being addressed to those who need it, but the workshops symbolize Seattle Public Utilities’ mission to reach out to communities and provide quality service.

Redesign Educational Material

Based on the findings of this study, Seattle Public Utilities and Resource Venture should work together to redesign their outreach material to address the concerns and issues that are most important to the business community.

- **Address space issues:** As mentioned in the findings, the most significant concerns that face business owners are space issues. However, none of the educational material provided by Seattle Public Utilities or Resource Venture addresses these concerns. In order to successfully encourage participation, SPU and Resource Venture should redesign their educational material to address how Resource Venture and Cedar Grove Composting will provide free consulting services to assist businesses with space issues.
- **Address logistical issues:** The educational material available to businesses does not explain how an owner can solve the simple logistical issues of collecting food scraps by contacting Resource Venture or Cedar Grove. As mentioned previously, the logistical issues of managing a food scraps collection program is a big problem for several businesses, especially those that are larger. In order to

successfully encourage participation, SPU and Resource Venture should redesign their educational material to address how Resource Venture and Cedar Grove Composting will provide free consulting services to assist businesses with logistical issues.

- **Be specific:** Designing the outreach material should address these issues *specifically*, not just in general terms that Resource Venture and Cedar Grove provide free consulting services. The information provided in the material should be enough to grab the attention of the reader by addressing the issues that are most important to him/her (such as space and logistical issues), encouraging them to contact these consulting organizations.
- **Address overcoming the “ick factor”:** Based on the findings of this study, businesses easily overcome the “ick factor” once they have experience collecting food scraps for compost. Integrate the “ick factor” into educational material and describe how easy it is for businesses to collect food scraps without it becoming an “icky” process. Also describe how quickly businesses will become accustomed to collecting food waste once they begin a composting program. Importantly, address the similarities between food scraps collection at home and at work.
- **Highlight the competitive advantage that results from composting:** As discovered in this report, businesses that currently compost see composting as an advantage over their competitors because they are viewed as a “green” company. With a rise in consumer expectations that businesses should be acting more sustainable and environmentally-friendly, composting may become a very attractive quality for Seattle customers. Therefore, Resource Venture and Seattle Public Utilities should indicate in their new educational material that consumers want more businesses to compost food scraps and will be attracted by those businesses that participate in the “Green Scene”.

Conclusion

This study discovered that business owners and managers are aware of their impact on the environmental and do have an interest in acting environmentally sustainable. In fact, the research finds that the majority of respondents do in fact act sustainability in some way, such as composting at home, reusing food scraps, minimizing food waste and other personal behaviors. In addition, the majority of owners and managers acknowledge and support the positive environmental impact that results from composting. However, they have little knowledge about how to participate in a food scraps collection program at work. This is due to several reasons; (1) Seattle Public Utilities does not have enough funding to target low-volume waste generators, (2) space and simple logistical problems discourage businesses from approaching Resource Venture or Cedar Grove to begin a compost collection program, and (3) community groups do not have the proper resources, support and direction to conduct aggressive outreach campaigns in the community to address these issues. By designing effective outreach campaigns, community groups can better provide educational services to these businesses and promote sustainability in their neighborhoods.

This research project was designed to identify these issues and provide recommendations to the active players in waste management in order to improve commercial compost collection in Seattle. I also encourage anyone in the waste management field, from any jurisdiction regarding any waste issue, to read this report and use my findings to better improve outreach strategies for community members in your area. If you have any trouble designing strategies for your outreach activities, please use this report as your guide for implementing successful outreach campaigns.

Appendix

Figure 1: Compost Containers



32 Gal. Toter/Bag
64 Gal. Toter
96 Gal Toter



1 Cubic Yard Container
Length: 72"
Depth: 24"
Height: 29"



2, 3 & 4 Cubic Yard Containers
Length: 72"
Depths: 34", 43" & 51"
Heights: 45", 48" & 56"



6 & 8 Cubic Yard Containers
Length: 80"
Depths: 66" & 71"
Heights: 71" & 86"

Table 1: Commercial Garbage Collection Rates



Commercial Garbage Container Rates

Rates Effective March 30, 2009

Container Service – Monthly Rates										
Account Fee: \$14.75 per account										
	Size or Type of Container									
Service Type	32 Gal.	60 Gal.	90 Gal.	1 Yd	1.5 Yd	2 Yd	3 Yd	4 Yd	6 Yd	8 Yd
Non-Compacted Material										
Each Container, Weekly Pickup	\$27.70	\$56.30	\$65.80	\$134.23	\$180.02	\$225.81	\$317.39	\$408.97	\$592.13	\$775.29
Special Pickups, per container	\$8.00	\$16.25	\$19.00	\$44.25	\$50.70	\$66.40	\$79.35	\$92.25	\$116.60	\$141.75
Compacted Material										
Each Container, Weekly Pickup	—	—	—	\$228.62	\$321.61	\$414.60	\$600.57	\$786.54	\$1,158.49	\$1,530.44
Special Pickups, per container	—	—	—	\$60.75	\$75.50	\$99.50	\$129.00	\$158.45	\$215.95	\$274.20
Other Charges										
Extra Garbage Collection and Overload Containers								\$24.30 per cubic yard. Assessed per 1/4 cubic yard		

Table 2: Commercial Compost Collection Rates



Commercial Compost Rates

Rates Effective March 30, 2009

Container Service – Monthly Rates										
Service Type	Size or Type of Container									
	32 Gal.	60 Gal.	90 Gal.	1 Yd	1.5 Yd	2 Yd	3 Yd	4 Yd	6 Yd	8 Yd
Non-Compacted Material										
Each Container, Weekly Pickup	\$18.85	\$38.30	\$44.75	\$91.30	\$122.40	\$153.55	\$215.85	\$278.10	\$402.65	\$527.20
Special Pickups, per container	\$5.45	\$11.05	\$12.90	\$30.10	\$34.50	\$45.15	\$53.95	\$62.75	\$79.30	\$96.40
Compacted Material										
Each Container, Weekly Pickup	—	—	—	\$155.45	\$218.70	\$281.95	\$408.35	\$534.85	\$787.80	\$1,040.70
Special Pickups, per container	—	—	—	\$41.30	\$51.35	\$67.65	\$87.70	\$107.75	\$146.85	\$186.45

Figure 2: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Does this business compost food scraps and organic waste? Y / N

IF BUSINESS COMPOSTS, READ “A” BELOW

A. Business does compost food scraps and organic waste

How did your business first learn about composting opportunities in Seattle?

What are the benefits to having a composting program?

What is the biggest challenge to you as a composter?

Would you please describe the most important reasons why you compost?

Based on your past experiences, why do businesses that generate food waste choose not to compost?

For businesses that do not currently compost, what advice can you provide to businesses that could encourage them to compost organic material?

Survey questions for businesses that compost

(On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=very difficult, 5=very easy, 6=don't know).

How difficult/easy was it to change your collection service with your waste hauler?

(On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)

It is convenient to collect food scraps at your business

Collecting food scraps attracts unwanted odors, rodents and/or flies

Other

What percentage of your waste do you think is collected as compost?

Reasons why this business composts (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting can save your business money by reducing waste fees

Composting can reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill

Composting creates nutrient-rich soil

IF BUSINESS DOES NOT COMPOST, READ “B” BELOW

B. Business does not compost food scraps and organic waste

Some people think of composting as an inconvenient and/or unpleasant activity. Is that a perception that you share? If so, what do you see as inconvenient and/or unpleasant about composting?

Are you aware of commercial composting opportunities available in the Seattle area?

Would you please describe the most important reasons why you don't compost?

What would need to happen for you to consider starting a composting program at your business?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about composting?

Survey questions for businesses that do not compost

(On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=very difficult, 5=very easy, 6=don't know).

How difficult/easy would it be to change your collection service with your waste hauler?

(On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)

It would be convenient to collect food scraps at your business

Collecting food scraps attracts unwanted odors, rodents and/or flies

Other

What percentage of your waste do you think can be collected as compost?

The following are reasons why some businesses begin composting. How important are these reasons to you? (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting can save your business money by reducing waste fees

Composting can reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill

Composting creates nutrient-rich soil

Figure 3: Memorandum to the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce

MEMORANDUM

To: Magnolia Chamber of Commerce
From: Grayson Court, University of Washington
Re: Sustainable Magnolia – Commercial Composting Opportunities in Magnolia
Date: February 10, 2009

Overview

Volunteers from Sustainable Magnolia will be contacting businesses to schedule appointments with owners and managers to discuss commercial composting opportunities available in the Seattle area. Sustainable Magnolia is interested in speaking with businesses that generate food waste, such as:

- Restaurants
- Coffee shops
- Bakeries
- Supermarkets

Meetings will last between 15-20 minutes, depending on the availability of the business representative. Sustainable Magnolia volunteers will begin calling businesses the week of February 16, 2009.

During the Meeting

The meeting is designed to educate business representatives about the benefits of recycling food waste. Sustainable Magnolia volunteers will also ask businesses several questions about their thoughts on composting food waste through a short questionnaire.

The following is an outline of what businesses can expect during the meeting:

- Short questionnaire (*10 questions*)
- Four fact sheets outlining the environmental benefits and cost savings from composting food waste
- Community composting pledge for businesses that decide to compost their food waste

All of this information will be fully explained during the meetings between Sustainable Magnolia volunteers and business representatives. For more information about the meetings, or if you would like to schedule an appointment with a Sustainable Magnolia volunteer, please contact Grayson Court at 360-789-0296 (grayson.court@gmail.com).

Figure 4: “Recycle Food Scraps at Your Business”

Recycle Food Scraps at Your Business

Vegetable trimmings, food-soiled paper napkins, fruit scraps, pizza boxes and more can be recycled to create compost, a nutrient-rich soil amendment.

Why?

The business case: Food scrap recycling can reduce your garbage costs by as much as 32%

Food scrap recycling is priced to be an attractive money-saving opportunity for businesses! Food scrap recycling service is not just significantly cheaper (32%!) than waste disposal, it is also tax free! You save when you:

- A. Divert food scraps and compostable paper away from garbage and into the cheaper food scrap dumpster, and therefore,
- B. Pay less for garbage disposal because you dispose of less material.

The environmental case: Food scrap recycling completes the biological cycle and reduces your climate impact!

When food scraps are disposed and then composted in the Puget Sound region, they return to local soils as a rich amendment to once more, grow healthy plants and food. It also minimizes the climate impact. For one, because food scraps are processed locally by Cedar Grove Composting, waste transport-related emissions are reduced, and for another, compost often displaces synthetic fertilizer, a petro-chemical by-product. Synthetic fertilizers not only ultimately deplete soil, but also have a climate impact because of emissions associated with the extraction, refining, production, and transport of oil.

Moreover, when food scraps and food-soiled paper are buried in a landfill without access to oxygen, they release methane gas as they decompose. By comparison, the process of composting circulates oxygen through the materials, minimizing methane production. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas. It traps over 20 times as much heat as carbon dioxide. While methane is sometimes captured at landfills for the production of electricity, the portion that isn't is available to trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to climate change.

Save Water

Collecting food waste can save thousands of gallons of water annually, water that would have been used to wash food off of dishes in a pre-wash sink and down a food grinder. Saving water translates into lower water AND sewer bills resulting in more dollar savings for your business.

Where Do I Sign Up?

Resource Venture: 206.343.8505 or help@resourceventure.org

CleanScapes: 206.859.6700

Cedar Grove Composting: 1.877.764.5748

Allied Waste: 206.332.7777

Get started today!

Resource Venture provides FREE:

- Implementation and compliance assistance
- Incentives and rebates
- Employee training
- Educational materials
- Awards and recognition

Figure 5: “Look Who’s Composting”

Look Who’s Composting!

Commercial Compost Collection

Composting!
Good for the Earth.
Good for Business.



Why Waste a Good Thing?
Sign up today!
206-343-8505

 City of Seattle
www.seattle.gov/util

Thinking about reducing your company’s bottom line? Restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, food processors and others are now composting their food scraps through the City of Seattle’s Commercial Compost Collection program. See how they rate this unique and exciting new service!



Starbucks Café – Magnolia
Magnolia’s Starbucks Café generates up to **200 gallons** of coffee grounds and food scraps every week. Their employee training and one-on-one conversations with staff have helped to achieve a **100%** composting rate for coffee grounds, food-soiled paper and cardboard. Starbucks Café is confident this program will help their business save money.

Canlis Restaurant
Canlis, an upscale restaurant overlooking Lake Union, joined the program because of their commitment to the environment and their interest in sustainability. They compost about **580 gallons** of fruit and vegetable trimmings, bread and pasta, table scraps, meat and dairy per week. As a result, Canlis saves roughly **\$80 per month** by composting. Canlis is very satisfied with the program and *“highly recommends”* it to other businesses.

A Taste of Paradise
This small food-processing company in South Park composts about **230 gallons** of food waste per week. It is convenient because their food waste containers can be kept right next to their facility. Since beginning the program, A Taste of Paradise generates much less garbage, and reduced their garbage service (and bill) accordingly. They *“definitely recommend”* this service.

PCC Natural Markets
Collectively, PCC’s five Seattle-area grocery stores compost approximately **10,100 gallons** of food waste and food-soiled paper per week. All stores use a system of color-coded bins that clearly designate where garbage, food waste and other recyclables go. By composting, a medium-sized grocery store can save about **\$300 per month**. PCC *“absolutely”* recommends this program to other businesses.

Essential Baking Company

In addition to two cafés in the Wallingford and Madison Valley neighborhoods, the Essential Baking Company (EBC) has a full bakery and processing facility where they compost about **6,000 gallons** of food waste and food-soiled paper every week. They use a convenient kitchen cart that holds containers for trash and food waste. EBC composts because they want to *“conduct our business with social and environmental responsibility.”* They are also estimated to save about **\$500 per month**.



Wild Mountain Café

This environmentally-conscious restaurant in the Crown Hill neighborhood has been composting since it opened in 2000. They compost between **200 and 300 gallons** per week, including their garden clippings. Wild Mountain Café publicizes their

efforts to customers by posting the details of their waste prevention and recycling programs on the back of their menus. Wild Mountain Café says, *“People shouldn’t shy away from composting. It’s so easy!”*

What Food Can I Recycle?

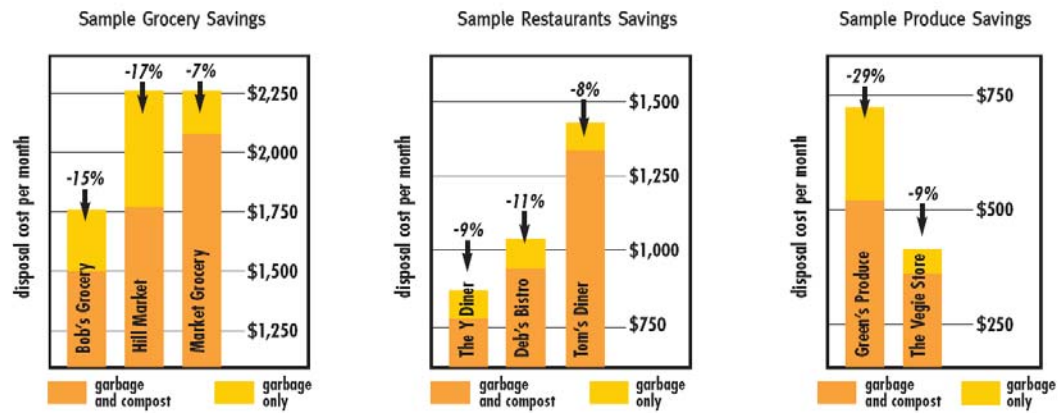
Virtually all food waste and food-related paper can be composted, including:

- fruit and vegetable trimmings
- meat, chicken, fish, shell fish and bones
- eggs, cheese and other dairy products
- grains, breads and pasta
- coffee grounds, filters and tea bags
- shredded paper and paper soiled with food, fat or grease
- waxed paper, waxed milk cartons and waxed cardboard
- cups, plates, napkins and take-out containers



Businesses that compost can cut their garbage bill by **30 percent**. Compost collection rates are **20 percent less** than garbage rates and most City and State taxes do not apply.

Businesses that save the most, compost all accepted items and reduce the frequency of their garbage collection and the size of their garbage containers. Sample savings realized by medium-sized businesses are shown below.



Composting!
Good for the Earth. Good for Business.

Figure 6: “Commercial Compost Collection”

Commercial Compost Collection



Yes!

Food Scraps

Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish & bones
Egg & dairy products
Table scraps & plate scraping
Fruit & vegetables
Bread, dough, pasta, grains
Coffee grounds, filters & tea bags



Food Soiled Paper

Kitchen Paper Towels
Uncoated Paper Take-out Containers
Pizza Delivery Boxes
Paper Napkins
Waxed Cardboard & Paper
Uncoated Paper Cups, Plates (No lids, straws or creamers)



Plant & Wood Scraps

Plants & flowers (No flower pots)
Wood pallets & crates (No wire)
Landscape vegetation (less than 4' long & 4" diam.)





NO!

*Plastic bags
*Plastic tubs & bottles
*Glass bottles & jars
*Metal
Produce baskets & netting
Burlap
Plastic wrap
Cork
Coated or Plastic take-out containers
Paper dairy cartons
Plastic plates, cups & utensils
Latex & plastic gloves
Styrofoam
Foil
Wire & rubber bands
Grease & liquids
Restroom tissues & paper towels
Painted & treated wood
Pet waste



Keep containers clean:

- ◆ Use paper bags, layered shredded paper, waxed cardboard boxes or approved compost bags (www.cgcompost.com).
- ◆ Rinse containers frequently into the sanitary sewer.
- ◆ Request clean containers as needed from Cedar Grove

1-877-764-5748

www.cgcompost.com



Figure 7: Community Pledge

Take the Composting Pledge Today!

Step 1. Calculate How Much Food Your Business Throws Away

Determine the percentage of food that is thrown into the garbage at your business.

- Conduct a simple visual audit of your container or contact Resource Venture to utilize an online tracking tool. An estimated 37% of all commercial waste in Seattle is compostable.

Step 2. Take Action

Sign up to begin a composting program at your business, its easy to do, and saves money! Call one of the following organizations for FREE consulting services:

Cedar Grove: 1-877-764-5748

CleanScapes: 206-763-4444

Resource Venture: 206-343-8505 or email at help@resourceventure.org

Step 3. Measure & Share Your Results

Measure the amount of food recycled as a result of starting a composting program (with the help of your service provider). Then, share your results with Resource Venture by emailing your information to: help@resourceventure.org or by faxing this side of the form to: (206) 343-9819.

Step 4. Be Recognized

When you take action and share your results with Resource Venture, your business's success will be featured on Resource Venture's website. In addition, by signing up for food waste collection with Cedar Grove, you become a member of the Green Scene and receive free window decals to advertise your participation to the community, and are listed as a partner on Cedar Grove's website, <http://www.gogreenscene.com/members.asp>.

I pledge, along with other businesses in my community, to compost food scraps and other compostable material at my business in order to reduce waste and promote sustainability in my neighborhood.

Signed: _____

Company: _____

Date: _____

Figure 8: Findings

Performance Measures

Inputs

- Total number of employees/volunteers = 2
- Total hours of employee/volunteer time spent dedicated to project = 300 hours
- Total number of dollars budgeted for outreach project = \$0
- Length of outreach campaign = 5 months

Outputs

- Number of volunteer training sessions conducted = 1
- Total number of businesses contacted = 27 out of 35
- Number of waste reduction and recycling workshops organized to promote commercial composting = 0
- Businesses interviewed = 16
- Total length of time interviewing businesses = 310 minutes
- Total number of fliers, fact sheets and community pledges distributed to businesses = 51

Intermediate Outcomes

- Total number of community members that participated in waste reduction and recycling workshops = 0
- Number of businesses that began a composting program = N/A

Final Outcomes

- Total amount of organic waste diverted from the solid waste stream = N/A
- Total cost savings for businesses that began composting organic waste = N/A

Responses to Questionnaire

Businesses that Currently Compost (5 out of 16)

1) How did your business first learn about composting opportunities in Seattle?

- Previous experience (2 responses)
- Knew about composting opportunities for a long time (2 responses)
- Required by corporate management
- Employee demand
- Online
- Neighboring business

2) What are the benefits to having a composting program?

- Being environmentally sustainable (3 responses)
- Corporate responsibility (2 responses)
- Cost savings (2 responses)
- Small dumpsters (2 responses)
- Competitive advantage – viewed as a “green business” (2 responses)
- Reduces waste that goes to the landfill (2 responses)

3) What is the biggest challenge to you as a composter?

- Employee education (3 responses)
- Supply vendors not clear if material is compostable (e.g. plastic utensils, cups) (2 responses)
- Difficult to encourage customers to compost (2 responses)
- No challenge
- Compost collection not picked up enough, food waste has to go in trash
- Collection is skipped some weeks
- Hauler is not interested in quality service
- Outside space limitation
- Negative public opinion – “Restaurant is storing rotten food in the back”

4) Would you please describe the most important reasons why you compost?

- Reduces waste going to the landfill (4 responses)
- Corporate responsibility – it’s the right thing to do (3 responses)
- Environmentally sustainable
- Feeds plants
- Business practices align with personal values

5) Based on your past experiences, why do businesses that generate food waste choose not to compost?

- Not convenient (3 responses)
- Not aware of opportunities (2 responses)
- Hard to train employees (2 responses)
- Don't want to waste time
- Space limitation
- Complexity
- Stuck with what the building provides
- Compost collection is seen as filthy by patrons and neighbors
- Collection service can skip business sometimes
- High costs for large kitchens

6) For businesses that do not currently compost, what advice can you provide to businesses that could encourage them to compost organic material?

- Corporate responsibility - Businesses should give back to their community
- There are increasing environmental expectations from customers, staff
- Composting completes the natural lifecycle
- Educate neighbors and patrons about composting
- Composting dramatically reduces the waste stream
- High cost savings

Businesses that do not currently Compost (11 out of 16)

1) Some people think of composting as an inconvenient and/or unpleasant activity. Is that a perception that you share? If so, what do you see as inconvenient and/or unpleasant about composting?

- No (6 responses)
- Inconvenient (4 responses)
 - Trash cans are too far away (2 responses)
 - Difficult to implement because of the large size of the business (2 responses)
 - Have to build a new dumpster shed
 - Expensive to start
 - No back door to an alleyway
 - Need an action plan to start because of the complexity of the process
 - Bags are heavy
 - Not fun to do
- No answer (1 response)

2) Are you aware of commercial composting opportunities available in the Seattle area?

- Yes = 4
- No = 7

3) Would you please describe the most important reasons why you don't compost?

- Limited space outside (3 responses)
- Limited space inside (3 responses)
- Not aware of opportunities (3 responses)
- Need more staff (3 responses)
- Compostable bags are more expensive (2 responses)
- Business minimizes food waste as much as possible so there is not much to throw away (2 responses)
- High costs (2 responses)
- Birds and rats are attracted to rotting food waste
- Food scraps cannot be stored inside very long
- Savings do not justify the costs
- Complex process to begin
- Limited to what building provides
- Decision goes through landlord

4) What would need to happen for you to consider starting a composting program at your business?

- City of Seattle should lower the costs of compost collection (2 responses)
- City of Seattle should make composting more convenient
- City of Seattle should make it a law
- City of Seattle should provide centralized drop-off locations
- City of Seattle should provide free compost collection service
- City of Seattle should cut taxes
- Receive a brochure or information
- Composting should be collected hourly
- Kitchen bins need to be small enough
- Need a place to put a kitchen container
- Similar businesses should demonstrate how they were able to begin a composting program
- Landlord has to say "yes"
- Lower costs for compostable products

5) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about composting?

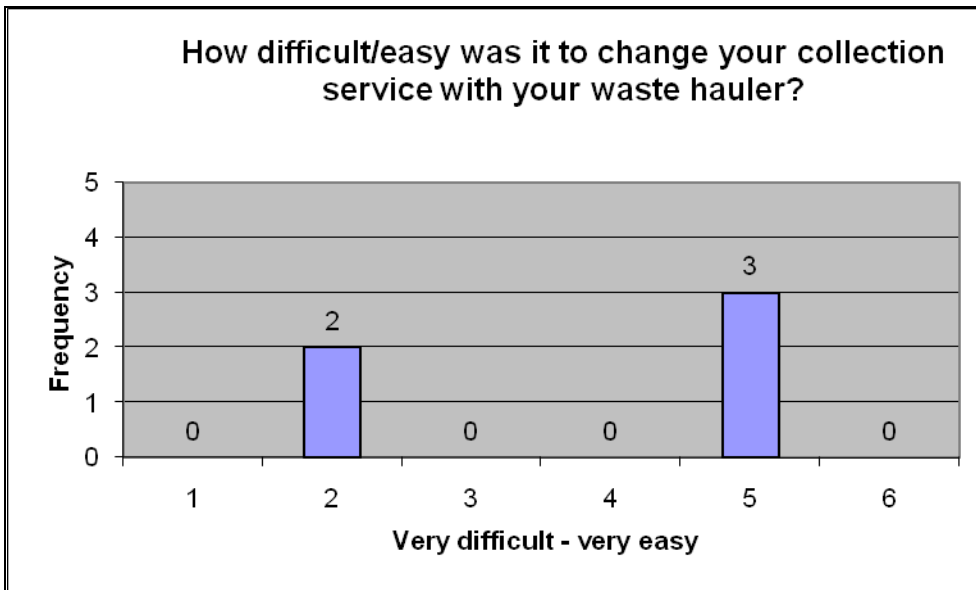
- Composting is good for the environment (3 responses)
- Owner/manger composts at home (3 responses)
- Business currently recycles grease (2 responses)

- Food that can be reused are good for other dishes (e.g. using carrot ends for soup stock)
- City of Seattle does not provide compost collection service
- Costs are too high
- Hard to do at business because each foot of space is critical
- Trash collection costs \$180 per month (small business)
- Homeless raid trash cans for food at the end of the day
- Shared trash bins cost \$1500 per month between 3 businesses
- Composting is good for business
- Learned about composting from a customer
- Understand that many businesses compost food scraps
- Glad that commercial compost collection is available
- Used to compost, but it became too expensive due to high operational costs (large company)
- Low quality compostable products

Responses to Survey-style Questions

Businesses that currently Compost (5 businesses)

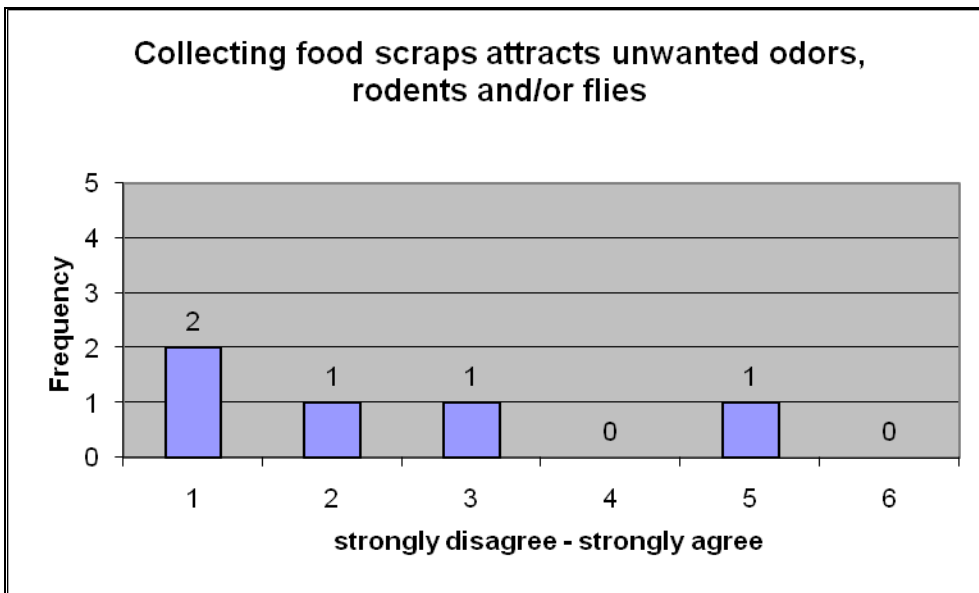
1) (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=very difficult, 5=very easy, 6=don't know).
 How difficult/easy was it to change your collection service with your waste hauler?



2) (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)
It is convenient to collect food scraps at your business



3) (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)
Collecting food scraps attracts unwanted odors, rodents and/or flies

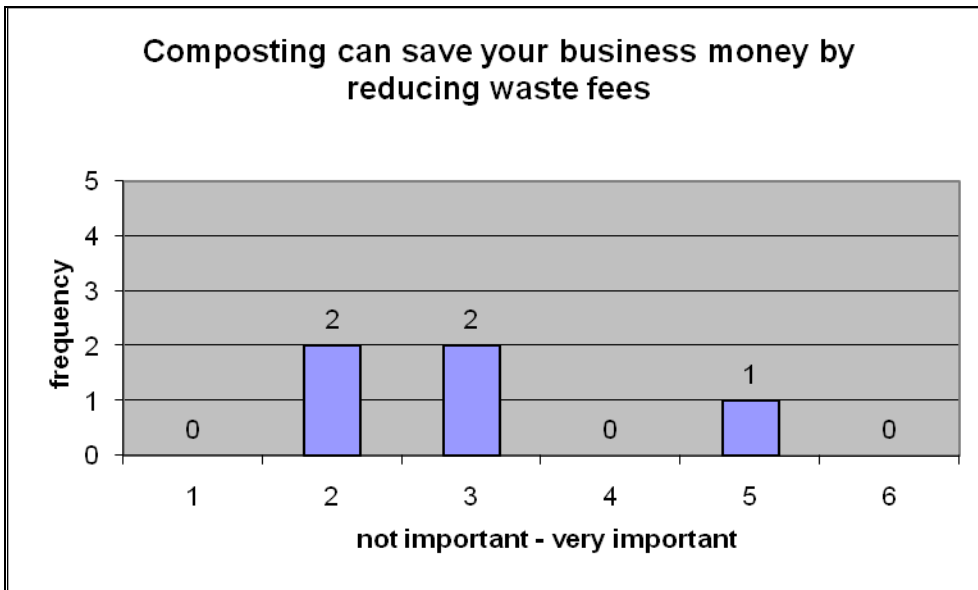


4) What percentage of your waste do you think is collected as compost?

- 25%
- 40%
- 50%
- 66%
- 80%

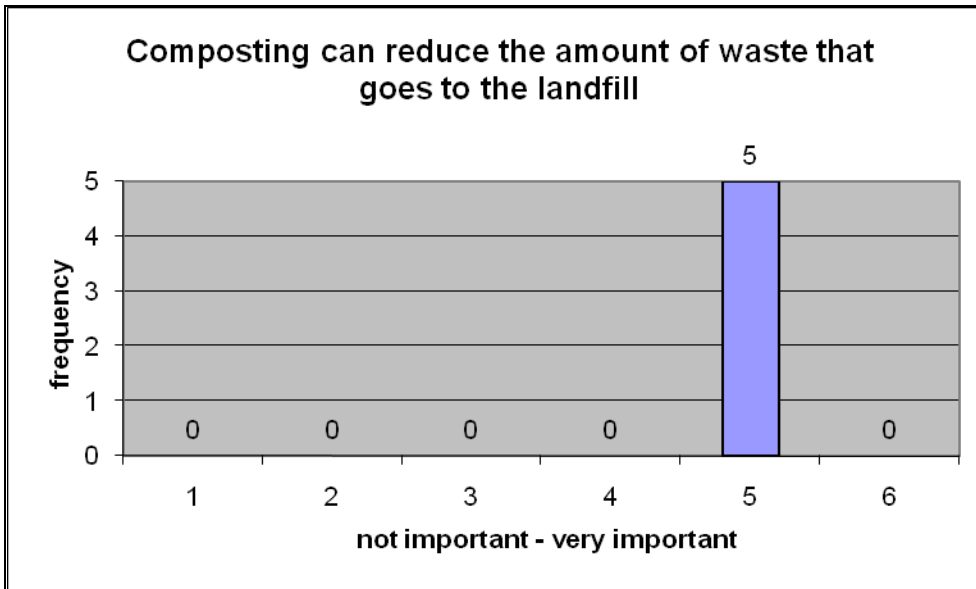
5) Reasons why this business composts (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting can save your business money by reducing waste fees



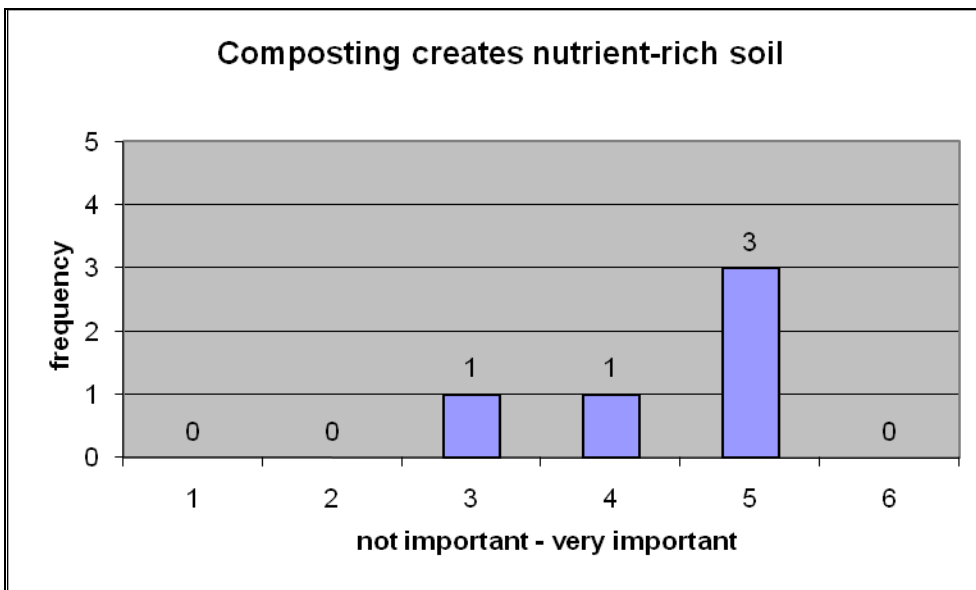
6) Reasons why this business composts (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting can reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill



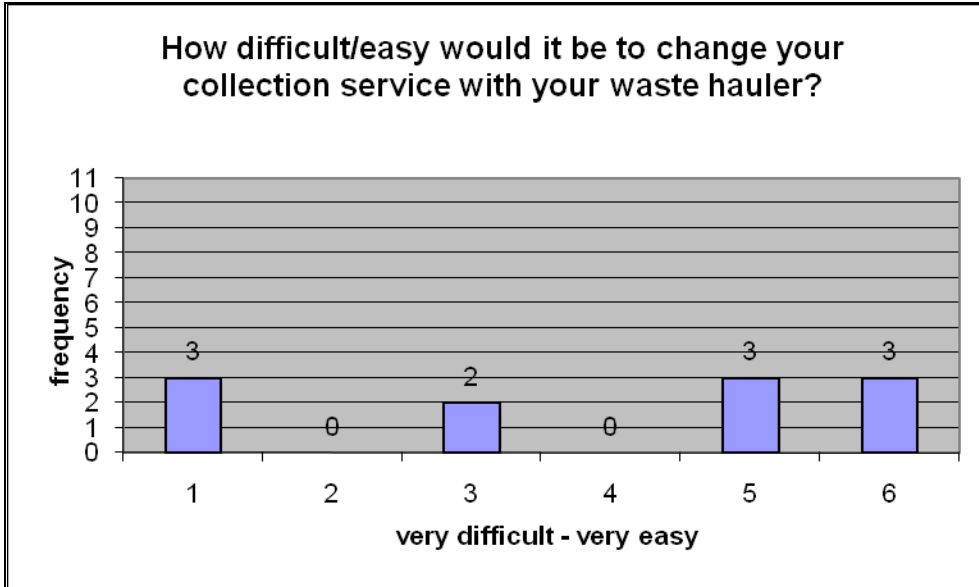
7) Reasons why this business composts (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting creates nutrient-rich soil



Businesses that do not currently Compost (11 businesses)

1) (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=very difficult, 5=very easy, 6=don't know).
How difficult/easy would it be to change your collection service with your waste hauler?



2) (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)
It would be convenient to collect food scraps at your business



3) (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree, 6=don't know)
Collecting food scraps attracts unwanted odors, rodents and/or flies



4) What percentage of your waste do you think can be collected as compost?

- 2%
- 6%
- 10%
- 15%
- 20%
- 20%
- 45%
- 75%
- 80%

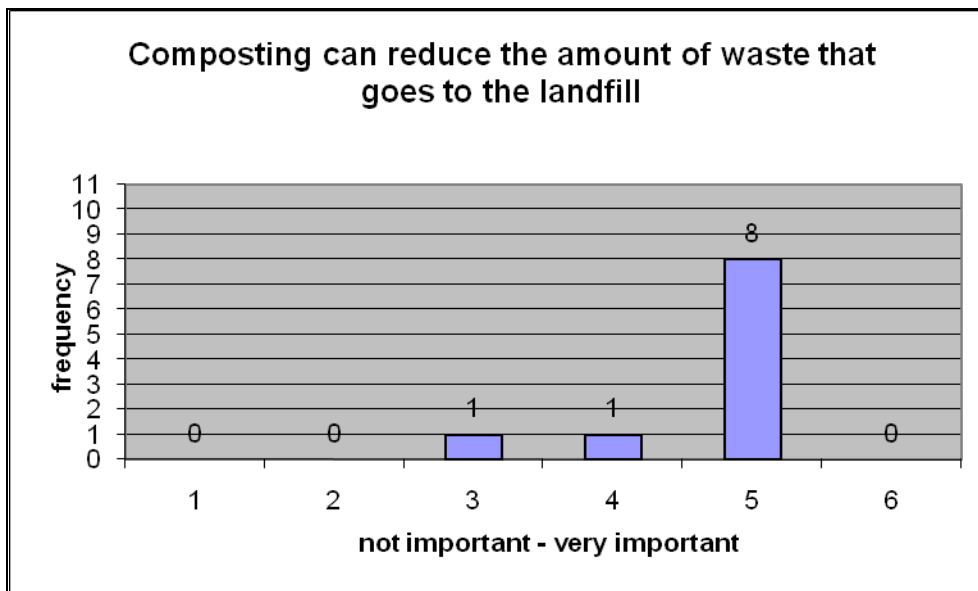
5) The following are reasons why some businesses begin composting. How important are these reasons to you? (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting can save your business money by reducing waste fees



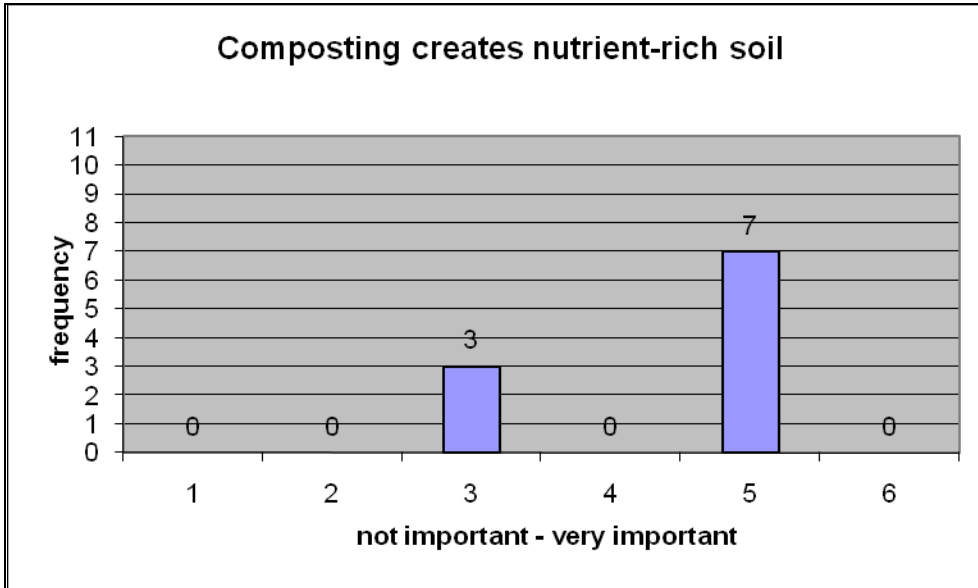
6) The following are reasons why some businesses begin composting. How important are these reasons to you? (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting can reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill



7) The following are reasons why some businesses begin composting. How important are these reasons to you? (On a scale of 1 to 5: 1=not important at all, 5=very important, 6=don't know)

Composting creates nutrient-rich soil



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