



Civic Centre Waste Minimisation Club Case study

In March 2002 seven departments in the Cape Town Civic Centre formed a Waste Minimisation Club. A pre-assessment conducted during April to August 2002 highlighted the focus areas and improvement options for the entire building. These reports were circulated to the department heads with the idea that implementation of these options would take place. The results below indicate the implementation of options to date.

Recycling: More recycling bins have been placed in various departments. Employees have become more aware of the usage of these bins. There is a 20% increase in recycling at the Civic Centre.

Coffee cups: Every month the Civic Centre purchases 80 000 plastic cups. These cups are used for the coffee machines. In the Civic Centre there are 48 coffee machines, which are filled every month with 1660 plastic coffee cups. One plastic cup costs R 0.18. The goal is to have all employees using ceramic mugs that can be reused. They have reduced the amount of usage of disposable cups and are now purchasing less. Employees have been made aware that they should bring their own mugs from home to reduce the cost of disposable cups. The Civic Centre is therefore currently saving about R40,000 per year on the usage of cups.

Cartridges: The previous practice at the Civic Centre was that all old cartridges were replaced with new ones. Recently the Civic Centre implemented a take back system for the refilling of cartridges. Therefore the purchase costs for the cartridges have been decreased. The savings that have been generated from this option is approximately R 400,000 per year.

Stationary: In future the stationary system will be changed to an electronic system, which will save on paper as each department uses a quadruple form that needs to be filled in.

Cafeteria waste: Styrofoam is mostly used for the packaging of takeaway food in the cafeterias and plastic cutlery. Currently the cafeterias have implemented the use of crockery for sit-down meals. There is a cumulative saving of R 146,000 per year. This option can still be improved by using returnable packaging for the meals provided at the cafeterias.

Double sided printing: There are only two departments in the Civic Centre that is using double sided printing. The amount of paper used by these departments is unknown; however they are saving between 40-50% of paper usage. This option should be implemented throughout the Civic Centre to decrease the paper usage. Employees should also be encouraged to use one sided copies for scrap paper.

It is recommended that if a Waste Minimisation Club would take place at an office building the top management should be committed to the project. In the Civic Centre the councilors and senior management was not made aware of the Waste Minimisation Club, therefore it was very difficult for individual departments to implement options on their own. The organization structure of the Civic Centre is unstable and information is not readily available.