

How much MONEY are you throwing away?

Many building or office managers look at recycling as an expense or as a utility when recycling can not only lower your expenses, but also help building managers meet corporate green initiatives as well. With the merger plans between Republic and Allied Waste Industries, we will yet again see the solid waste industry consolidate the finite landfill resources into even larger and even fewer corporations. Depending on the Department of Justice antitrust review, the result may well be a continued escalation of the disposal price increases that seem to be occurring on a semi-annual basis or even more frequently now.

To better answer the question of “How much money is your business may be throwing away?” let’s take a look at a case study in Houston. Arthur Triplette, a CBRE Real Estate Manager, recently had a waste audit completed to help him answer that very question. The waste audit helped him identify potential cost savings opportunities that could be achieved through right-sizing and recycling. Right-sizing is the process of matching the level of waste services to the actual volume of waste material being generated at a location. The process is simple and can be replicated by anyone.

Step one requires that data is collected to complete a waste characterization report to understand how many “actual” cubic yards of waste are generated daily and what types of valuable commodities are present in the properties waste stream. By surveying the buildings at night, Arthur’s team was able to determine exactly how many cubic yards of trash the janitorial crew collected from each building. Then by visually inspecting the waste material, they identified the percentage by volume of cardboard, office paper, plastic, aluminum, and glass in the waste stream. They also recorded the percentage of the total dumpster capacity that was being filled with trash.

Using the data collected from the waste audit, they were able to determine that the buildings were only actually consuming less than 60% of the waste collection services that they had been getting billed for on their invoices. Triplette immediately reduced the collection services from a five times per week pickup frequency down to a 3 times per week. He additionally consolidated his vendors from two to one. The result was an immediate 46% cost reduction and he hadn’t even started the recycling program yet!

Arthur then started a recycling program at each of the buildings, and expects to reduce his pickup frequency by another 33% or more, by diverting material from the trash. As stated earlier, this process is simple and you can do it. However, you can also have an expert audit your site for free by submitting a request using the contact us form at www.EcoRewards.com or the “*Schedule Time with our Staff*” button on the EcoRewards newsletter.

