



*Let's Recycle Better, Together.*

# REBUILDING CONFIDENCE IN RECYCLING

TUESDAY MARCH 26TH 1:00 PM ET.

Presented by:  **BUSCH**  
SYSTEMS



# Today's Panelists



**Elizabeth Schussler**

*Senior Director of Social  
Change, Behavior, & Impact*

The Recycling Partnership



**Rachel Kennedy, M.S.**

*Environmental Specialist*

Dakota County, MN



**Justin Garvey**

*Director of Brand Strategy*

Metre

# Join the Discussion

From your toolbar:



Share your experience & opinions

Look for links to resources

Type direct questions for panelists

# REBUILDING CONFIDENCE IN RECYCLING



# Recycling is Relevant

## Recycling really happens:

- 69.1 million tons\* annually in US
  - Paper: 46 mil. tons
  - Metals: 8.5 mil. tons
  - Plastics: 3 mil. tons

## Recycling is good for the environment:


- 187 million MTCO<sup>2</sup>E of GHG reduction\* in US
- Equivalent to removing 40 mil. cars annually



*National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling, 2018*

## Recycling supports the economy:

- 681,000 jobs
- \$37.8 billion in wages
- \$5.5 billion in tax revenue



**ADVANCING  
RECYCLING**  
with Alec Cooley  
Busch Systems, Senior Advisor

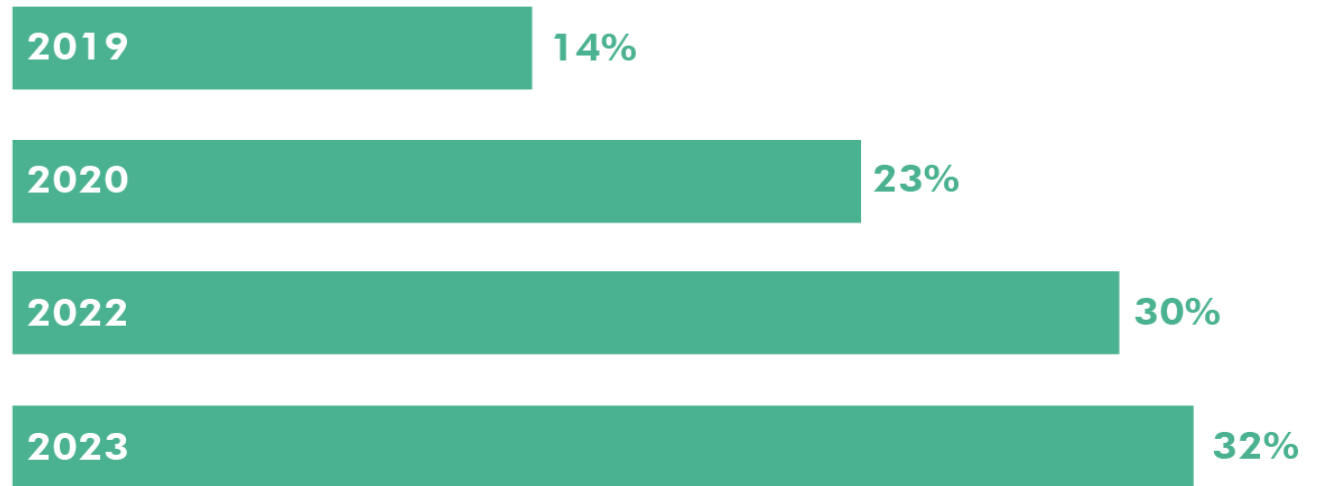
**Look for Myth  
Busting blog  
in the coming  
weeks**

# Public Confidence in Recycling is Flagging



*“How confident are you that items you toss in recycling bin actually get recycled?”*

## Not very or Not at all:



**Shelton**<sup>Grp</sup>

Shelton Group, *Recycling Pulse* (n= 1000)

# What Contributes to This Situation?

## External sources:

- Industry crisis in wake of Chinese policy
- Sensational headlines:
  - “Recycling is broken”
  - “Recycling is a fraud”
- Disconnected packaging design
- Green washing



**FRONTLINE**

*The Atlantic*

**n p r**

**GREENPEACE**



# What Contributes to This Situation?

## Internal sources:

- Real problems with recycling system
- Frustration over the complexity
- Lack of:
  - Trust & Transparency
  - Understanding how recycling system works
  - Public outreach





# Skepticism by Generation

	Millenials	Gen X	Boomers	Matures	General
I'm skeptical that the recycling I put on the curb actually gets recycled	43%	29%	28%	15%	33%
I'm pretty sure the trash collector puts the recycling in the same truck with regular trash	39%	30%	18%	8%	27%

**KEEP AMERICA  
BEAUTIFUL**

Keep America Beautiful; *Research on Consumer Attitudes & Behaviors Toward Recycling*; October 2016; US gen pop (n=1000)

# People Want to Recycle!

80%

of Americans say:

*“Recycling very important”*

WORLD  
ECONOMIC  
FORUM

World Economic Forum; *The Climate Progress Survey*; November 2021; US gen pop (n=1253)



# The Risk from Eroding Confidence

- Transcends all groups, attitudes
  - No one wants to feel their effort is wasted
- People start to disengage:
  - Less effort to separate
  - Less effort to understand rules
- Once perceptions set, very hard to reverse



# Do you have a “pro-tip”?

Strategies to address public skepticism / lack of confidence?

## Share in the chat

# Elizabeth Schussler

*Senior Director of Social Change,  
Behavior, & Impact*



# Trust, Confidence, and Behavior: New Views on Recycling

March 25, 2024



**The Recycling  
Partnership**  
Solving for Circularity

We mobilize people, data, and solutions across the value chain to reduce waste and our impact on the environment while also unlocking economic benefits.





# The System Must Be Efficient & Cost-Effective



**All households have access to recycle in their home.**



**Residents get material into the right bin.**



**Recycling facilities effectively sort and sell the material.**





**Single Family Home,  
curb service every  
other week, trash  
weekly, glass not  
accepted**

- **Est 680lbs/yr  
recyclables**
- +History of recycling
- Discouraged there is  
no “rallying” support

20 trips to glass drop  
off, 10lbs per trip  
30 min roundtrip



## Studio apartment, no recycling

- Est 300lbs/yr recyclables

- + Enthusiastic but craves community support

- Find space to store recyclables

30 trips, 10lbs per trip

Borrow a car

30 min roundtrip



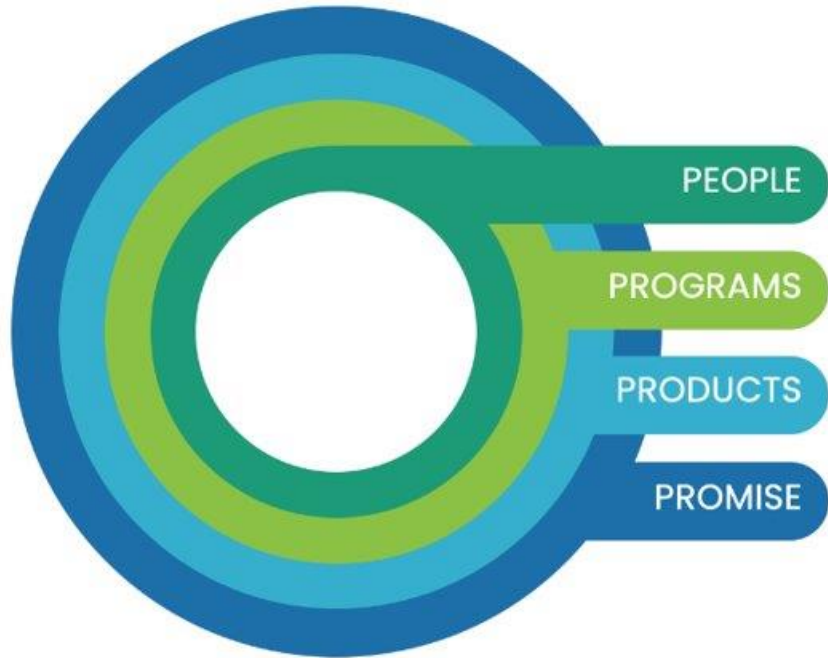




**Single Family Home,  
drop-off, trash weekly in  
shared alley containers**

- **Est 680lbs/yr recyclables**
- +History of recycling
- Frustrated with waste services

40 trips to drop off,  
15lbs per trip  
15 min roundtrip



## RELATIONSHIPS + HISTORY

### Trust

Relies on feelings  
Connections  
Belief, have faith in  
Willingness  
Vulnerability

### Confidence

Relies on actions  
Keeping score  
Assurances  
Expectations  
Living out of past

## Rebuild trust and confidence?

- Compel people to have a willingness to act out of faith, reassure trustworthiness.
- Demonstrate reliability, visible actions, meet expectations, address doubt, confusion.

## PROMISE

**Recycling is a strongly felt social good.**

*“It’s good for the planet, it’s good for everybody.” — Focus Group Participant*

**Half believe items they recycle are made into new things.**

*Significant number of people express confidence in their own programs.*

## SUPPORT

## LIVED EXPERIENCE

The Recycling Partnership, Recycling Confidence Index, 2022 n=3000  
<https://recyclingpartnership.org>



### PROMISE

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### SUPPORT

**Highest levels of confidence exist where people receive communications and support.**

*This includes convenient bins, recycling knowledge and information, and motivational messages.*

### LIVED EXPERIENCE

**Opportunity to improve difficulty of recycling.**

*By making it easier, not just by saying it is easy.*

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### LIVED EXPERIENCE

**Opportunity to improve difficulty of recycling.**

*By making it easier, not just by saying it is easy.*

**Increased communication and transparency around recycling outcomes can improve trust.**

*“Just let us know that it’s working. I don’t know if it’s by percentages or if it’s pictures but let us know... if it paid off.” — Focus Group Participant*

The Recycling Partnership, Recycling Confidence Index, 2022 n=3000  
<https://recyclingpartnership.org>



# Segmenting Respondents into Predictive Groupings

## Categories of inquiry that shape segmentation

### Psychographic:

values, interests, lifestyle and personality characteristics.



### Behavioral:

tendencies, habits, products and service usage.



### Demographic:






age, race, religion, gender, family size, ethnicity, income, education.








### Need:

requirements for participation and confidence in recycling.



5 Types of Recyclers	Eco Activators (25%) 	Committed Followers (24%) 	Discouraged Self-Doubters (18%) 	Detached Abiders (16%) 	Conflicted, Overwhelmed (16%) 
Segment Tendencies (but not exclusives)	45+ yo, higher income & education, larger home, more Asian, fewer Black	45+ yo, higher income, average race/ethnicity mix	18-64 yo, lower income & education, smaller household, more Black	45+ yo, small households, more conservative	18-64 yo, mid-upper income, larger household, more Hispanic, Black, Asian
<i>Inclinations</i>	<i>Social, Emotional</i>	<i>Private, Practical</i>	<i>Private, Practical</i>	<i>Private, Emotional</i>	<i>Social, Emotional</i>
2 groups	MORE DEDICATED		LESS DEDICATED		

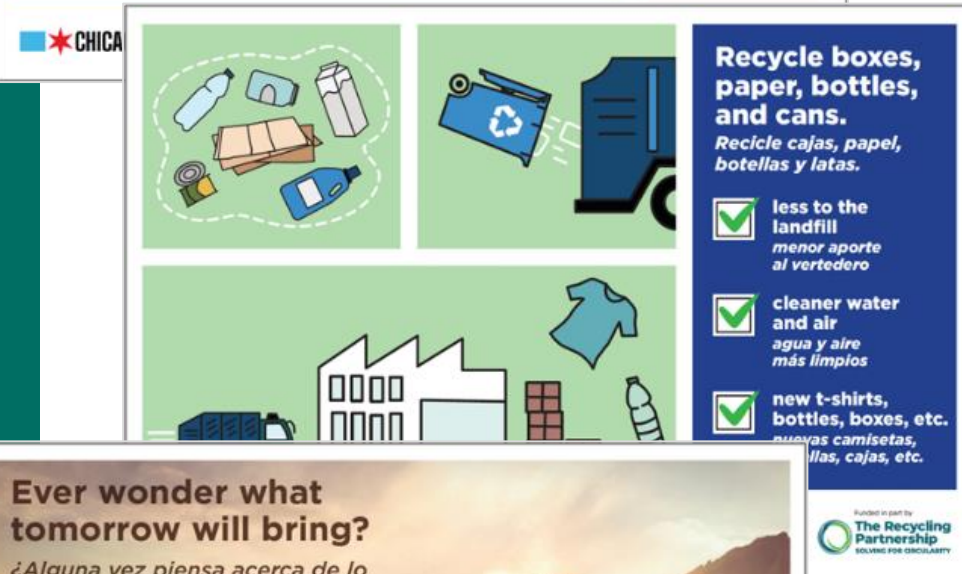
12% don't recycle and are distributed across the segments.

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2 groups	MORE DEDICATED		LESS DEDICATED		
Feelings about recycling	<b>Passionate</b> <b>Proud</b> <b>Hopeful</b> <b>Confident</b> <b>Connected</b>	<b>Importance</b> <b>Responsibility</b> <b>Confident</b> <b>Intentional</b> <b>Community</b>	<b>Guilt</b> <b>Worry</b> <b>Confused</b> <b>Doubt selves, process</b> <b>Resent no support</b>	<b>Guilt</b> <b>Unsure, confused</b> <b>Feel required</b> <b>Doubt benefits</b> <b>Resent non-recyclers</b>	<b>Passionate</b> <b>Judged</b> <b>Anxious</b> <b>Too much effort</b> <b>Resent warnings, fines</b>
Behaviors around recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and teach</li> <li>• Social</li> <li>• Overcome issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Consistent</li> <li>• Productive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defer to labels (pckg, bin)</li> <li>• Inconvenience = barrier</li> <li>• Likely new to recycling</li> <li>• Recycle limited items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Defer to gov, friends, not packaging or tech</li> <li>• Low effort, interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research, teach others</li> <li>• Defer to digital, friends</li> <li>• Don't go out of the way</li> </ul>
Motivations around recycling	to <b>make a difference, protect the planet</b> , and having a system	by values, believe recycling is the <b>right thing to do</b> . They create solutions.	by <b>reducing waste</b> but doubt their knowledge and the importance of recycling.	doing their <b>civic duty to their community</b> is important, <b>personal gain, sunk cost (paid for)</b>	by <b>hope for helping</b> the planet and self, being <b>more organized, having support and assurances</b>
Avoiding	<b>FOOLISHNESS</b>	<b>WRONG</b>	<b>WRONG</b>	<b>DISAPPOINTMENT</b>	<b>FOOLISHNESS</b>

# POLL:

## Which motivational message was most successful in driving behavior change?

- Empathetic
- Logical
- Emotional
- Other / None of the Above



EMPATHETIC

LOGICAL

EMOTIONAL

## Empathetic and Emotional Appeals Are Outperforming Logical Appeal

Confused about recycling?  
¿Dudas respecto al reciclaje?

...always...  
...siempre...

I hear you!  
¡Lo comprendo!

Recycle your boxes, bottles, and cans.  
Recicla tus cajas, botellas y latas.

CHICAGO DSS  
recyclebycity.com/chicago  
(312) 744-2413

Scan to ask a question  
Escanee para hacer una pregunta

Funded in part by  
The Recycling Partnership  
SOLVING FOR CIRCULARITY

Ever wonder what tomorrow will bring?  
¿Alguna vez piensa acerca de lo que le deparará el mañana?

CHICAGO DSS  
recyclebycity.com/chicago  
(312) 744-2413

Scan to ask a question  
Escanee para hacer una pregunta

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SOLVING FOR CIRCULARITY

Does the introduction feel like a welcoming *invitation*?  
Or does it feel like an *explanation*?





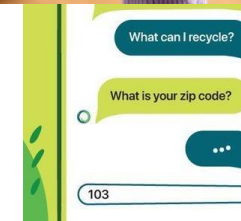
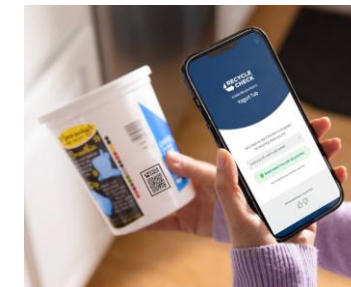
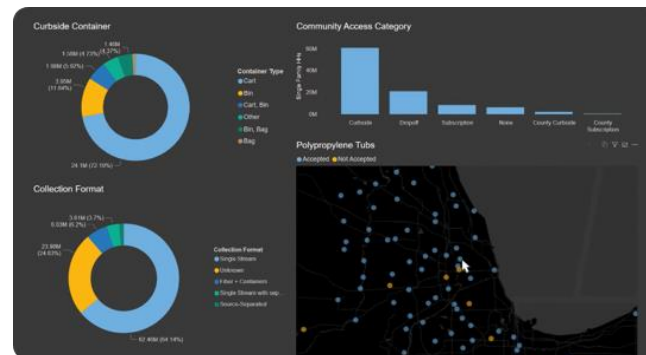
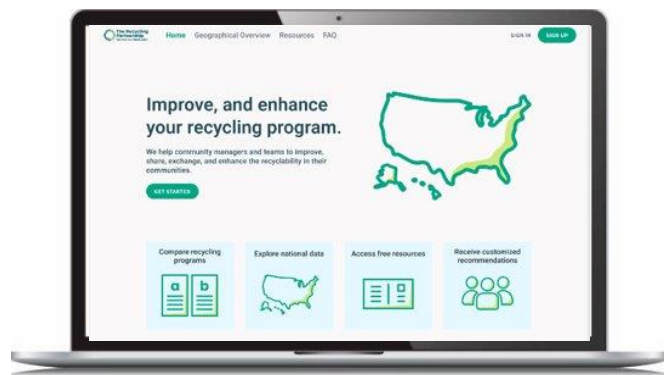
## Recycle Check: On-pack labels, ChatBot, and more! Driving Behavior Change with Dynamic, Local Information

[Community.RecyclingPartnership.org](https://Community.RecyclingPartnership.org)

A community verifies its recycling data and accepted materials list

Our national recycling database unlocks accurate communications, tracks progress

Residents **scan on package QR code** or consult **chatbot** for updated information



**The Recycling Partnership**  
Solving for Circularity

For real-time recycling information in your community talk with our chatbot!

Get in Touch:

## Elizabeth Schussler

 [eschussler@recyclingpartnership.org](mailto:eschussler@recyclingpartnership.org)

 [recyclingpartnership.org](https://recyclingpartnership.org)

 [community.recyclingpartnership.org](https://community.recyclingpartnership.org)  
(Recycling Program Solutions Hub, free resources)



We mobilize people, data, and solutions across the value chain to reduce waste and our impact on the environment while also unlocking economic benefits.



[Download](#)



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M.S.**

*Environmental Specialist*

Dakota County, MN



**Justin Garvey**

*Director of Brand  
Strategy*

Metre





# Case Study: Recycling Exists

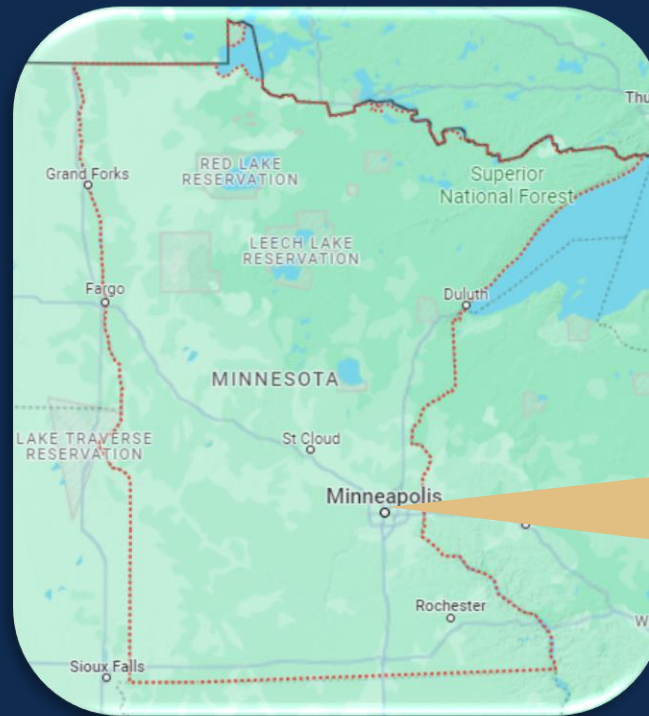
Twin Cities 7-County Metro Area

Rachel Kennedy, Dakota County

Justin Garvey, Metre

# Twin Cities 7-County Metro Area (TCMA)

- Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties
  - Population: 3.16 million
  - 55% of Minnesota lives in the TCMA
- Counties are required by the State of MN to provide recycling education





**What sparked this campaign?**



# The Myth

DECEMBER 12, 2022 ·

PLASTI

Is it ev

# Recycling — and the

OCTOBER 24, 2022 ·

Recy  
Brok



A MYTH

ycling, Really?

nd

is being

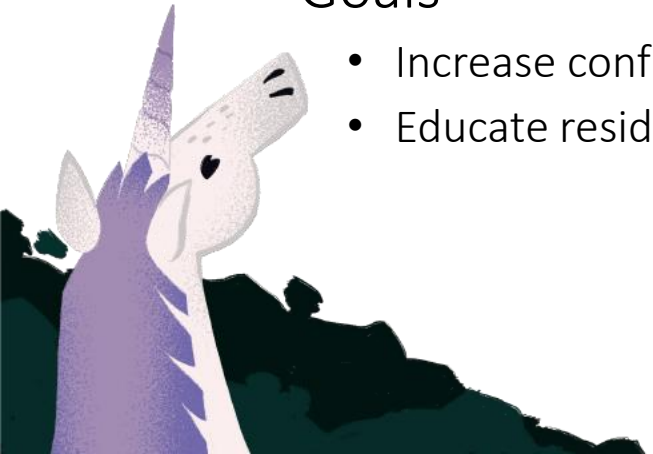




People say we're  
**made up.**

# Forming the group

- Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties
  - Former TCMA counties joint-powers group disbanded
  - Counties informally maintain communication
- Funding
  - Funded according to county's respective population size
- Assets
  - Microsite, videos, social media, billboards
- Goals
  - Increase confidence in the TCMA recycling systems
  - Educate residents on where their recycling goes





# Messaging

- “Recycling Exists”
  - Direct opposition to existing body of recycling skepticism
  - Positively framed
  - Simple
- Recyclable categories & items
  - Each county uses their own categories and lists, varied
- Content needed to align with all counties

**RECYCLE**  
Bottles • Cardboard • Cartons • Cans  
Plastic Food and Beverage Containers • Please Empty Containers

**NO PLASTIC BAGS**

**Paper**

- Newspaper and inserts
- Magazines and catalogs
- Mail and office papers

**Cardboard**

- Corrugated cardboard
- Paperboard (e.g. cracker boxes)

**Cartons**

- Milk and juice cartons
- Soup, broth and wine cartons
- Juice boxes

**Plastic bottles, containers & jugs**

- Containers numbered
- Soda, juice and water bottles
- Milk and juice jugs
- Margarine, cottage cheese, cream cheese and other tubs and lids
- Laundry detergent bottles and jugs
- Clear berry and produce containers

**Metal cans**

- Aluminum, tin and steel cans

**Glass bottles & jars**

www.dakotacounty.us, search recycle right 952-991-7557

**RECYCLE RIGHT**

Put these empty and dry items in the recycling. Keep caps on containers and flatten boxes.

**Paper**

- Newspaper and inserts
- Magazines and catalogs
- Mail and office papers

**Cardboard**

- Corrugated cardboard
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## Recycling Guide

**Paper**

- Mail, office, and school papers
- Magazines and newspapers
- Flattened boxes and cardboard

**Plastic**

- Bottles: water, soda, juice, salad dressing, shampoo, liquid soap
- Jugs: milk, juice, laundry detergent
- Cups: yogurt, pudding, fruit
- Tubs: margarine, cottage cheese
- Containers: produce, deli, takeout

**Metal**

- Food and beverage cans

**Cartons**

- Milk cartons and juice boxes
- Soup, broth, and wine cartons

**Glass**

- Food and beverage bottles and jars

Find preparation instructions and a detailed list of accepted and not accepted items at [hennepin.us/recycling/what-to-recycle](http://hennepin.us/recycling/what-to-recycle)

### Items Accepted for At-Home Recycling

These are general guidelines. Please follow instructions from your city or recycling hauler.



■ Rinse all containers. OK to leave caps on. Do not crush or flatten.



■ Flatten boxes. Keep boxes and paper items dry.

### What can you Recycle?

The following items may be placed in single-stream, residential home recycling bins in Scott County.



**Recycling at Home**  
Empty and rinse all containers

**Glass**  
Bottles & Jars

**Metal**  
Food & Beverage Cans

**Plastic**  
Bottles & Containers

**Cartons**

**Paper & Cardboard**

When in doubt, keep it out. Putting these items in your recycling cart does more harm than good.

**NO!**

- Do Not Bag Recyclables
- No Plastic Bags or Wrap
- No Tangles (No boxes, wires, or string ties)
- No Shredded Paper

www.co.washington.mn.us/publichealth | 651-430-6655



# Messaging



## What's the right way to recycle in my county?

Make sure you are recycling the right things in the right way where you live.

- Put items loose into your home recycling—do not use plastic bags.
- Rinse all containers. OK to leave caps on.
- Empty and flatten cardboard boxes.

Click on the county you live in for more information.



# Recycling Markets & Numbers

- Used recycling categories to identify markets
- Leaned on Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
  - Market experts
  - SCORE Report Data
- Kept markets as local as possible
  - Use cities that people would recognize
  - Contacted markets



## Where does our recycling go?

Recycled cans, bottles and paper are taken to a local facility where people and machines sort the recycling into material types, which are sent to many different companies to be made into new products. Beyond saving energy and protecting natural resources, recycling supports vital industries in Minnesota and across the country. Explore what happens to your recycling:

### Paper and cardboard

Paper mills like [West Rock](#) in Saint Paul mix paper and water together to make a pulp, which is then flattened, dried and rolled into new boxboard. The boxboard is used to make cereal and cracker boxes.

### Cartons

### Metal cans

### Glass bottles and jars

### Plastic bottles, containers and jugs



The Twin Cities recycled  
**525,335 tons**  
of paper and cardboard in 2021.

*Minnesota Pollution Control Agency*



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### Paper and cardboard

### Cartons

### Metal cans

Recycled food cans are transported by Minnesota companies like [Miller Scrap and Disposal](#) in Winona to foundries and steel mills throughout the Midwest. These cans are made into new products like wire, beams and parts for cars and appliances.

### Glass bottles and jars

### Plastic bottles, containers and jugs



The Twin Cities recycled  
**193,257 tons**  
of metal cans in 2021!

*Minnesota Pollution Control Agency*



# Creative Process + Production

- Campaign concept theme – how can we get people to pay attention?
- Produce a set of short videos (and static ads) that each relate to key campaign takeaways and delve into areas of focus
  - Materials are getting recycled
  - Where is recycling happening and what it is made into
  - Recycle the right things the right way
  - Recycling works to protect the environment and support the local economy

# Media Strategy

- Utilize digital and social to optimize targeting and drive traffic to [www.recyclingexists.com](http://www.recyclingexists.com)
- Engage local influencers to help spread an authentic message
- Utilize Spanish language ads to expand reach
- Engage local media to secure additional exposure
- Run an initial campaign for 4 months to keep ad frequency high and make a splash



# Media Mix

- Social media reels, video posts, stories, and static posts
  - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok
- Streaming TV
- YouTube
- Local influencers
- Univision and Telemundo
- News releases
- Billboard



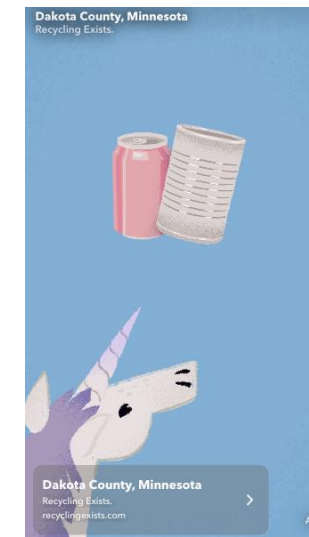
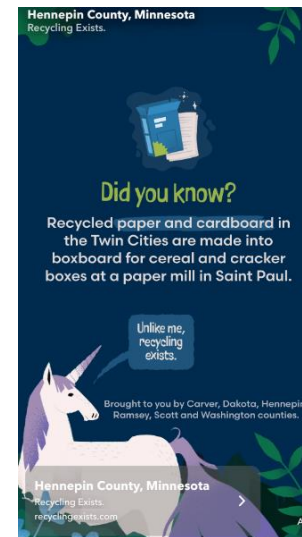
**hulu**



# Campaign Results

- 22,776 clicks to website
- Over 5 million ad impressions
- Significant media coverage

Most Effective Messages by Platform		
Ad Message	Platform	CTR
Plastic	Facebook	0.60%
Glass	Instagram	0.84%
Plastic	Instagram	0.80%
Paper/Cardboard	Snapchat	5.80%
Metal Cans	Snapchat	4.89%
Glass/Plastic	TikTok	2.73%
Plastic	TikTok	2.35%



**Does your organization / community  
have a local PSA campaign to  
counter skepticism & build confidence?**

**Share a link in the chat**

# Today's Panelists



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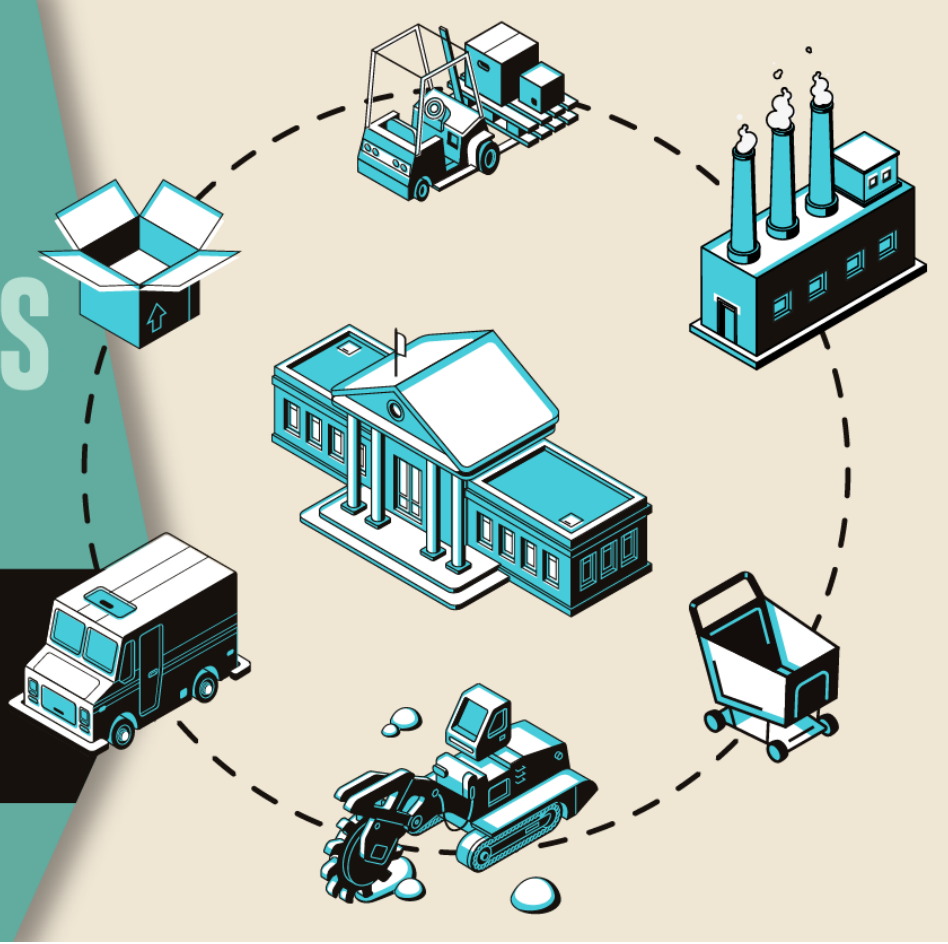
*Director of Brand Strategy*

Metre

# Next Up...

**SCOPE 3 INVENTORY:  
WHEN ASSUMPTIONS  
MEET DATA**

**TUESDAY APRIL 23RD  
1:00 PM ET.**





## Today's Program Online

- Recording
- Presentation slides
- Links to resources

## Archived Slides & Recordings

- Food organics
  - Centralized office collections
  - Reuse & waste prevention
- + More**

**Visit: [buschsystems.com/blog](https://buschsystems.com/blog)**

# Calling all Colleges & Universities...



**Survey of Indoor Waste & Diversion Practices**

To understand trends & lessons learned to improve campus diversion programs

A collaboration between:



   % have uniform bin standards

   % require staff to empty own desktside waste

   % have removed waste baskets from classrooms

**Visit:**



**[buschsystems.com](https://buschsystems.com)**



# Need Credit for CEU's?

Email Marissa Caldwell  
to request a  
Certificate of Attendance

[marissac@buschsystems.com](mailto:marissac@buschsystems.com)

# Please Share Feedback to Presenters

## Post-Webinar Survey:

- Prompt at end of program, or
- Look for Email tomorrow