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REBUILDING CONFIDENCE IN RECYCLING

TUESDAY MARCH 26TH 1:00 PM ET.

Presented by: BUSCH® SYSTEMS | GREEN THINKING WEBINAR SERIES

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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

BUSCH® SYSTEMS

Let's Recycle Better, Together.

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Recycling is Relevant

Recycling <u>really</u> 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 $MTCO^2E$ 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:

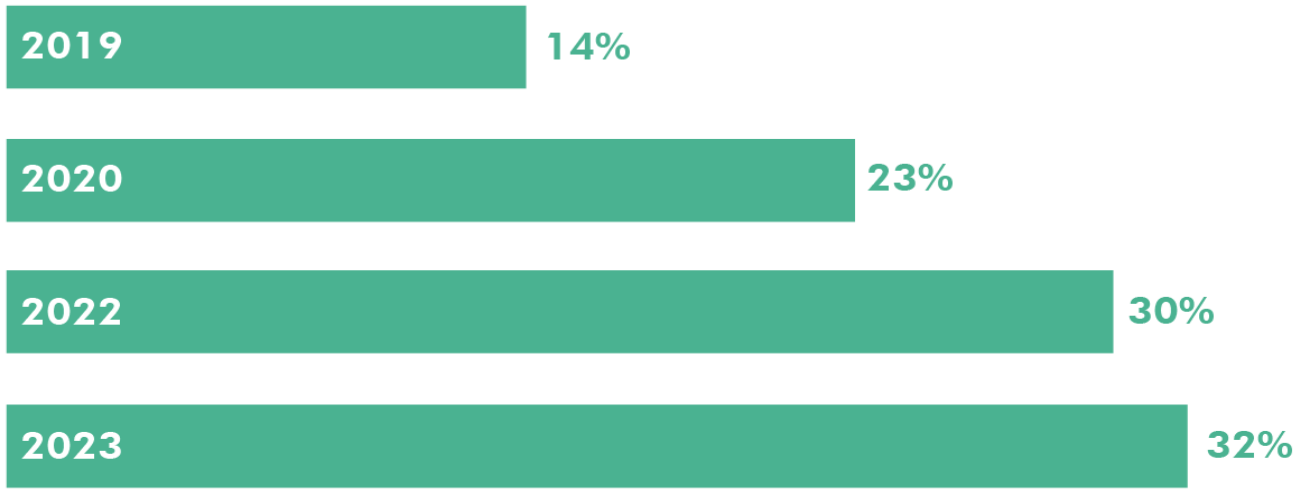
- 681,000 jobs
- $37.8 billion in wages
- $5.5 billion in tax revenue

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 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

npr

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; *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

The Recycling Partnership
SOLVING FOR CIRCULARITY

Trust, Confidence, and Behavior: New Views on Recycling

March 25, 2024

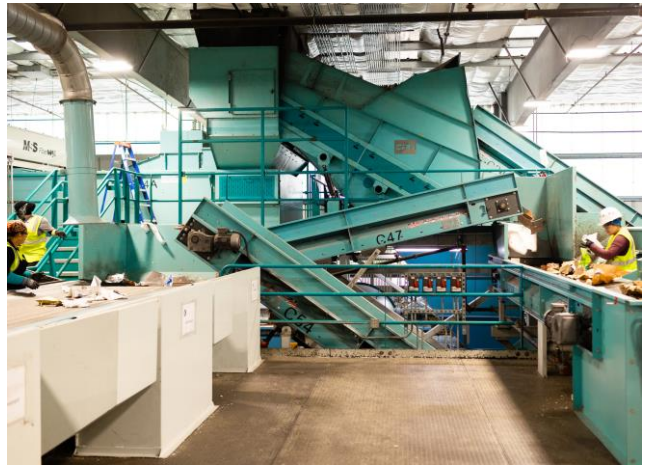
The Recycling Partnership
Solving for Circularity

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

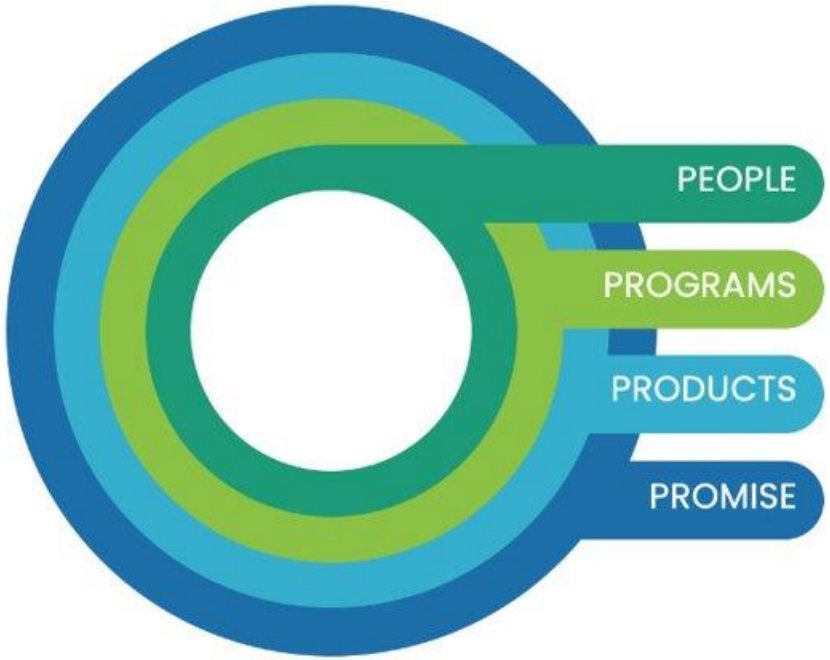
Single Family Home, drop-off, trash weekly in shared alley containers

- **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	Confidence
Relies on feelings	Relies on actions
Connections	Keeping score
Belief, have faith in	Assurances
Willingness	Expectations
Vulnerability	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

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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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Opportunity to improve difficulty of recycling.
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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
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Segmenting Respondents into Predictive Groupings

Categories of inquiry that shape segmentation

Psychographic:

values, interests, lifestyle and personality characteristics.

Demographic:

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

Behavioral:

tendencies, habits, products and service usage.

Need:

requirements for participation and confidence in recycling.

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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
Inclinations	***Social, Emotional***	***Private, Practical***	***Private, Practical***	***Private, Emotional***	***Social, Emotional***
2 groups	MORE DEDICATED		LESS DEDICATED		

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

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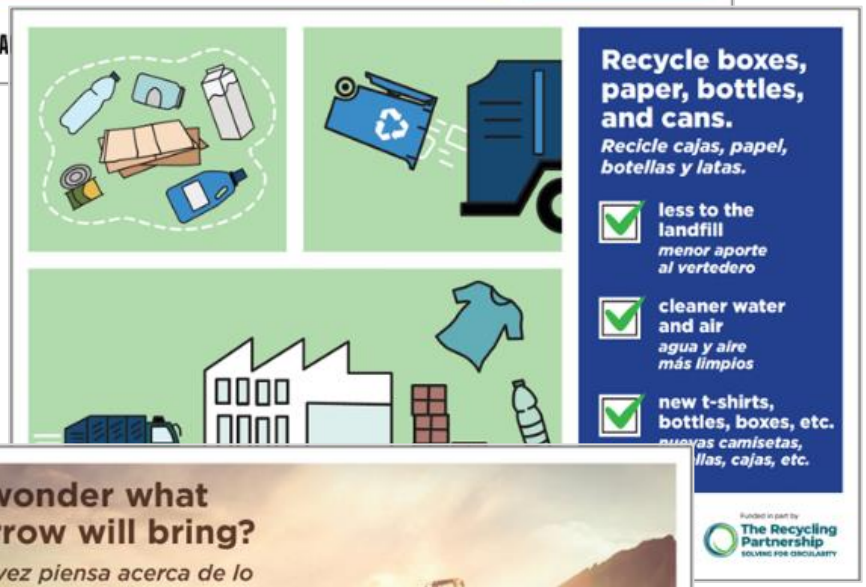
Feelings about recycling	**Passionate** **Proud** **Hopeful** **Confident** **Connected**	**Importance** **Responsibility** **Confident** **Intentional** **Community**	**Guilt** **Worry** **Confused** **Doubt selves, process** **Resent no support**	**Guilt** **Unsure, confused** **Feel required** **Doubt benefits** **Resent non-recyclers**	**Passionate** **Judged** **Anxious** **Too much effort** **Resent warnings, fines**
Behaviors around recycling	• Research and teach • Social • Overcome issues	• Organized • Consistent • Productive	• Defer to labels (pckg, bin) • Inconvenience = barrier • Likely new to recycling • Recycle limited items	• Organized • Defer to gov, friends, not packaging or tech • Low effort, interaction	• Research, teach others • Defer to digital, friends • Don't go out of the way
Motivations around recycling	to **make a difference, protect the planet**, and having a system	by values, believe recycling is the **right thing to do**. They create solutions.	by **reducing waste** but doubt their knowledge and the importance of recycling.	doing their **civic duty to their community** is important, **personal gain, sunk cost (paid for)**	by **hope for helping** the planet and self, being **more organized, having support and assurances**
Avoiding	**FOOLISHNESS**	**WRONG**	**WRONG**	**DISAPPOINTMENT**	**FOOLISHNESS**

POLL:

Which motivational message was most successful in driving behavior change?

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

EMPATHETIC



LOGICAL

EMOTIONAL

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Empathetic and Emotional Appeals Are Outperforming Logical Appeal

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

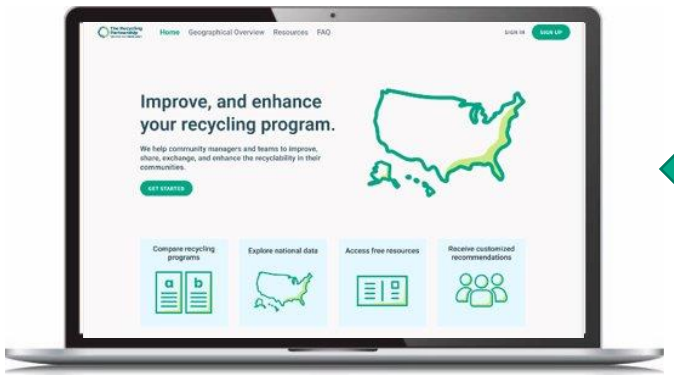
Data-Backed Behavioral Solutions:

Recycle Check: On-pack labels, ChatBot, and more!

Driving Behavior Change with Dynamic, Local Information

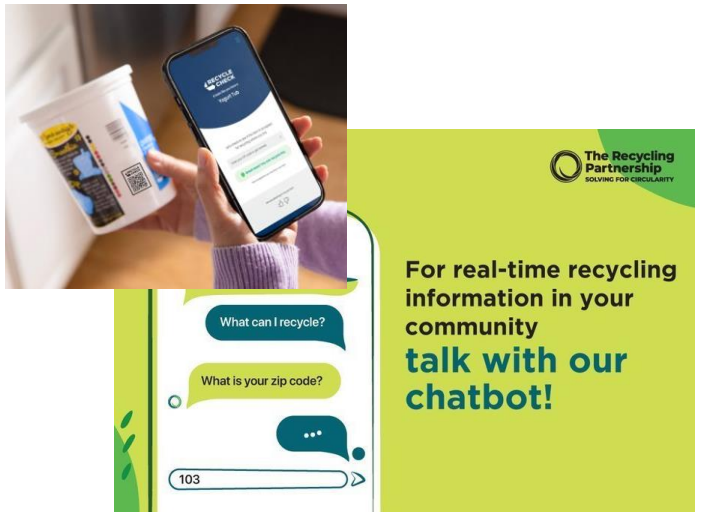
Community.RecyclingPartnership.org

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



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Get in Touch:

Elizabeth Schussler

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recyclingpartnership.org

community.recyclingpartnership.org
(Recycling Program Solutions Hub, free resources)

Download

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Case Study: Recycling Exists

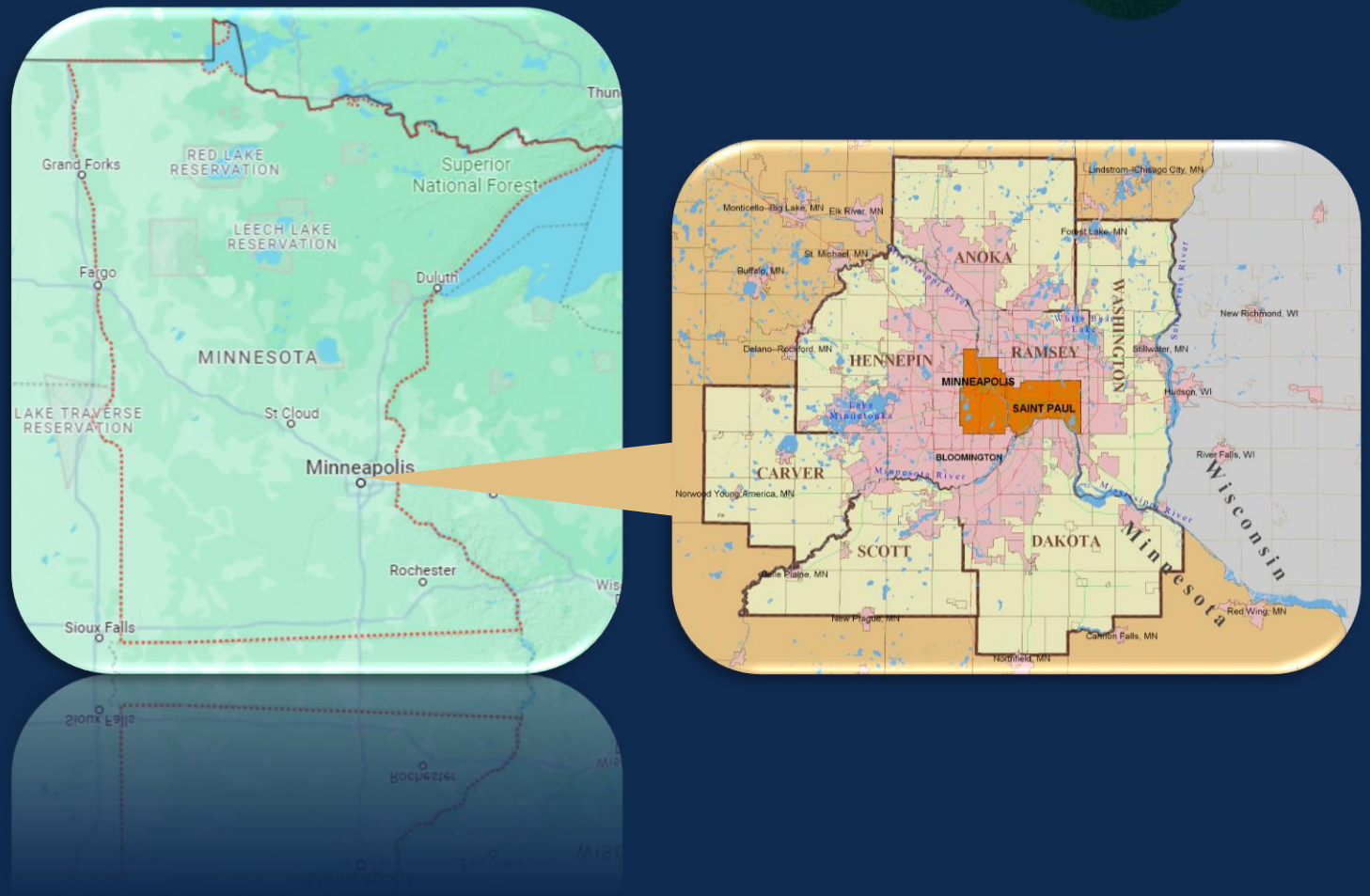
Twin Cities 7-County Metro Area

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



Recycling Exists Campaign

What sparked this campaign?

Plastic recycling
is a myth.
Learn why | MEETGROVE.COM
Grove

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

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.

CARVER COUNTY

Dakota COUNTY

Hennepin

RAMSEY COUNTY

Scott

Washington County

Recycling Exists Campaign

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

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
- 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

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

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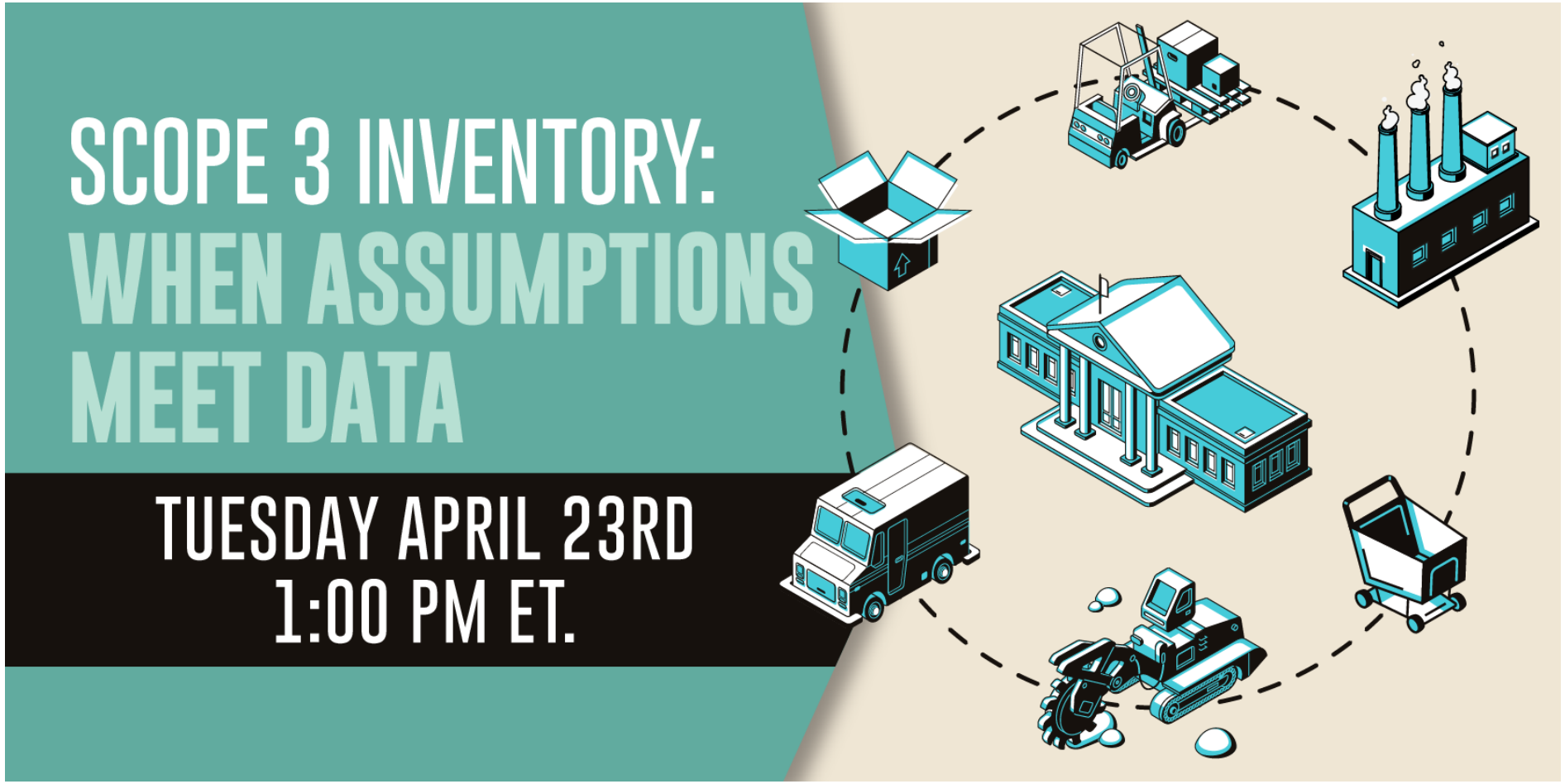
SCOPE 3 INVENTORY:
WHEN ASSUMPTIONS MEET DATA
TUESDAY APRIL 23RD
1:00 PM ET.

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