
**BLUE BAG PROGRAMS-BEST PRACTICES
PUBLIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES
RESEARCH REPORT**

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INTRODUCTION

Background And Objectives

The City of Toronto intends to implement a waste reduction program to include the use of blue bags. The overall goal of the blue bag program is to maximize the amount of waste of diversion. The ultimate goal is no more landfill by 2010.

The purpose of this research was to explore “best practices” that have been used to create public awareness, support and participation by other cities and jurisdictions in North America that already have a blue bag recycling program in place.

The research findings will assist Padulo Integrated Inc. to build a communication strategy and advertising campaign to achieve maximum public awareness and support in this waste diversion initiative.

Methodology

“Best practices” were explored with respect to creating public awareness around blue bag recycling programs.

In order to identify the cities in North America who have embarked on blue bag programs a comprehensive review of existing literature and an Internet search was undertaken.

Telephone interviews were conducted with senior management personnel who were involved with the launch and the ongoing use of blue bag programs and initiatives with the following cities:

- Chicago, Illinois
- County of Northumberland
- Dallas, Texas
- Edmonton, Alberta
- Guelph, Ontario
- Halifax, NS
- Kelowna, BC
- London, Ontario
- Markham, Ontario
- New York City, New York
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The city managers contacted were asked a number of questions specifically dealing with the following issues as they relate to a blue bag recycling program:

- Political leadership and commitment
- Public awareness and support Strategies
- Methods used to gain public awareness and support
- Apartment owner support and participation
- Private sector support and participation
- Provincial and Federal support
- Regulatory / mandatory requirements
- Finding required financial resource

A thorough review of reports and supporting documentation provided by the above cities was also undertaken.

This report provides a general overview of the public awareness and education efforts undertaken in the above mentioned cities. The cities identified do not reflect a comprehensive survey of all cities that participate in blue bag programs. Given the time restrictions of this project, the intent was to highlight the more exemplary projects relative to the initiatives that will be undertaken in the near future in Toronto.

Apart from North American cities it should be noted that research indicates that there are significant waste diversion public education initiatives being undertaken in various European cities.

Some of the materials used in the cities surveyed are included as appendices to this report.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Highlights of Blue Bag Programs in Selected North American Cities

In all the cities surveyed blue bag programs were found to be an important and critical ingredient in significantly increasing waste diversion.

The city of **Chicago** is regarded as having one of the most successful recycling programs in the United States. Currently they are meeting their goal of keeping 25% of the City's waste out of landfills with blue bag recycling. They are in the process of making improvements to the sorting centers. New equipment and procedures will be put in place in the coming year that will enable them to go beyond the 25% diversion rate.

The City of **Dallas** launched a blue bag program in the fall of 2000. Dallas has lagged behind many cities in recycling. Until very recently the city has done little to educate the public. As of February 2001 the city partnered with a private corporation – Community Waste Disposal Inc. (CWD) to run their recycling program for the next five years.

The City of **Edmonton** with an 85 % residential household participation rate in their blue box program switched to the blue bag program in 1999. They received a "Gold Award" for Blue Bag commercials. Both the television and the radio commercials for the Blue Bag program won gold (first place) awards from the Edmonton Advertising Club.

The City of **Guelph** has introduced a Wet-Dry Recycling Program with the goal of achieving a 50% waste diversion rate, which is double the rate of the former blue box program. The program was implemented in 1995 as part of the City's ongoing efforts to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. To achieve its diversion targets, Guelph has implemented a multi-faceted public education strategy.

Halifax was the first city in Canada to launch a blue bag recycling program in 1989 which was modeled after the one in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In partnership with The Clorox Corporation (Glad Bags), who provided free advertising and free bags, the program was expanded from a public small-scale pilot study. The City sustains the success of the program with an ongoing comprehensive public awareness and education program.

Kelowna's Blue bag program was launched in July, 2000 after an extensive process of public consultation. It has become the preferred method of recycling for 97% of the residents and increased recycling by 42% in the first 6 months of the program.

London introduced blue bags to their recycling program in 1999. While most Londoners participate in the recycling program, and the City has reached a waste diversion rate of 33%, most do not use the blue bags. The City attributes the lack of success with blue bags to the fact that it was poorly promoted. Residents continue to have a choice of the blue box or the blue bag and since the blue box was working there was no incentive for them to use the blue bag. The promotion, centered around "sort more – recycle more" needs to be more focused around the efficiencies of using blue bags.

The town of **Markham** ran a pilot project whereby residents tested the use of blue bags. The test program proved to be successful. 97% of those involved in the test area were still participating in the program one year after the launch. The Blue Bags were greatly preferred to the Blue Box. 88% of those interviewed in a market research survey cited that they would continue to use the blue bags for recyclables beyond completion of the pilot test.

New York City is one of the most comprehensive waste prevention and environmental public awareness programs undertaken to date in the United States. In addition to an imaginative and comprehensive advertising and public awareness campaign, New York has established regulatory by-laws and a policing system to insure compliance in their recycling program that includes single dwelling homes, apartment buildings, condominiums, and businesses.

In establishing a Wet-Dry Recycling Program, similar to the city of Guelph, The County of **Northumberland** operates a recycling program that is quite different from most other municipalities in Ontario. Results of a market research study revealed that the blue bag was the overall preferred recycling container by 69 % of residents.

Pittsburgh was the first city in North America to introduce the blue bag as part of a recycling program in the late 1980's. In 1997, Renew America presented the city of Pittsburgh with a Certificate of Environmental Achievement for excellence in recycling. One of this program's keys to success is that since its inception the City's public awareness and promotion strategy has been noticeably creative, humorous and entertaining.

Political Leadership and Commitment

The political support behind most of the city initiatives was found to be a significant contribution to the success of the programs. Given the environmentally friendly nature of the initiatives, it was considered a “no-risk” political winner.

Political leadership is what drove the selection of the blue bag program in the City of Chicago. The mayor was part of two press conferences at the very beginning and at the first anniversary of the program which definitely helped to get widespread media coverage.

The mayor in Pittsburgh was involved in a similar manner. They also have a “Mayor Service Center” whereby citizens can call in to report concerns and complaints.

The Mayor of the City of Edmonton attended a special event from time to time. It was actually perceived to be “politically incorrect” had the Mayor been more involved since environmental issues were not his primary concern.

New York City gained a high level of support from elected officials and environmental groups, although they had a political hurdle to cross in the early 1990’s to get budget people to understand that money had to be spent on public education. Their city council considers itself the advocates of recycling. The recycling law was imposed on the city administration by the city council. Advocacy groups perceive the mayor as holding back recycling efforts by not getting involved enough. Nonetheless, the current Mayor has participated in television recycling commercials.

The City Council in Dallas initially was not interested in promoting recycling programs and as a result participation rates were not very high. In the last year they have been more forthcoming with support which has allowed them to become more directly involved with their public education programs.

Public Awareness Strategies

Multi-media Strategies

The focus of every city's blue bag programs was the implementation of a multi-faceted public awareness program.

The evidence suggests that the cities with the most comprehensive and aggressive advertising campaigns, also had the highest participation rates.

Virtually all the cities surveyed agreed that the best strategies must include a comprehensive approach that is designed to create awareness and to educate all sectors of a community about the benefits and the details of waste diversion.

“Any good strategy has to deal with public education on a broad scale”.

“A comprehensive educational program is essential to ensure that residents are adequately informed”.

“No one medium is effective on its own; you have to do it all or you'll end up missing a lot of people”.

“ A mix of media is really the best way”.

Most of the multi-media strategies included all or at least some of the following avenues:

- radio & television
- newspapers
- direct mail campaign
- posters in subways, buses and bus shelters
- billboards
- newsletters
- programs in schools and universities
- website

Many agreed that an awareness strategy needed to include a wide range of programs with a strong thematic link that work together to reinforce the message.

Advertising campaigns with an emphasis on reaching as much of the population as possible to create a high level of awareness was seen as essential. Critical to these campaigns, in addition to broad advertising and promotional activities were effective media relations and a strong community outreach program.

Chicago and New York felt that the best way to reach people was through a catchy expensive advertising campaign. Chicago and Pittsburgh believed the elements of fun and entertainment were critical when trying to get the attention of the public.

All cities surveyed used a multi-media strategy. For Edmonton and New York radio, television, newspaper advertising, as well as a proactive media relations campaign proved to work best.

New York has had a long-term contract with a major advertising agency. They believe this relationship has also been very beneficial in drawing upon a range of resources in the corporate and community sectors.

Additionally, at the time their individual blue bag programs were launched almost all of the cities in this study undertook a direct mail campaign to every family household which included samples of blue bags, a collection calendar, a newsletter and coupons to buy a box of blue bags at a discounted price. The bags were almost always provided by First Brands (also known as Glad Bags or The Clorox Company).

While television was cited as key for reaching a wide audience, it proved to be too expensive to continue on a regular ongoing basis for most of the cities.

Most cities agreed that all of these venues were beneficial, but if they had to single out the most cost efficient strategy, direct mail was found to be the most effective.

“We always send a direct mail piece out to every household and to every landlord telling them about changes to the program”.

“It’s the most efficient way to reach each and every household”.

The City of New York discovered through market research over the years that direct mail was overwhelmingly the best means by which almost everyone knew about their program.

Focused Strategies

Clearly, it was important to all awareness programs to ensure there was continuity in the message that was conveyed in all mediums.

New York's program was somewhat unique in that each of the 59 Districts of New York were introduced to the program one at a time. While criticisms were directed at the length of time taken in rolling out the program to all Districts, it was the only feasible option, to reach over 8 million people with a comprehensive public education strategy.

Dallas also had some unique aspects in their approach to public education. Firstly, The City of Dallas owns a radio station that broadcasts City Council meetings bimonthly. Information about recycling is often included in these broadcasts. Secondly, as part of their campaign they included several of their local movie theatres. They had commercial advertisements on the screen prior to the showing of the featured films. This proved to be highly effective, although this was only done at the time of the launch.

Additionally Dallas had a brochure that got inserted with utility bills semi-annually which described guidelines for participation. They will continue to utilize this method to reach new customers. This method of getting the information out was perceived to be one the most effective for reaching lower socio-economic groups.

"The insert in utility bills is often the only contact the city has with lower socio-economic groups".

Strategies on a Budget

Although budget constraints don't permit the ongoing use of the multi-faceted advertising campaigns for some of these cities, in order to sustain the participation rate all agreed that public education must continue on some level.

"They need constant reminders, otherwise participation rates begin to drop off".

"In order to sustain the recycling level that we have, we need to continually remind people that its worthwhile".

"People need to be reminded that what they're doing is the right thing; we can't assume that just because we have a high level of participation rate in recycling that it will continue if we stop communicating with them".

"Ongoing communications are key".

“We use public education to continually to remind them, encourage them and to thank them when they are doing the right thing”.

The most cost effective mode of promoting the blue bag program in Dallas has been enlisting a great deal of support from community organizations, such as homeowner associations and public service groups. They attend their meetings regularly, get mentioned in their newsletters and ask the leaders to contact the City with any particular issues or problems in their neighborhoods.

Budget restraints for some cities means picking one or two mediums and focusing on those. Edmonton, for instance does something different every year.

“We use a variety of mediums but the focus will change from time to time. This year we’re running an eco-station campaign to encourage people to take their household hazardous waste to the eco-station”.

The City of Chicago, employs an ‘Ambassador Program’ whereby volunteers go out to the communities and talk to groups. This takes many forms including for example, participation at public events or going to grocery stores and handing out information.

“Having people out on the streets on a constant basis talking about it is very important to keep participation rates up there”.

Some cities have a regular newsletter that is mailed out to every household with the collection schedule once or twice a year.

Chicago uses door hangers instead of newspaper advertising or mailings. They have volunteers to deliver them, thus cutting down on their costs.

“We do that a lot; It’s much cheaper than other methods of advertising and pretty effective too”.

They also found the use of magnets and stickers to be fairly cost effective and quite useful.

Although the City of Chicago employs several methods of communicating with their citizens, the one that appears to be most effective is having strong media relations.

“If you establish good relations with the media you can really extend your reach far beyond what you could do with your advertising dollar”.

Edmonton, in announcing its blue bag program, received 115 minutes of free radio and television news coverage which had an equivalent advertising value of \$76,000, simply by building strong ties with the media. This was thought to be one of the best returns on investment.

Thematic Strategies

Other criteria considered to be important aspects of a public awareness campaign were to have recognition through a visual and audio identity.

Guelph produced a video which included a program jingle. The same jingle was also incorporated into their radio advertising.

Pittsburgh’s recycling program includes a strong thematic strategy. In partnership with a separately incorporated company, “Wastebusters”, they run a weekly comic strip in a local newspaper. Their recycling team is known as “Wastebusters”. They have a mascot – “Buster”, the recycling raccoon. “Buster” makes appearances at schools, on “Wastebusters Central” and at special events. “Wastebusters” are cartoon characters dedicated to educating people about resource conservation.

“Wastebusters Central” is a 30 minute TV show hosted by school students, geared toward the support of recycling.

“Wastebusters” also has an interactive website which gives program information in an entertaining fashion.

The “Wastebusters” message is printed on blue bags and distributed through local supermarkets.

The City’s recycling collection vehicles are equipped with “Wastebusters” signs and slogan “Join The Recycling Revolution”. They are used as traveling billboards to promote programs and raise public awareness.

Their purpose for using cartoon characters to deliver a message is simple:

“We believe in educating people in an entertaining way. ‘Edutainment’ is a tremendous new growth market. Opportunities aside, waste is a mundane subject that simply needs cheering up”.

Cartoons appeal to all generations particularly the young. The appeal to younger generations is considered important because they are regarded as being more conscientious about the environment but will retain the lessons of resource conservation throughout life.

“Wastebusters” is developing an ever expanding inventory of portable "edutainment" programs, products and services.

New York has used more than one theme. One of their first mottos was “Be a Waste Watcher” with the graphic of a garbage can with a measuring tape around its mid-section. “Reduce Reuse Recycle” is another theme currently being used.

Television ads include a talking blue receptacle and a talking green receptacle talking about recycling.

“It has to be catchy to work”.

It should also be noted that the City of New York conducts ongoing focus groups to test residents’ knowledge and how effective the programs really are.

“People get confused a lot about what to recycle – this allows us to see where we need to focus our awareness strategies”.

The City of Halifax employed all the methods already mentioned, but found the newsletter medium to be the most effective. Since the launch of the program in 1989, they have only recently started using television as another venue. So far it has proven to be quite effective.

Schools

Most cities surveyed recognized by most that educating the school-aged sector was extremely important to the success of their programs.

Most of the cities have developed strong partnerships with the Public School Boards as part of their multi-faceted campaigns. Programs in schools are considered important in helping to instill environmental stewardship attitudes at an early age.

In partnership with the Edmonton Public School Board, the Waste Management Branch provides in-school presentations to at least 10,000 students each year. Resource materials are provided to teachers and students, who take the material home thereby extending the educational message to their parents.

The salary of a full-time highly experienced teacher is shared with the Edmonton Public School Board to deliver this program.

The City of Guelph hired university students to work as a team for a month long work term to develop and provide school presentations.

The City of Guelph also produced a video that was provided to all local schools for use by teachers and students.

In Pittsburgh, children have always been a principle target audience of its public awareness campaign. Their mascot "Buster", the recycling raccoon, makes appearances at schools and special events, educating the audience about the benefits of recycling.

"Children get the message out to the parents".

Pittsburgh also has a video: "Etta meets the Blue Bag", a 12 minute entertaining instructional video, produced by the City's Cable Bureau. Although it is primarily used in schools it is geared towards a wide audience range.

In New York schools were provided with information and technical assistance on how to set up recycling programs. In 1994 a Teachers' Campaign included 48 ads in Teachers' Journals. A pull-out section contained complete recycling information including instructions and diagrams showing what and how to recycle.

Promotional Items

As part of its outreach programs to schools, a promotional package was developed by New York, which included recycling videos, a CD-Rom, t-shirts, videos, decals, posters flyers and handbooks. Similar promotional materials were developed and disseminated to the community at large.

The Town of Markham designed and distributed a recycling shopping bag, along with magnets, rulers, and sample packs of blue bags.

Pittsburgh has used various items – t-shirts, hats, posters, bumper stickers, pens, pencils, magnets and key rings.

In addition to the above mentioned items, the City of Chicago also developed and distributed a CD-Rom entitled “The Blue Crew”.

Websites

Most of the cities surveyed have well developed websites which provide information on waste management and recycling. Perhaps one of the most interesting sites is Pittsburgh’s “Wastebusters” website. It is an interactive site which gives program information in a colorful and entertaining fashion.

Language Barriers

In the cities of New York, Chicago, and Dallas there were language and cultural barriers to overcome when trying to find effective ways of communicating a sometimes complex and confusing message to all sectors of the population. The education materials in New York were translated by the city into nine languages including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Polish, French Creole, Greek, Hebrew, and Yiddish.

In Chicago materials were produced in Spanish, Polish, Korean, and English. In Dallas materials were produced in just Spanish and English.

24 hour Information Hotlines

Most of the cities have a 24 Information Hotline and have found it to be a useful tool.

In Edmonton, the “Waste Hotline” responds to thousands of calls each month (7,000 in 1999).

Call center agents respond to calls concerning collection complaints and requests for information on a wide variety of waste topics.

The Hotline is also useful in providing a daily gauge of customers’ needs and concerns.

Sustaining Public Education

In some cities participation rates have dropped off since they initially launched their programs.

“Participation is not as good as it could be”.

“If you’re not in their face continuously they think it doesn’t work”.

They attribute this directly to fewer promotions and public awareness and education programs.

In the City of London the lack of success of the blue bag program was directly linked to a lack of promotion.

Program Evaluation

Virtually all of the cities surveyed conducted market research using qualitative and quantitative methods not only prior to implementing programs but also on an ongoing basis to assess the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the public education programs.

Kelowna conducted market research for both program development and communication purposes. Ongoing Market Research and evaluation were considered by all the municipal governments as essential in understanding the risks, barriers and opportunities prior to developing their blue bag programs and in refining and redirecting their public education strategies.

New York has had and continues to have a sizeable research and evaluation budget to assess the effectiveness of their programs.

“We continually and constantly look at what is happening nationwide in other cities and what they do to measure what we’re doing”.

The County of Northumberland engages market research firm as does the city of Guelph and the City of Edmonton which conducts market research to measure levels of awareness, attitudes, and obstacles to desired behaviors, as well as satisfaction levels with the City’s waste management services.

Chicago conducted focus groups around participation issues and will be implementing a pilot study whereby they will give out free blue bags for 3 months to see if participation will increase.

Apartment Buildings And Condominium Support And Participation

Apartment building and condominium participation in blue bag programs varied among the cities surveyed.

Blue bag collection pick-up of household recyclables in most cities included all single family homes. Some did include duplexes, fourplexes, townhomes and small apartment communities.

New York and Pittsburgh were the only cities that included this sector in their recycling program.

Pittsburgh’s public awareness strategy includes ongoing consultation with property managers of apartment building complexes.

With only 14% of New York City homes being single unit and more that 31% being in large buildings with more than 50 units, substantial efforts were made by the City of New York to achieve apartment / condominium participation.

New York held an extensive series of seminars with building superintendents throughout the 5 boroughs – Manhattan, Staten Island, the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn.

Comprehensive outreach programs over the years to real estate boards and associations, meetings with property management companies and owners of apartment buildings and condominiums and offered all the support that we could.

Buildings with more than 5 units have to hang signs telling residents how and what to recycle. Primary responsibility rests on the landlords and superintendents to keep informing and reminding residents.

With the continuing low diversion rates and the need to reach as many building superintendents as possible with updated recycling information the City of New York implemented a series of large scale seminars using professional entertainment to communicate the recycling message. To encourage attendance the clubhouses at Yankee and Shea Stadiums were used. Goody bags were provided to all participants.

Halifax has had a fairly aggressive campaign including 35 of the largest property management firms. On site meetings were held to educate them and inform them of their requirements to provide private collection services for their residents for their recyclables. Results of this effort proved to be fairly successful. Of the 12,000 apartment units well over 8,000 now have recyclable collection services.

If waste coming from apartment buildings arrives at the waste processing disposal facility containing a high percentage of non-recyclables, The City of Halifax issues a waste discrepancy report which is issued to the driver of the vehicle and a copy to the owner of the building. This is followed up with a site meeting.

“We are always pushing the requirements of proper separation and proper placement of materials in the blue bags”.

The Nova Scotia Waste Management Strategy Group has referred property management groups to the Department of Environment for follow up action relative to the compliance with provincial regulations.

In the City of Chicago there is a mandatory law that requires that apartment/condominium contracts for garbage service are also required to contract for recycling service, and must also include an education program. The onus is on the owners and or property managers to have a recycling program available to the residents.

Funding of Public Education Awareness Programs

Public Support / Partnerships with organizations

Funding for most of the cities public awareness of recycling programs comes from municipal tax dollars.

The City of Edmonton has developed a number of partnerships. For example, as already noted its partnerships with the schools involved sharing the salary of a teacher who gives presentations in the schools.

Shopping centers are partners in the sense that they provide space for drop-off depots.

All of the cities involved in blue bag programs are funded in various amounts from tax dollars.

The City of Halifax for example allocates \$300,000 to a comprehensive education program.

Private sector support

The City of London established a corporate sponsorship program in 1997 which recognizes financial and “in kind” services. This has resulted in a number of technical, education and awareness initiatives.

The Chicago has a contract with Waste Management Corporation primarily for funding of their “Ambassador Program” where volunteers participate in community special events and school programs.

Several cities have partnerships with recycling contractors. Community Waste Disposal, (CWD) in Dallas for example, holds open house events for the leaders of community organizations at their materials recovery facility.

The City of Pittsburgh has Corporate Sponsorships with Giant Eagle, Pittsburgh Recycling Services, The Alcoa Foundation, and The Laurel Foundation. These sponsorships supplement grant funding and help to promote blue bag programs. This enables the city to reach a larger audience.

The City of Pittsburgh also has partnerships with a number of local non-profit organizations.

The Clorox Company was involved at the launch phase of the blue bag program with most of the cities surveyed. Their involvement included some or all of the following:

- hard copy advertisements in newspapers
- sale of blue bags a discounted rate
- supply of free sample packs including coupons redeemable on purchase to every household
- in-store retail promotions and displays.

Most perceived the sample packs as key to getting people involved in the program.

“They have to give out bags so the people can try them out before they actually go out and buy their own.

“At the very least Clorox should be providing the blue bags as an introductory offer”.

The company offered no support after the launch. The Cities of New York and Edmonton, in particular expressed their disappointment that there were no samples or coupons forthcoming at a later date. Both of these cities, in hindsight said it would have been better to have had a contract in place, outlining their involvement.

Although this preliminary survey indicates that there is an opportunity to partner with private business, many cities are only in the consideration stage or in the process of ongoing negotiations with private sector business for support.

Halifax is involved in discussion with local newspapers. The discussion focuses around the provision of free advertising space on in exchange for crediting the newspaper for their sponsorship. The City of Halifax is also negotiating with fast food companies, although nothing is in place just yet.

The City of Chicago has worked with major grocery stores who have occasionally handed out free samples of blue bags. Some private corporations in Chicago have been involved with special events.

Canadian Tire has distributed an information package for the City of Edmonton, which also included store coupons. The advertising campaign run by the City informed people to go to Canadian Tire to get their coupons for Blue Bags. This in turn increased traffic in Canadian Tire stores who also provided a \$1.000 gift certificate.

New York City received support from Reynolds Aluminum Foil. They donated \$100,000 for “The Great Balls of Foil Contest”. It is a contest where kids in schools bring aluminum foil to school and make all kinds of things. It is centered around the fact that aluminum foil lends itself so well to recycling. In exchange they got a lot of exposure.

The City of New York has found the private sector not that willing to be involved in their programs. Reservations were expressed regarding the political sensitivities about any kind of private / public partnership. Elected officials are always worried about whatever possible link that can be made that is inappropriate between themselves and the private partner.

“Especially in New York City, the press can dream up any bizarre connection they want to”.

Several years ago PepsiCo was interested in sponsorship so long as their logo was prominent in all materials. But the City declined.

“It’s so difficult to find the perfect partner that you wind up never finding them”.

Some cities felt that if they had more time and resources at the time of the launch they may have considered approaching more private companies for support.

“No one is going to hand over funds. You have to involve them and it has to be a win-win”.

Provincial / State / Federal Funding

None of the cities surveyed in this study receive any federal funding either in Canada or the United States. For the most part all funding for recycling public awareness programs comes from municipal tax dollars.

Several respondents describe this as a hard sell. Interesting and noteworthy, it was pointed out that although every elected official gets partially elected through the medium of advertising they seem to forget that fact the minute they are elected. City Officials perceive advertising expenses as “soft money”, so its very difficult to allocate funds for this purpose

The City of Halifax has a Provincial stewardship agreement with the Dairy Council of Nova Scotia, whereby the council absorbs 100% of gross costs for recycling their table top milk cartons. This equates about \$140,000 per year. This is a voluntary structured agreement that has been in place for approximately one year.

The City of Edmonton receives some provincial funds specifically for the processing of the household hazardous waste we collect.

Mandatory Regulations

Many cities indicated that if it was mandatory to use blue bags participation would likely increase.

Voluntary Compliance

This does not appear to be the case in cities like Chicago and Edmonton where all recycling programs have been on a voluntary basis.

“We use public education to remind them and thank them – it works”.

Residents in Edmonton were allowed to continue to use blue boxes for one year beyond the implementation of the blue bag program. They never enforced blue bags and they continue pick- up from those who prefer to use the box .

“We continue to advertise and encourage people to use the bags but we’re not going to penalize anyone who doesn’t and if they put something out, if its clearly recyclable we will pick it up whether its in a clear bag or in a box”.

In Chicago there are no mandatory regulations for participating in the blue bag program. They on the other hand feel that if a mandatory by-law was implemented it would affect participation rates very positively. As already noted, here is a mandatory regulation for private contractors for recycling in general. The regulation stipulates that who ever contracts for garbage service for apartment buildings, the owners and / or managers must have a recycling program available for their residents.

Mandatory Compliance

Residents in Guelph are required by law to support the “Wet/Dry” recycling program.

They were given a one-month grace period to learn the new wet/dry recycling system. When the grace period ended, a bylaw was enforced. If waste is not properly sorted, the waste is not picked up and a “door knocker” is left behind instead. The “door knocker” explains how to put out wet/dry waste properly and provides a phone number if a resident has further questions.

There is a Waste Collection Bylaw in the County of Northumberland, which stipulates what can and cannot be collected.

New York City passed a mandatory law in 1989 which stipulates that under the law residents must recycle.

“In New York it’s a very good thing to have because there is a whole segment of the population who don’t respond to anything unless there is a law and a perceived enforcement of the law”.

“This is a city where you need drastic solutions”.

The New York Department of Sanitation has their own police force whereby tickets are issued for failure to recycle. The minimum fine is \$25 and escalates from there.

Approximately 10,000 tickets are issued every month, half of which get contested and most are thrown out in the same way that parking tickets are thrown out.

“We have an Environmental Control Board which adjudicates the tickets”.

The revenue generated from this is not linked to awareness campaigns. It is part of the City's general revenue. It is mandatory to recycle in the City of Pittsburgh. It is written into the law that all recyclable materials must be collected in blue bags. The city may refuse to pick up any recyclable materials not prepared in compliance with its bylaw.

A 1994 bylaw requires of the residents in the City of London to recycle. They are however given a choice of using a blue bag or a blue box.

User Fees

In some US cities where households pay separately for garbage pickup, the fee structure has been found to be an effective tool for getting residents to recycle. Many cities charge for garbage removal but not for recycling, and the cost difference provides an incentive for people to change their behavior.

Quantity based user fees charge residents for garbage collection according to the volume of waste they generate. This approach is a policy option for the City of Toronto to consider.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In summary the research indicates that it is a tremendous undertaking to change people's waste disposal habits. This is evident across all the cities that were looked at.

In order to maximize public awareness and increase public participation in a blue bag program, the experience of other cities suggests that some if not all of the following steps need to be taken:

- Keep educating residents
- Continue producing multi-faceted media campaigns; they provide effective visible reminders that recycling is part of daily living.
- Produce and distribute literature to support and supplement these campaigns.
- Use direct mail to inform citizens of new programs and requirements on their behalf.
- Continue to plan and execute special events
- Continue to build and maintain relationships with the media, community leaders, and organizations.
- Continue to educate students in schools and universities
- Conduct market research and evaluation studies on a regular basis. This has proven to be crucial in increasing the effectiveness of public awareness and education. It is also valuable for testing reactions to advertising campaigns and for checking if messages are reaching target audiences. Focus groups in particular whether they are face to face or online, can help to form the creative development of advertising campaigns and for testing the effectiveness of new advertising before it is produced.
- Implement program changes consistently throughout the city. This can maximize resources and minimize confusion.

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- Consider enforcement of a recycling mandatory regulation.
 - Continued enthusiasm, cooperation and perseverance on the part of the city and the residents.

Most respondents in this preliminary study agreed that each component of the implementation was integral to the public awareness program's success. When commencing any new or large program, sufficient planning time is crucial. It allows for contingency plans to be formed and all methods of promotion and operations to be linked in an organized fashion. Input from all involved in the program at all levels, in addition to review of promotional information during development, is vital to the success of promotional material style and content.

The best learning for Toronto as indicated by this preliminary survey are the initiatives that have been undertaken in New York City and Chicago. It is recommended that Padulo Integrated Inc. undertake a follow up to this preliminary survey by developing a comprehensive public education strategy for the City of Toronto. It would be useful to the research and development of this strategy to incorporate site visits to these cities.