

Centralized Waste Bins

Increase recycling by replacing personal waste bins with larger waste receptacles



The Impact

Replacing personal waste bins with centralized waste bins in an office encourages recycling, reduces landfill waste and cuts recycling-stream contamination. This change can alter or subtly reshape personal habits and may translate into general behavior shifts.

Description

It is common for employees working in an office to have their own wastebasket at their desk. Many employees use it to discard all items that are no longer needed, mixing waste that could be recycled or composted with that which must be disposed of in the landfill. In most communities, neither offices nor municipal waste services sort waste, so mixed waste requires that all contents be disposed of in the landfill.

Offices that transition to a centralized disposal system with separate bins for compost, recycling and trash can reduce the volume of waste that goes to the landfill, increase the percentage of waste that gets recycled, and decrease contamination of the recycling waste stream. In certain situations, the landfill bin can be eliminated, and although contamination of recycling may increase, diversion rates for the business may increase dramatically.

Where It's Been Implemented

A number of businesses have already implemented centralized waste bins to reduce their waste stream. One example is Oracle's former headquarters in Redwood Shores. In these offices, personal bins were removed and replaced with central bins for recycling and composting. Oracle even eliminated bins for landfill, which greatly increased its diversion rate. The company provides only compostable and

recyclable items at its offices and cafes, eliminating the need for landfill bins. This also increases employee awareness and reinforces sustainable habits. Many other companies and organizations, especially larger ones like Genentech, Google and Stanford, have made significant progress in the implementation of centralized waste bins.

Key Drivers

Personal bins don't require people to properly sort waste, which prevents sustainable habits from forming. Making the act of throwing away garbage a conscious decision is an incredibly important part of the process. Walking from a desk to a bin results in a more conscious decision about how to sort waste, and these behaviors then have a bigger chance of being used outside of the office.

Key Factors for Success

Correctly marketing this initiative is key. At first, employees may react negatively to removing personal waste bins. Making this change uniform throughout the business is important. The rollout of the new policy should be paired with impactful and attention-grabbing flyers or posters that advertise the reasoning behind the change, and include statistics about the expected reduction in waste and improvements in efficiency. Highlighting the positive impact on the environment will add an "emotional component" that might further motivate employees to pay attention and make a concerted effort to "do the right thing."

Depending on the size of the office, there may need to be multiple centralized bin locations. In crafting the plan, it is important to begin with less rather than more. After a week or two, the waste can be audited, and if another bin location is necessary, it may be added. It is better to add a bin later rather than remove it once people have become accustomed to it.

Key Obstacles

Aside from some initial resistance from a few employees, there aren't many obstacles to adding centralized waste bins. Removing personal bins and replacing them with central ones is a simple process. It reduces the time and expense of maintaining and servicing multiple personal bins.

Eliminating landfill bins from your office may be a possibility. A facility as large as Oracle's former headquarters was able to successfully do so because it offers only compostable or recyclable items at its cafes and break rooms. The small amount of landfill contamination that will make it into the recycling bins will likely fall under the local contamination threshold for certain recyclers. Plentiful and effective advertising and continuous education via targeted campaigns (for example, posters in high-traffic places like cafeterias) will help with the transition.

References and Resources

- Diana Vasileva, Oracle Facilities Manager and Bay Area Sustainability Department Process Owner, diana.vasileva@oracle.com
- Alec Cooley, Senior Advisor and TRUE Advisor, alecc@buschsystems.com, 843-530-7582
- RTS. [Ditch the Deskside Bins: A case study proving the value of centralized waste bins](#)
- Busch Systems. [Centralized Waste Bins vs. Individual Waste Bins – Which Is Better?](#)
- Road Runner. [The Benefits of Using Centralized Collection Points at Businesses](#)
- Busch Systems. [Revolutionizing Deskside Waste Collection](#)

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Centralized Waste Program

This program aims at lowering waste generated and maintaining commitment to sustainability through improving contamination rates.

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Goal

Centralized Waste strives to reduce waste production and cross-stream contamination through replacing all individual waste bins in offices and cubes with large waste bins centrally placed across the floor.

What is Binless

With Centralized Waste, all individual waste bins in offices and cubicles are replaced with large waste bins placed at central locations across the floor. Small waste bins remain in all huddle and conference rooms.

Why Go Binless

Offices go Binless for the following reasons:

- Sustainability
 - Centralized Waste has been proven to reduce waste and lower contamination
- Cost Savings
 - Waste reduction will lower waste collection costs
 - Potential reduction in janitorial costs since they will no longer have to take out individual waste bins
- Employee Benefits
 - Promotes coworker engagement
 - Increases workplace cleanliness
 - Encourages movement
 - Improves awareness surrounding waste

Implementation

1. Pre – Implementation Audit
 - a. Audit each waste stream prior to implementation to establish baseline
 - i. Collect waste over two days for a specific stream
 - ii. Open each bag over a tarp and separate contaminants
 - iii. Weigh total waste and contaminants to gather contamination percentage

2. Email Space Admins
 - a. Send **Employee Communication** PPT explaining the program specific to your Oracle campus, with a floor plan showing the new locations of each bin
 - b. Briefly explain Centralized Waste in the body of the email. Example email below

I am reaching out regarding a new program Real Estate and Facilities is implementing: Centralized Waste. This means that large waste bins will be positioned at central locations across the floor, in place of the individual waste bins at each desk. Centralized Waste allows each employee more space at their individual work stations, as well as improves awareness surrounding sustainability. Waste bins will stay in all conference and huddle rooms.

I have attached more information regarding Centralized Waste and what it will look like at OPL so feel free to share it with any/all employees. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there are any questions or concerns regarding this program.

3. Remove individual waste bins from cubes and offices
 - a. Small waste bins stay in conference + huddle rooms
4. Place large waste bins at central locations across the floor
 - b. Install signage above each bin
 1. Signage should have words and pictures of each item to ensure proper sorting
 - c. Estimated about 30 – 35 employees per Centralized Waste Station.
 - d. Review the **Centralized Waste Implementation** PPT for potential bin spec and placement
5. **Tent cards** at each desk
 - a. Temporary signage at each desk to inform employees of the new program
6. Post – Implementation Audit
 - a. Conduct an audit 3 – 6 months after the program has been implemented, ideally on the *same day* of the week as the first audit
 - b. Monitor percent of waste and contamination levels

Pilot

Lessons Learned

- Employees asking to keep their bins or bring in their own
 - The janitorial staff will not be providing this service, so employees will be responsible for dumping the contents of their individual bins to the main waste stations

Example response:

Thank you for reaching out to Facilities. A recycling bin will be delivered today. As servicing individual bins are no longer included in our janitorial services, you will be responsible for bringing the contents of your bin to the main waste stations. Thank you for your understanding, as Oracle works to be more sustainable.

Pre and Post Audit Results

| % Contamination Reduction from 3.21.19 - 7.18.19 | | |
|--|--------------|-----|
| Recycling | Kitchenettes | 28% |
| | Office | 6% |
| Compost | Kitchenettes | 7% |
| | Office | 0% |

| % Waste Reduction from 3.21.19 - 7.18.19 | | |
|--|--------------|-----|
| Recycling | Kitchenettes | 66% |
| | Office | 67% |
| Compost | Kitchenettes | 44% |
| | Office | 43% |

*See excel sheet for details

Conclusion

This guide is meant to be a resource for other campus's to adopt similar programs, and is not intended to dictate future program details. Please refer to this document as a guideline or template, making necessary modifications based on the needs and desires of the campus in your region.

Please share if your campus implements Centralized Waste or a similar program, allowing us to track our progress globally. Email Kelsey.morgan@oracle.com with any details or questions.