

E&E Project Summary Report

Project Name: Hamilton Waste Watch Communication and Education Project

Project Number: 125

Lead Sponsor: City of Hamilton

Total project cost: \$775,000

Priority Area: Communication & Education

Completed By: Dennis Guy

E&E fund contribution: \$ 50,000

Project Overview:

I. Goals

- Increase blue box recycling diversion by 15%
- Increase capture rate of specific blue box materials
- Increase blue box participation to 90%
- Increase recyclable materials revenue
- Better understand how Hamilton residents currently receive recycling information and how they prefer to receive recycling information
- Identify the components of a successful communication strategy

II. Accomplishments

- Overall blue box recycling diversion increase of 8%
- Capture rates of specific blue box materials increased
- Blue box participation sits at approximately 95%
- A current understanding of resident communication preferences was gained
- Six key components were identified to develop a successful communication strategy
- Revenues did not increase as expected given a decrease in certain commodity prices, especially corrugated cardboard

III. Lessons Learned/Best Practice implications

- Mascot Distracted From The Message – Blue Box Man took all the attention away from the message of ‘what goes in’ the blue box.
- Multi-Media Approach – in Hamilton, there is no one single medium that can be used to reach all residents and therefore information must be disseminated through multiple sources.
- Get Outside The Kitchen – capture rates continue to show that recycling is well received in the kitchen but forgotten in other key areas of a household
- Grocery Store List Principle – focus on items that have low capture rates. Like forgetting your grocery list when you go to the store, residents remember only the most common items on the blue box list.
- Hit Singles Principle – create a sustained campaign that releases a ‘hit single’ on a continual basis, rather than trying to promote too many all at once.

IV. Limitations

Municipalities communicating environmental messages will need to continually evolve as audiences, media, and methods of communicating evolve. We must continue to try different approaches using different forms of media. The limitation that will remain constant is that we cannot reach all residents using a single communication channel.

Impacts (including tonnes diverted and cost impacts)

The amount of recyclable materials collected at curbside increased 8%, from 41,632 tonnes in 2005 to 45,144 tonnes in 2006.

Resources & Tools

Hamilton has been approached to request permission to post a copy of its Strategic Communication Plan on the newly launched P&E module on the Knowledge Network. The tool provides some context on the importance for municipalities of developing such a plan, and walks the user through the steps involved in such an exercise. A “Grab and Go” section provides actual examples of completed communication plans.

