

# GREEN JOURNEYS - TURNING ON-THE-GO WASTE INTO HIGH-QUALITY RECYCLING MATERIAL

Train operating companies such as SWR produce a significant volume of 'on the go' waste (coffee cups, food waste, newspapers, packaging) which is one of the most challenging waste streams to recycle. For SWR to deliver a target of up to 90% recycling a ground breaking strategy was required. To tackle this problem SWR partnered with SWRNewstar to develop an industry leading recycling programme. Over the last year this has led to;

- Recycling increasing to 82%.
- Over 4,000 tonnes of waste sent for recycling.
- Zero waste direct to landfill.
- Increased quality of recycled product thus turning waste costs into revenue streams.

## A phased approach

SWR and SWRNewstar worked together to identify the top waste producing locations and develop a phased recycling programme, which included;



### PHASE 1

**MAXIMISING FLEET DEPOT RECYCLING**  
WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 39% OF  
SWR'S WASTE



### PHASE 2

**IMPLEMENTING BESPOKE WASTE PLANS**  
FOR 13 TOP WASTE PRODUCING  
STATIONS WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 40%  
OF SWR'S WASTE



### PHASE 3

**RATIONALISING DISPOSAL**  
OUTLETS WITH HIGH RECOVERY RATES

For Phase 1 audits were undertaken across all depots. Recycling officers were employed to undertake full waste segregation (paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, food, glass, general waste). The majority of waste was from newspapers therefore a specialist newspaper collection service was also implemented. The savings made through increased recycling covered the cost of the Recycling Officers resulting in a cost neutral service and higher recycling rates.

For Phase 2 each station was surveyed, audited and mapped for platform bin locations, signage, current and future recycling, resources. Based on the findings individual waste management plans were developed as each station was different.

For Phase 3 SWRNewstar rationalised the supply base used across the estate to those with higher recovery rates for waste. By engaging with our extensive supplier base, we were able to find suppliers who have more efficient recycling rates and diversion infrastructure.



## Delivering success through engagement

The improvements made in recycling across the estate were only possible with extensive buy in and engagement from all stakeholders.

- All site managers for stations and depots were given the opportunity to feedback on the waste management plans.
- At stations with tenants, a consultation with tenants and station managers were held to explain new processes and how to segregate waste. This agreement and education on recycling has been key.
- At fleet depots, the train presentation teams were engaged and agreed to improve source segregation of newspapers from trains. A '2 bag system' was adopted, with one bag specifically for the collection of newspaper. This has helped source segregation and improved efficiency of Recycling Officers
- SWR employed a 'Waste Manager' to assist recycling officers at fleet depots and deliver onsite training.
- Daily Mail Group who provide free of charge newspapers across the network in the form of The Metro and London Evening Standard are working with SWR to investigate a closed loop process of recycling newspapers.

## The business case

A business case was developed for the phased approach and presented to the SWR Executive to gain senior leadership buy into the recycling programme. As part of our commitment to 'Be Transparent' performance was reported regularly to our internal and external stakeholders.



## Key Successes

The savings made through increased recycling covered the cost of the labour on site, resulting in a cost neutral service and much higher recycling levels. The results of this are:

- Total Recycling levels at the Fleet Depots have now also increased from 57% to 87%. Stations have increased total recycling from 64% to 78%.
- An additional 100 tonnes of waste recycled on site each month on site.
- Increased 'off site' recycling by 5% on a like for like basis, equating to 25 tonnes of waste per month
- Source segregated single waste stream ready to be reprocessed into newspapers again.
- Reducing transport on compactors from weekly to fortnightly – total reduction in movement of 76 per year. This saved 702 tonnes of carbon.
- Generating revenue from a previous cost base. Waste costs reduced by 15%.
- Seven new part-time staff roles as Recycling Officers.
- Supply chain that works effectively for client, to maximise and supporting recycling efforts.



## Leading the way

SWR and SWRNewstar have been awarded a Gold Green Apple for Environmental Excellence and are Finalists at the National Recycling Awards in the category of Recycling Excellence for our industry leading waste programme. We are working across the industry supporting other TOCs and the DFT to maximise their recycling rates.

'The commitment South Western Railway have shown to increasing recycling across their estate has been fantastic. It is widely recognised 'on the go' waste is one of the most challenging waste streams to handle. By treating waste as a resource, rather than 'something to be got rid of' they have implemented best practice and turned a problematic waste stream into a commodity. It has been a pleasure working on this project and seeing the changes that have been made in the last 18 months'.  
(SWRNewstar)