HOW TO RUN ENGAGING WASTE CAMPAIGNS

FIRST, CHANGE THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT WASTE

Too many waste communication campaigns become ‘part of the wallpaper’ in organisations, fading into the background of multiple boring signs. Beyond the lack of visual appeal, many of our waste campaigns can also be off-putting for staff, often asking people to improve in a negative, serious or frustrated tone. For these reasons, and because recycling is generally viewed as an ‘old hat’ behavior that staff think they’ve mastered, it can be valuable to refresh your communications around waste to re-engage people.

Negative messages, which can inspire guilt, often lead to avoidance, feelings of helplessness or resentment. Campaigns will be much more successful if they use a positive, fun and inspiring tone.

THEN GET STARTED!

1. Look at your set-up
Before you go to the effort of designing a great communications campaign, it’s important to first get infrastructure in place that will make things go smoothly.

+ Remove individual desk bins. Choose bins in clear colour distinctions for each waste stream.
+ Consistent set-up. Place the same bins right next to each other in the same order at all waste stations.
+ Location location location. Bin stations should be frequently located, in high-traffic areas.
+ Use large signs colours & images. Have everything set up before you launch your communications campaign, to avoid confusion and backtracking.

2. Make it fun
Fun initiatives can be very effective in directing an audience’s attention toward an issue in the short-term. Fun things arouse people’s curiosity, make them want to get involved, and help them to learn. Try the following:

+ Positive tone. Make people want to participate through encouraging language
+ Colourful. Posters and signs
+ Engaging. Let people know what they’re doing well.
+ Humorous. Visual and verbal puns, rhyming, jokes.
+ Surprise factor! Use unexpected visuals to add surprise to your communications.

3. Be visual
Images are worth a thousand words, as they say. Increasing the balance of images to text in your communications will:

+ Show the desired action quickly and easily, overcoming language and time barriers
+ Use visual comparisons and image cues to explain complex environmental issues.
+ Draw people to them – we are visual by nature, and usually want to find out more when a picture grabs us.

4. Use your ‘people’
Humans are social animals and we’re very influenced by those around us. Your waste communication campaign will be much more successful if you show that ‘everyone is doing it’ when it comes to the behaviour you are trying to create. This can be achieved through:

+ Use images of your colleagues carrying out the desired behavior on posters, newsletter articles, intranet posts and emails.
+ Awards for staff ‘spotted in action’.
+ Getting key influencers on board such as your CEO to model the behavior at an all staff event.

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