PACKAGING AND THE FUTURE OF RECYCLING

Carolina Recycling Association / March 25th / Myrtle Beach
Corporate Sustainability Goals & GreenBlue's Approach
What is Circular Economy?

A framework for discussing sustainability in which economic activities are regenerative or restorative by design.

- Closed loop systems
- Returning materials to the bio or technosphere
- Eliminating externalities
- Prominent in Europe, taking root in US
- A “trillion dollar opportunity” - Accenture and McKinsey
The Big Pivot

Andrew Winston’s interpretation of comments made by Ray Anderson, Interface Inc.
Greenblue is a non-profit dedicated to researching and promoting the principles of *sustainable materials management*
SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

USE WISELY

ELIMINATE TOXICITY

RECOVER MORE
THE SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING COALITION

- Membership organization bringing together hundreds of companies & stakeholders since 2004
- Working together to broaden the understanding of packaging sustainability and develop meaningful improvements
- Reports, packaging design tools, educational courses, conferences, and consulting
What is the SPC doing?
What is the SPC doing?

- Establishing the **definition of access-to-recycling** through stakeholder engagement
- Convening funders for a credible, centralized **access-to-recycling study**
- Advising companies on recyclability claims through our **How2Recycle** labeling system
The Federal Trade Commission Says:

You can only claim recyclability when you know that at least 60% of consumers have access to a recycling system that accepts the package.

Anything below 60% needs qualification. The lower the access, the more qualification required.
Brand owners need credible access-to-recycling data before they risk legal liability by claiming that a package is recyclable.
Defining Access to Recycling

- Which types of access count?
- What about communities with multi-family housing?
- What about communities with subscription curbside recycling services?
For substantiating recyclability claims, the *convenience of access* does not matter

For all other initiatives: *convenience is everything*
The SPC’s Proposed Study

• Several funders from across the packaging industry

• Gathering national access-to-recycling rates to substantiate recyclability claims - building on existing studies

• Gathering data to benchmark the type and quality of recycling collection services
The How2Recycle Label Program

- The only on-package recycling label that goes across all packaging types and formats
- Leveraging access to recycling studies and SPC expertise
- Timeline
  - R&D: 2008 - 2011
  - On-Package: 2012 - Present
- Goal: the industry standard recycling label
The How2Recycle Label Program

Example for Frozen Food Package

Recyclability Icon
Indicates the recyclability of the packaging component

Special Instructions
Additional information to ensure proper recycling

Packaging Material
Identifies the material type of packaging component

Packaging Component
The specific part of the package referenced by the label

Program Website
Provides information on the label, local recycling resources, and additional recycling tips
The How2Recycle Label Program

WIDELY RECYCLED
At least 60% of the U.S. population can recycle this package type at curbside or municipal drop-off locations.

LIMITED RECYCLING
Between 20 - 60% of the U.S. population can recycle this package type at curbside or municipal drop-off locations. Check your local program.

NOT YET RECYCLED
Less than 20% of the U.S. population can recycle this package type OR includes a known contaminant to common recycling systems.

STORE DROP-OFF
Polyethylene bags and films are widely recycled at store collection points, including grocery and other retail stores. Check for participating locations.
New Members

P&G

DELHAIZE

GREENBLUE®
How2Recycle Updates

- Annual Report in April
- Consumer testing How2Compost with USCC, opportunity for foodservice...
- Recent Carton Council collaboration on terminology
- Content available for municipal programs and store drop-off film programs
- Sponsorship money from ACC and StopWaste
- Scaled up functionality: Brandfolder
How do we take this a step further?
Other SPC Activities...

- Scaling up composting in Charlotte: Lessons learned for increasing composting
- Examining packaging design choices, not just claims
- Connecting design and end of life systems
- Lessons learned from end-of-life to other critical business activities
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