

Confidence and Recycling

March 29, 2023

Cody Marshall



**The Recycling
Partnership**
Solving for Circularity

We mobilize people, data, and solutions across the value chain to reduce waste and our impact on the environment while also unlocking economic benefits.

The Challenge: Overcoming the Intention-Action Gap



Despite consistently high levels of public support for recycling, **half** of all residential recyclables are **lost to landfills** each year due to **behavior gaps**.

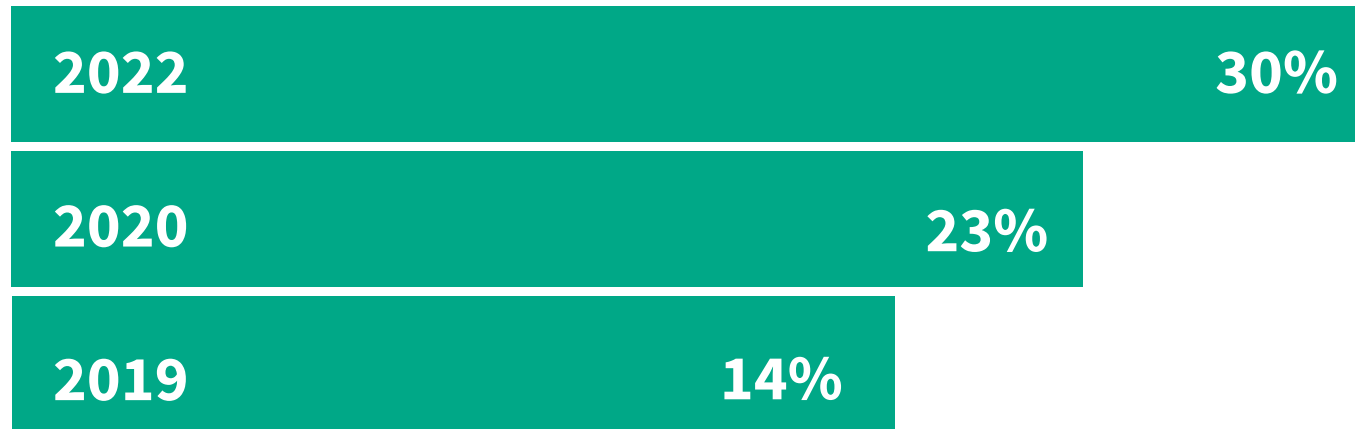


That adds up to **15 million tons** of recyclables, the equivalent of **63 million metric tons of carbon dioxide**.



How confident are you that the things you toss in the recycling bin *actually* get recycled?

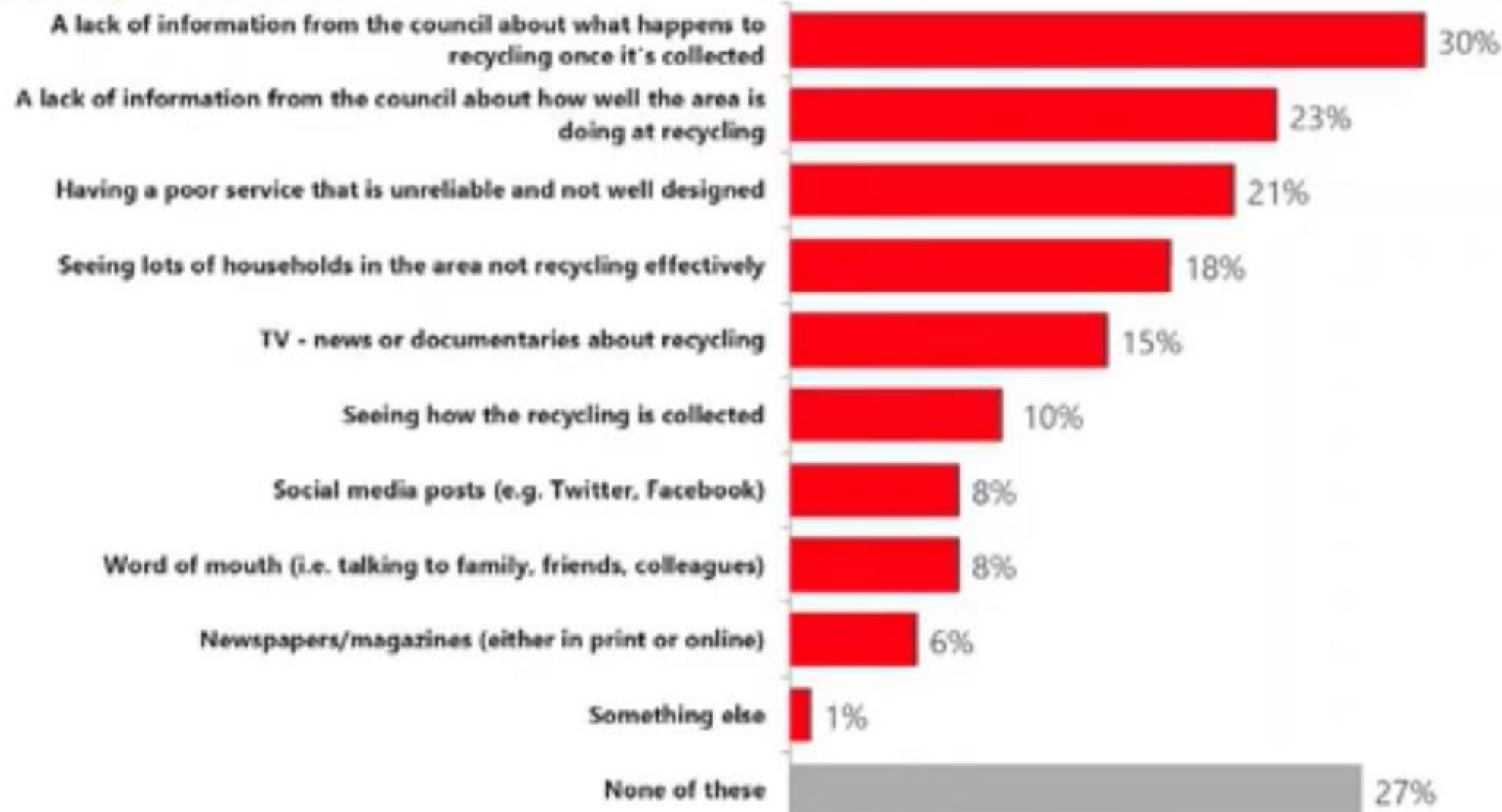
NOT AT ALL / NOT VERY CONFIDENT



Shelton Group, Recycling Pulse 2022 n=1,001

Negative influences on recycling confidence

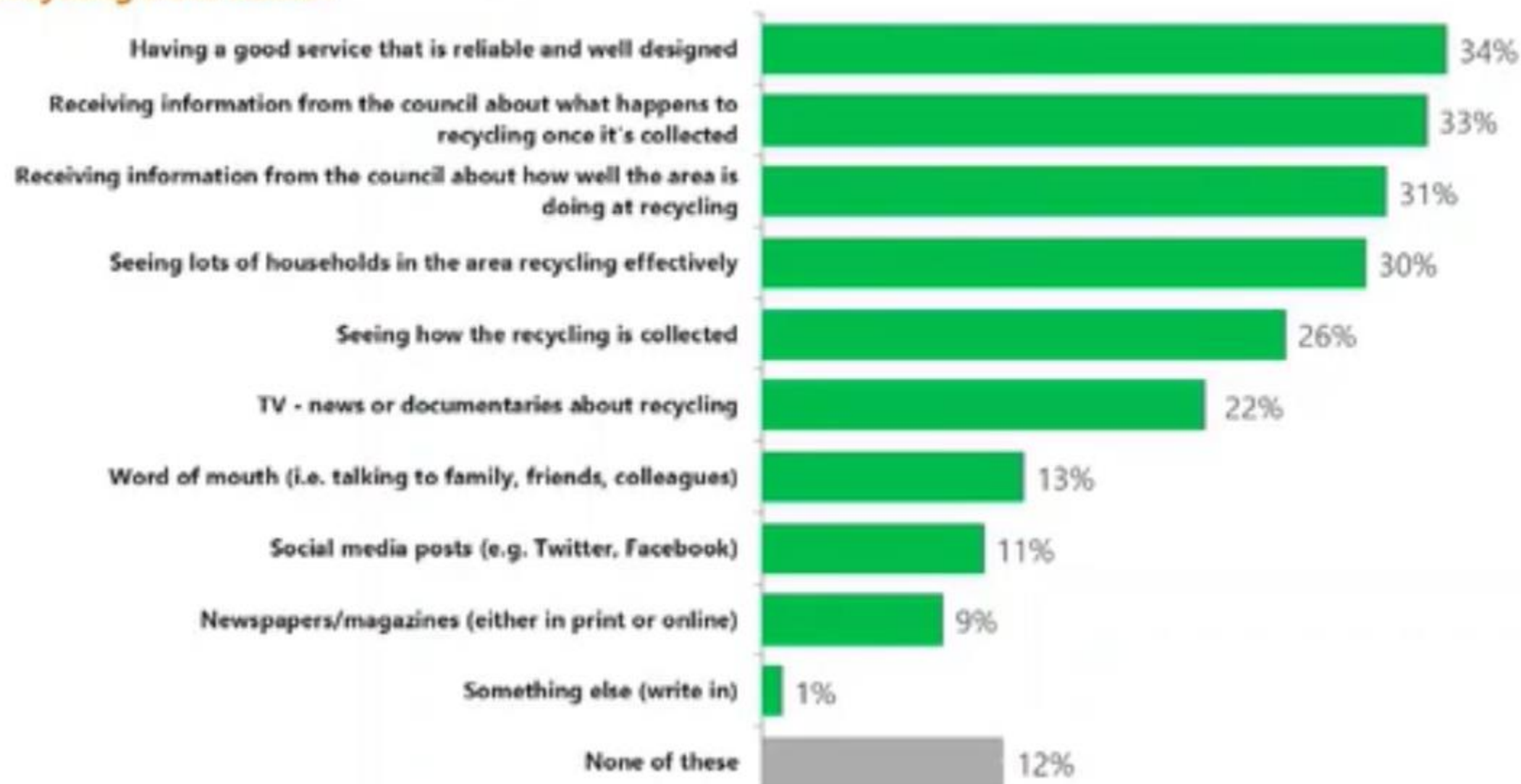
Q. And which of the following, if any, negatively influence your confidence in recycling from home?



Base: 1,917 GB adults who recycle from home and express a view on their confidence in recycling from home, August 2021

Positive influences on recycling confidence

Q. Which of the following, if any, positively influence your confidence in recycling from home?



Base: 1,917 GB adults who recycle from home and express a view on their confidence in recycling from home. August 2021



Our Data Highlights the Urgent Need to Restore Faith in Recycling



KNOWLEDGE

40% don't know food does not belong in recycling bins.

50% say plastic bags can go in household recycling.

CONFIDENCE

Less than half believe their recyclables are made into new things.

INFORMATION

8 in 10 look to and trust the recycling information on labels.

70% admitted being confused by instructions on labels.

75% don't recall communication about their recycling program.

THERE IS A CLEAR NEED AND PUBLIC EXPECTATION FOR SUPPORT

Upon seeing our infocard, **84%** said having that information would give them more confidence in their recycling.

Our Recycling Confidence Index

This inaugural **Index** is based on national qualitative and quantitative research

It will track **confidence over time** and identify influential factors



The Center for Sustainable Behavior and Impact; Confidence Index; June 2022; US gen pop (n=3000)

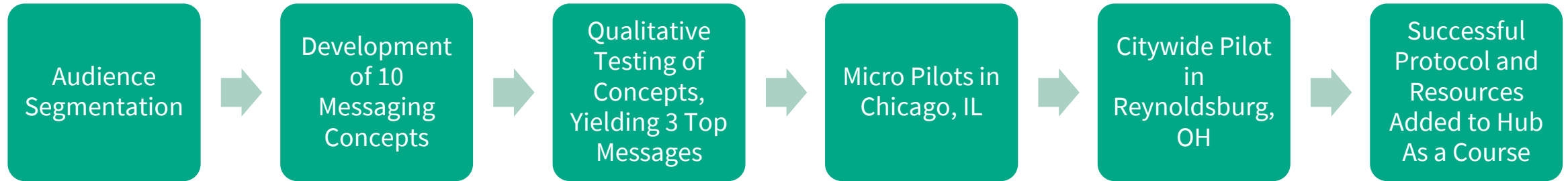
Restoring Faith in Recycling

General Session
Wednesday, March 29

CRA's 33rd Annual Conference and Trade Show



Demonstrated Success: Motivational Messaging Informed by Audience Segmentation



Top Messages



Empathy "We get it. It can be confusing."



Logic "Recycling makes sense."



Emotion "We have to do better!"

COMING SOON – Scan QR Code for First Access

RESEARCH REPORTS

Audience Segmentation Research

Confidence Index

In-Home Insights to Accelerate Behavior Change,
Consumer Insights on Packaging, Labels, and Claims

Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Survey

Plus, behavior change-focused pilot project reports

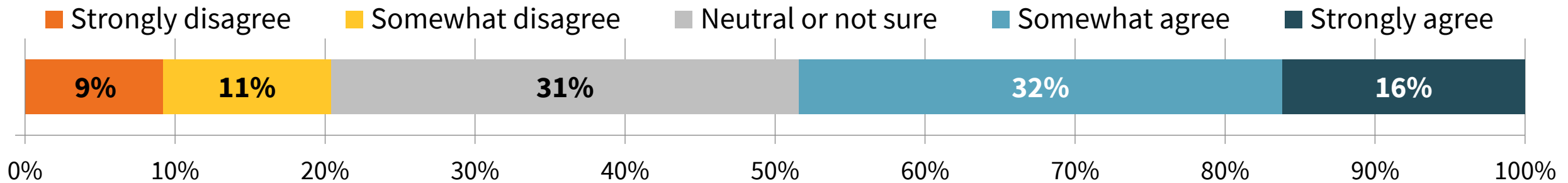
RECYCLING PROGRAM SOLUTIONS HUB

New online tool and community specifically designed for
municipal recycling managers



People Need More Good News and Reassurance

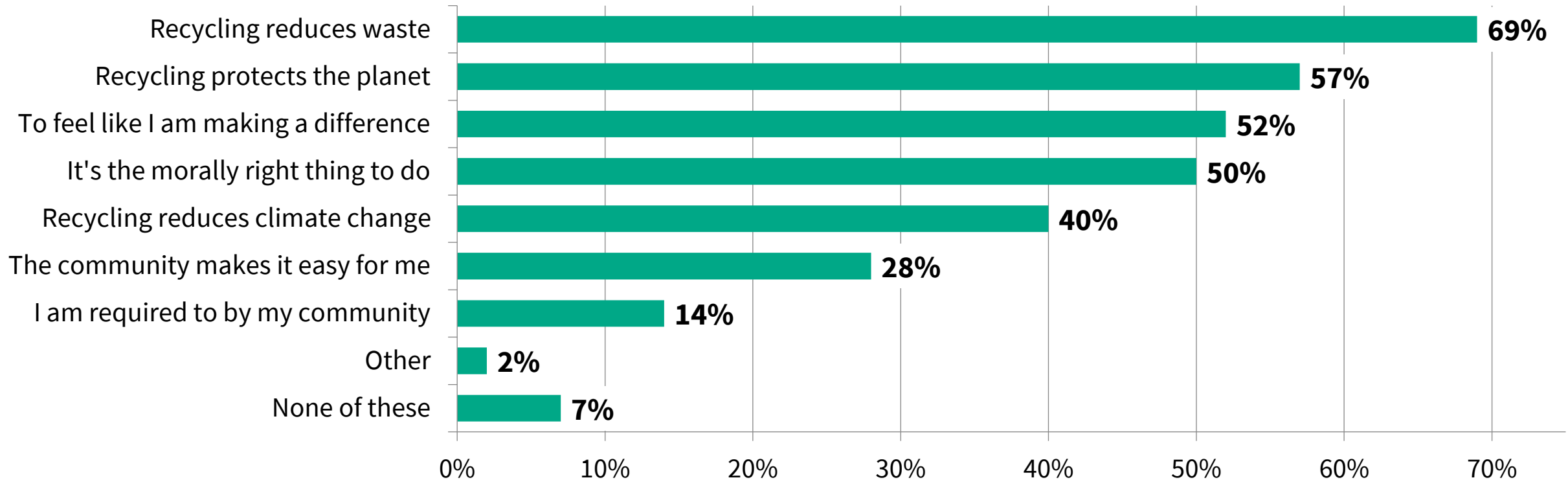
Fewer Than Half Have Seen Positive Recycling Stories & Images



I have seen positive stories or images about recycling in the media or social media.

The Center for Sustainable Behavior and Impact; Confidence Index; June 2022; US gen pop (n=3000)

Main Reasons Households Recycle



There are many reasons why a household may recycle. Which of the following, if any, are the main reasons that you or your household [recycles/would recycle]?

What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity.

Dan and Chip Heath,
Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard

To achieve scaled impact, there are four actionable themes that we must make true.



**Reliable &
Systematic
Communications**



**Reassurance &
Restored
Confidence**



**Needs-Based &
Modular Support**



**Behavior-Centered
Design &
Innovation**

Reliable Communications and Service Correlate with Confidence

The most confident recyclers:

- ✓ **recall communications from their program** (w/in 6-12 mos)
- ✓ **have curbside cart-based service**
- ✓ **recycle more items**
- ✓ **rate higher satisfaction w/ their service** (other than wanting more items to be accepted and more frequent collection)
- ✓ **are less likely to doubt recycling's outcomes**

Thank You to Our Partners!



Get in Touch:

Cody Marshall

✉ cmarshall@recyclingpartnership.org

🌐 recyclingpartnership.org



**The Recycling
Partnership**
Solving for Circularity

We mobilize people, data, and solutions across the value chain to reduce waste and our impact on the environment while also unlocking economic benefits.

Live Poll #1

Are you hearing increasing public skepticism about recycling in past five years?

- Yes, experiencing noticeable increase in skepticism
- About the same, has always been an issue
- No, has not been an issue
- Don't know

Live Poll #2

Has your organization done outreach to address this skepticism issues? *(choose whichever fits best)*

- Yes, we've done dedicated "story of recycling" public messaging
- Yes, other messages specifically to build confidence in recycling system
- Yes, integrated with "Recycle Right" messaging
- No outreach specific to building confidence in recycling



King County, WA “[*Value of Recycling*](#)” campaign

CRA’s 33rd Annual Conference and Trade Show





<https://berecycled.org>

[Stream PSA Video](#)

CRA's 33rd Annual Conference and Trade Show





<https://yourbottlemeansjobs.com/>

CRA's 33rd Annual Conference and Trade Show



Resources – Confidence Statistics

- The Recycling Partnership – [Key findings: 2022 Recycling Confidence Index](#)
- Shelton Group - [2022 survey findings](#)
- INCPEN - [2021 Presentation on UK Public Confidence in Recycling survey](#)

Resources – NC DEACS

- [Defending Recycling & Get the Facts](#)
- [Recycling Employment Study NC](#)
- [Recycling Revealed - Social Media Kits](#)
- [Recycle Right NC - Social Media Kits](#)
- [Customizable Outreach Materials](#)
- [Printable Outreach Flyers](#)
- [WRP Recycling Manufacturer Profiles](#)
- [Full Cost Accounting tools](#)



Resources – South Carolina

SC DHEC

- [SC DHEC Recycling homepage](#)
- [Recycle Right SC](#)
- [Public Outreach resources](#)



SC Dept. of Commerce

- [SC Commerce Recycling homepage](#)
- [2022 Recycling Market Dev. Annual Report](#)
- [SC Recycling Industry Economic Impact Fact Sheet](#)



Additional Resources

- US EPA [Model Recycling Toolkit](#)
- The Recycling Partnership:
 - [Behavior Change White Paper](#)
 - [Multicultural Behavior Change Strategies](#)
- SERDC – [State-by-State Recycled Manufacturing & Job Stats](#)
- King County, WA - [Responsible Recycling Task Force](#)
- Carolina Recycling Association [Online Resources](#)
- [Research on “Transformation” info to influence behavior](#)