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I Dream of Green

I have had an idea that would help increase sustainability of our plant's resources and reduce pollution at the same time. In fact, the idea I have is a very simple and somewhat easy task to do; recycling for bars/restaurants.

The idea first came to me a few years back when I was a bar tender in Lubbock, TX. I noticed that on the during the week the dumpsters outside the bar were having to be picked up twice a week to be emptied due to the fact they were overflowing with bottles. Then the more I looked up and down the alley, I saw that every dumpster was also in the same situation as ours. Twenty plus dumpsters, full of nothing but cans and bottles that can all be recycled, and not just emptied once but twice a week all year round. To me this was a huge opportunity to help out our planet and possibly something that could change the way business in Lubbock would viewed recycling.

I began doing some research in to see if there was a recycling center in town. Which there was, but it was mainly a drop-off center and only had one recycling dump truck. The recycling bins around town were only put in the grocery parking lots behind the store, so many people didn't know about them. I called the manager of the recycling center and asked what needed to be done to have recycling dumpster put in

the alley behind the bar, all there needed was for the bar owner to call and request for one and to also pay an extra \$5 a month on to their waste fee.

This seemed like a great opportunity to get our bar and surrounding bars to help out our planet and contribute to something bigger than ourselves. So I decided to meet with each bar owner/GM and talk to them about putting a recycling dumpster outside the bar to replace at least one or more of the regular dumpsters. Even if they just replaced one dumpster, it could still make a huge impact on the environment, while also give themselves a sense of helping and contributing to a greater good.

After all the meetings were held, every bar decided to add at least one recycling dumpster to their locations, some even decided to add two. We had arranged to set up a meeting with the recycling center manager to tell them to start adding the dumpsters in the coming weeks. However; we were met with bad news, the recycling center could only give 5 dumpsters to the area due to recycling dumpster shortages and not enough recycling garbage trucks. So in turn we got to only add the 5 recycling dumpsters instead of the 18 dumpsters wanted.

With this being the case, I decided to once more come up with a plan that could help with the recycling of the bottles and cans. I came up with a plan, when the recycling dumpsters became full, myself and another bartender on the block would take individual 55 gallon trash cans full of bottles and cans and load them onto a trailer and haul them to the recycling center personally.

Is what I would have the bars to do would be to leave their full trash cans out buy the recycling dumpsters when they closed and I and the other bartender would come around after we closed and load them up. Then the next afternoon I would go to the recycling center and empty the trailer and return the trash cans to the bars when I cleaned them out, which I used Simple Green to clean and white vinegar to disinfect and smell better. We would do this 2-3 times a week and I would try to get at least a different bartender or manager to help me out.

This went on for a few months, then one day out of the blue, almost every dumpster on the block had been turned into a recycling dumpster. That was an awesome site to see! Which also meant that I didn't have to haul anymore bottles and cans to the recycling center, which was also nice for me!

I ended up leaving Lubbock a few years later, and the program was still going on and going strong. I haven't been able to return and see if the recycling is still going on though. But I believe it still is, I think I really helped open up the eyes of a lot of business owners there and to show that it's really no extra time to recycling, just easier to make it another habit.

This also opened up my eyes and made me take just an extra second every time I threw something in the trash, is it recyclable?