

WASTE AMBASSADORS



Background (REF: 1 & 3)

Communication is a key to citizens' engagement in paper recycling. However, it has been demonstrated that, although print media are influential (for the decision of households to recycle), face-to-face communication is the most effective medium to convince people to start recycling.

For this purpose, "waste ambassadors" (also called "waste (prevention) officers", "recycling officers", "waste (prevention) advisors") can be engaged at local level in order to raise the awareness among the general public. This will be a give and take conversation as they will answer questions and identify barriers households face when managing their waste. The information gathered will better lead the decision makers on how to make recycling and composting easier for householders. Waste ambassadors interact directly with the residents and therefore have the potential to achieve more engagement and long-lasting behaviour changes.

ACTION

Appointing people to inform citizens about the collection system established in the municipality in order to boost their participation in the recycling loop

Examples of good practice implemented

Waste Ambassadors to facilitate 600 local workshops on household waste management (Ireland) (REF: 3)



Figure-1. Voice organization logo

Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment (VOICE) is set to team up with the **three regional waste authorities** this autumn to roll out an **information campaign to resolve confusion and instruct the public on waste management.**

Over 600 household waste workshops are set to be held across the country, with the immediate goal to resolve confusion over what can be placed into the waste, recycle and food bins respectively. **VOICE, which focuses on waste & water issue, will manage 25 'Waste Ambassadors' who will be responsible for running the workshops in collaboration with the regional waste authorities and are currently looking for individuals interested in running the workshops.**

In addition to helping to clarify per-lift and weight-based charging models, the campaigns will also guide the public on waste prevention and how to improve their recycling habits.

According to VOICE Coordinator, Mindy O'Brien, the project will help to address public confusion around the three 'R's: "reduce, recycle and rot".

"We are very excited about this hands-on approach and cannot wait to hire and train our new team of waste ambassadors and tackle waste in a real way."

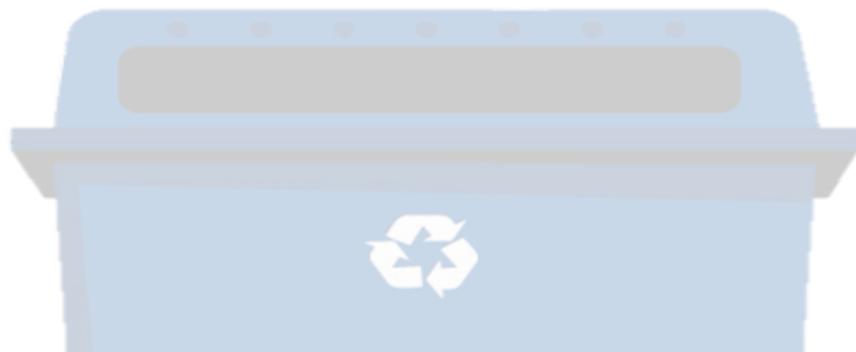


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How to start? (REF: 4)

- ✓ **Recruit a team to manage the Recycling Ambassador Programme:** this can be done through paid job offers or in a voluntary basis. Social networks and the municipality web can be a channel to achieve this.
- ✓ **Explain to the waste ambassadors the waste management policy of the municipality and all related topics that you want them to discuss with the citizens** (explain how the system works, practical advice, etc.).
- ✓ **Plan workshops with citizens.**
 - Plan day and location and advance and make sure citizens are aware of these workshops.
 - Use posters and leaflets with visual information to make easier for citizens to understand the message.
- ✓ **Plan face-to-face meetings at individual houses.**
 - Organize the routes to reach all the population involved.
 - Design questionnaires to get feedback directly from citizens.
- ✓ **Organize regular meetings with the waste ambassadors in order to receive inputs and feedback from citizens.** These meetings can be a bi-directional information channel in which the municipality explains the last novelties about the city' waste management system.



Keep in mind that...

- ⚠ **Waste ambassador should be able to collaborate with the city council and the citizens.**
- ⚠ **The city council must be open to share information with the waste and resource ambassadors.**
- ⚠ **City decision makers have to accept different opinions and should be willing to listen and take into account what the citizens have to say.**
- ⚠ **With motivation, open-mind, cooperation and effort the waste and resource ambassadors can have great results in short time.**
- ⚠ **Internet communication channels: Live chat or fixing individual appointments by use of internet calendars.**

Potential benefits

			
Increase information and communication between citizens and city council about paper and cardboard recycling activities.	●	●	●
Better communication and feedback			●



References:

1. J.-D. M. SAPHORES, H. NIXON, O. A. OGUNSEITAN AND A. A. SHAPIRO, ENVIRON. BEHAV., 38, 183 (2006).
2. REGIONS FOR RECYCLING (2014) – Good practice styria: Municipal waste consultancy
3. VOICE (2017) - Waste Ambassadors
4. EMILY COHEN, ROADRUNNER (2016) – Commingled corner: how to become your office's eco ambassador.