

Bulky Waste Guidance: Communications

Planning a bulky reuse communications campaign

Effective communications planning

WRAP already provides comprehensive guidance for local authorities about developing recycling communications campaigns, and many of the principles and practices will apply to bulky goods for reuse and recycling - for more information see [Improving Recycling Through Effective Communications](#).

This section summarises the stages of WRAP’s communications planning cycle (pictured below), and provides information about engaging with the public to maximise the volume of bulky goods diverted from the waste stream.



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Effective communications planning should be part of a long-term and ongoing process, and should be closely linked to operational activities from the outset. The success of communications activity depends not only on the quality of the campaign, but also on the authority's infrastructure, and the convenience and reliability of the reuse services and facilities. Therefore, all targets, activities and timescales should be planned in partnership to ensure the expectations of key stakeholders are met.

Where services are provided by third parties such as charity shops and/or online exchanges, understanding how these work and their capacity to increase the volume of bulky goods diverted is important.

One of the key questions to ask at the start of the planning process is – "is the campaign is going to target donation or purchasing or both?". Research shows that the motivations and audiences are different for each action and that separate communication materials need to be developed. This guidance is largely focused on donation but there is information and points for consideration for communications around purchasing.

Questions to ask:

- Will your council's infrastructure support your communications?
- Do your service providers have the capacity to achieve the targets?
- Are services reliable and convenient?
- Do the reuse services cover enough households to generate the volumes required?
- Are your service providers flexible enough to deal with increased participation in reuse?
- Can you work together with any Third Sector Groups?

Background

Background research is required to build up an accurate picture of bulky reuse in the area, taking into account both current and proposed services and facilities. This is the starting point of planning for bulky reuse communications.



The key points for consideration are shown below.

- The area and the people living in it - is it rural or urban, affluent or deprived?
- Local and online reuse services and facilities, and how householders use them.
- Barriers to participation, attitudes and behaviours towards reuse.

Demographics

Information can be found from research, survey results and frontline colleagues (collection crews and call centre teams) to build a picture of the people who live in the area and how they behave. Some suggested areas are provided below:

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Area	Question	Relevance	Consideration
Age	What is the age profile of the area?	Donating bulky goods for reuse and recycling is connected to several events that may occur later in life such as: grown-up children leaving home (empty nesters); downshifting to a smaller property; moving into sheltered accommodation or a care home; and bereavement (house clearance).	An older age profile might inform a 'life events' approach to maximising reuse as opposed to promoting reuse at particular times of the year, such as just after Christmas or springtime, when people traditionally donate bulky goods.
Gender	How many householders are male and how many are female?	Women aged 25 – 44 donate to family and friends or to charity shops, while men tend to prefer to sell goods online.	Consider whether you need to focus on a particular reuse option or promote the full range of bulky reuse services and facilities.
Income	What is the socio-economic profile of your area?	Three-quarters of the population donate to charity shops while only a quarter buy from them. People who donate are generally ABC1s while those who buy are lower down the social scale.	Higher numbers of affluent households would suggest more donators than buyers in your area, whereas in less affluent neighbourhoods there is likely to be greater demand for reused bulky goods. To maximise reuse, do you need to encourage the donators or the buyers, or both, and do your service providers have the capacity to cope?

The information above has been gathered from the following sources, for a copy of these resources please contact: lasupport@wrap.org.uk

- 2009 Brook Lyndhurst – Reuse message testing.
- 2010 Public Attitudes to Waste in Wales – GFK.
- 2006 Assoc. of Charity Shops and 'Choose 2 Reuse' campaign findings report (East of England).
- 2006 British Heart Foundation – Research of Customer Findings.
- 2011 Defra Public understanding of product lifetimes and durability (2): Reuse of Bulky Items

Current and proposed services

It is important to gather data about current and proposed bulky reuse services and facilities in your area. (Ideally, you should be part of the team planning improvements or changes to the bulky waste service.)

- Is your local authority planning to charge for bulky waste collections?
- Is it planning to contract out the service to another provider?
- How many charity shops/reuse projects and second hand dealers are there in your area?

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- What online options are available?

Information can be gathered from colleagues, by contacting third sector organisations and projects, and via internet research. If possible, try to gather information about the performance of the various services and facilities so that targets can be set. It will be useful to gather any current or previous communications material about bulky reuse services and facilities provided to householders.

Waste data and targets

This should be reviewed to identify any trends, such as:

- Are some types of bulky goods (e.g. wardrobes, settees) donated more frequently than others?
- Are some goods unpopular (e.g. sideboards) or difficult to sell and if so, why (e.g. old-fashioned, dark wood)?
- Are there particular times of the year when requests for a bulky waste collection increase (e.g. post-Christmas)?
- Have there been any issues with the quality of bulky goods collected (e.g. items left out in the rain)?

While detailed tonnage data may not be available, most reuse organisations will have some information on throughput and revenue, and this can be used to make assumptions about the number and type of bulky items currently available for reuse. Your local authority's call centre may record data regarding bulky waste collection requests, which will also indicate how the service is being used.

Interpreting data in this way will help you to understand the message. Do you need to increase the numbers of a particular bulky item donated for reuse? Do you need to encourage householders to recycle some (unpopular) goods rather than donate them for reuse? Could you capitalise on busy periods or do you – and your service providers - need to spread donations more evenly over the year? Do you need to provide information about keeping bulky items for collection in good condition?

Research

There are a number of reports available online about householder behaviours and barriers to participation in reuse, such as the [Household Waste Prevention Evidence Review](#) (Defra, 2009), Public understanding of product lifetimes and durability (2): Reuse of Bulky Items (Defra 2011) the Association of Charity Shops, the Choose2Reuse Campaign Findings Report - East of England (Association of Charity Shops, 2006) and the Oldham Bulky Waste Communications Research Project 2010. These reports contain interesting, and useful, findings, such as:

- Charity collections and goods passed on privately make a much more significant contribution to reuse than goods received through HWRCs and bulky waste collections, with an estimated 86% of total reuse;
- People are loyal to charity shops and causes, with two thirds of customers visiting three or four times a year;
- The main reason for buying is to 'find a bargain', with 'the environment' given as the last reason
- Explaining what the local benefits are to householder donating items is important for gaining trust

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- 'Reuse' was not a term used by participants, nor was it a motivation for their behaviour

Research has shown that there are a number of barriers specific to reuse, including:

- the hassle of arranging a bulky waste collection;
- the storage of items that are no longer wanted is a problem especially when new items are arriving;
- the item has ceased to be useful from a householders perspective, so they believe it has no value to anyone else (but the perception of value is very variable between items and people);
- the belief that second hand goods represent poor value for money;
- reservations and perceptions of risks about buying second hand, especially particular items e.g. beds;
- the view that second hand goods are of a poorer quality than brand new;
- charging for collections for reuse, the belief that if someone else is benefiting why should payment be needed¹;
- lack of trust in the service provider and who was benefitting;
- lack of choice for second hand goods; and
- confusion over fire labels and what will and won't be accepted.

It is important to consider the timing of communications, research suggests that most people donate once or twice a year, and that just after Christmas and spring time are key periods upon which to hook your communications.

In your research you should consider:

- What else is your local authority putting out to householders and what is out there commercially?
- What are the charities, and their shops, doing? For example: British Heart Foundation's The Big Donate happens in September and again during the January sales every year.
- Are there any other national campaigns or initiatives that you can work with such as Oxfam and Marks & Spencer's Clothes Exchange?

Situational Analysis

Analyse the current position and the data and information gathered from background research. Use the information and tools such as PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), to analyse the external and internal factors respectively affecting your local authority.



- How is your local authority performing?
- How effective are current communications?
- Are they focusing on the right target audience?

Once you have looked, in detail, at where you are, list any implications for communications. Depending on your situation, the following may be important:

- any deficiencies highlighted in current or past communications;

¹ Oldham Bulky Waste Communications Research Project 2010 – available on request.

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- any deficiencies in operational performance that targeted communications might address; and/or
- any targets that still need to be reached - despite there being no further improvements/changes to services.

At this point a good way to formalise the working relationship between key stakeholders is to establish a steering group of partners, with clear roles and responsibilities. It can be the job of the steering group to discuss the campaign strategy and agree the aim and objectives, communications plan and budget.

Aim and Objectives

The **aim** is a broad statement. For example: to maximise the volume of bulky goods diverted from the waste stream.

Objectives are specific statements and can have inputs, outcomes or impacts.



Input	Deliver 10,000 charity shop maps to encourage householders to donate bulky goods for reuse by [DATE]
Outcome	Make 1,000 residents aware of the location of charity shops where they can donate bulky goods by [DATE]
Impact	Divert 100 tonnes of bulky goods from the waste stream to charity shops featured on the map by [DATE]

It is important to establish the overall aim and to set objectives at the start of communications planning, because it is against these targets that you will monitor campaign activities in order to evaluate whether the campaign has been a success or not.

For further information about setting an aim and objectives, see: [Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance - WRAP](#)

It is worth remembering that at this point in the communications planning process, no overall approach has been agreed yet or actions carried out: you have simply gathered information and analysed it to work out what it is you want to achieve.

Target Audience

Understanding your audience is important part of planning communications. It helps to decide what messages to promote; the language, tone and imagery to use; where to promote them and what method to use.

As we know from recycling communications campaigns, different audiences respond to different messages. Bulky reuse is no different. A decision needs to be made - communicate with all householders in the same way, which is expensive and risks the message missing its mark, or categorise the people living in your area into smaller chunks using



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characteristics such as age, gender, socio-economic group, geography, life-stage, housing type or attitude.

Known as segmentation, this is where the background research is important - a basic understanding of the area and the people who live there is very useful in deciding who to communicate with. Using the findings of the background research, identification of simple segments (target audience) will enable to message to be targeted for example:

Donators	Purchasers
People who mainly offer second hand goods	Those who mainly buy second hand goods
Women aged 25 – 44	Less affluent neighbourhoods
Men - online	Student areas
People at the later life stages	Enthusiastic Greens
More affluent neighbourhood	People moving house
People moving house	People at key life stage moments (e.g. having a baby, setting up home for the first time)
	People interested in vintage, unique or shabby chic items

Some other methods of segmentation are provided below.

Bulky waste is often created at, or coincides with, particular stages in our lives. Check to see if your council's website has a 'life events' section with information about what to do when moving into the area, or advice for key points in people's lives when they may need to dispose of items, and might want to use the bulky waste service - divorce, grown-up children leaving home ('empty nesters'), downsizing to a smaller property, moving into sheltered accommodation or a care home or bereavement (house clearance). Suggestions for reuse could be made on these web pages. Alternatively, consider targeting local estate and or letting agents to provide reuse information for people looking to move or to furnish new homes.

The London CRN report: *Third Sector Reuse Capacity in London*² identifies four categories of reuse customers, and you might wish to break down the people in your area according to these.

- Traditional – people on income-related benefits referred to furniture reuse organisations from social services.
- Thrifty – elderly people, students and people unwilling to declare benefit status.
- Green – people who prefer to buy reused more than new.
- Fashion – people looking for something retro, funky, kitsch and quirky.

Internal groups

A key audience, and one not to forget, is local authority staff. Call centre staff, for example, play a very important role in making sure householders are aware of the bulky reuse services and facilities available and how the bulky waste collection service works. Call centre staff need detailed briefings and scripts that not only provide factual information, but also guidance for dealing with householders

² <http://static.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/environment/reuse-fullreport.pdf>

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during conversations about reuse. For an example call centre checklist go to the main webpage for the Communications section.

Call centre staff should avoid asking a householder donating an item for reuse to make the judgement on whether it is in good condition or not. This is very subjective – what one person thinks is 'good nick' can be very different to someone else's opinion! Instead a checklist to determine the quality of items should be used. Provide call centre staff with the reasons why some goods cannot be accepted for reuse, to manage expectation of donators who may be offended at the 'rejection' of their item.

Other important internal groups include:

- collection crews – it might be useful to provide them with notices to explain to householders why certain items have not been collected (e.g. if they are unsuitable for reuse and why) and what the householder should do, see "Unable to collect notices" on the main webpage for the Communications section;
- other frontline staff such as Neighbourhood Wardens;
- communications/press office teams;
- social services and housing teams – these teams can influence the market for collected items through the referral of householders who need items and via the collection of items from empty premises. Working together can help development of consistent messages and reach a wide range of audiences; and
- council members.

Engaging with internal audiences provides a good opportunity for your local authority to exemplify reuse behaviours, stimulate markets, produce joint communications and as residents they may also be ambassadors in the community.

Donation days and swap shops

Ask council staff to bring a bag of good quality, unwanted household items for donating to local charity shops or reuse projects, or for swapping. Weigh the donations to estimate how much has been collected. Ask the charity shops and reuse projects for feedback on how much money your day helped to raise for good causes and let your staff know the good news.

Branding and Message

The Recycle Now branding (pictured below) has been successful in encouraging the public to recycle.



However, there is still a lack of understanding of reuse and what makes it different to recycling amongst householders. According to the London CRN



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report *Third Sector Reuse Capacity in London*³ "... the Furniture Reuse Network in its communications with the general public is that 10 years ago few people in the UK understood the distinction between reuse and recycling; using the latter to describe a reuse activity. While understanding of the distinction is getting clearer, there is still a widespread sense within the sector and the public that recycling is a catchall term including reuse."

Visual identity

Taking this into account, you might wish to use the Recycle Now 'swoosh plus Reuse' visual identity (pictured below) but research shows this only has impact when combined with a suitable strapline⁴ featuring your key message (call to action).



Type of message

It is important to promote the benefits of reuse, as one of the biggest communications challenges with the reuse and recycling of bulky goods is likely to be around getting householders to understand a new concept. Research⁴ has shown that currently, householders tend to view reuse as quite a narrow series of actions, such as the repeated use of everyday items e.g. carrier bags or refillable containers. Often they do not differentiate between Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in the same way waste management experts do. To many householders, the default position is simply 'recycling' therefore the benefit of doing something different or new needs to be explained in their terms.

Buying

Reuse is good for the environment but research from the Association of Charity Shops⁵ has shown that the main reason householders buy from charity shops is not to protect the planet, but to 'find a bargain' (55%) with only 27% stating environmental reasons. This is supported by research in Oldham where testing showed that the statements to promote buying, linking both finding bargains and the social benefits, were the most popular. Therefore, it makes sense to promote this benefit when encouraging householders to consider buying second hand. There are a number of other headline benefits listed below:

- Find a bargain
- Get something unique/special
- Support good causes/help others

Donating

The Oldham research showed that it is important to include information about who was benefitting from the item but a lot of people felt very strongly about the loose term 'charity' as they did not trust

³ <http://static.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/environment/reuse-fullreport.pdf>

⁴ Unpublished by Brook Lyndhurst for WRAP (Reuse Message Testing - March 2009)

⁵ Association of Charity Shops and Choose2Reuse Campaign Findings Report – East of England (2006)

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it and questioned which charity and who was *profiting*. It is therefore important to state who is benefitting. This research also indicated that regular feedback on the amount benefit would be well received for example, number of items reused, number of people helped etc.

Messaging needs to focus on the fact that items have value, even if not perceived to have value by the owner. In fact in Oldham the term bulky waste was associated with junk and rubbish. If a local authority reuse service is being promoted messaging needs to take account of the fact that Defra research shows that householders identify council provided services with disposal options not reuse.

Call to action

Although some householders are carrying out reuse behaviours, by their own definition they may not realise they are doing so. The key is to focus on the action being encouraged, focusing on local benefits while addressing barriers. This in turn may broaden householders' understanding of the actions that constitute reuse (and those which apply in your area). Messages could include:

- donate to or buy from a charity shop or reuse project;
- give to friends or family (research shows this is often the first choice option⁶);
- advertise on or use Freecycle or Freegle;
- sell on or buy from eBay or at/from a new-to-you or car boot sale; or
- arrange for bulky waste collection.

In order to overcome the notion that the behaviours listed above do not count as reuse, communicate exactly what the householder needs to do **within the context of reuse** in order for it to be interpreted logically and understood. The table below shows how the Reuse version of the Recycle Now branding can be combined with messages that communicate the benefits of reuse, and define clearly what the householder should do with their bulky item (call to action):

Visual identity	Proposition	Benefits	Call to action
	The possibilities are endless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Find a bargain ■ Get something unique/special ■ Support good causes/help others ■ Protect the environment – this is likely to be audience specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Donate to/ buy from a charity shop or reuse project ■ Give to friends or family ■ Advertise on or use Freecycle or Freegle ■ Sell on or buy from eBay or at/from a new-to-you or car boot sale ■ Arrange for a bulky waste collection

⁶ 2011 Public Understanding of Product Lifetimes and Durability (2): Reuse of Bulky Items

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If your authority is planning to implement changes to its bulky waste service, or if your background research has revealed problems with the quality, condition or nature of bulky goods donated for reuse, you may need to help householders understand what can and cannot be reused and why. You could consider applying the same principles that many local authorities have adopted as best practice for communicating the materials that can and cannot be recycle at the kerbside. Use green ticks ✓ and red crosses ✗ which are both easy to interpret and familiar, with 'yes please!' and 'no thanks!', and illustrate examples of items that can and cannot be accepted with realistic (not clip art) images. In Oldham photos were popular.

Provide clear, concise information:

1. to **address specific concerns** such as foam-filled furniture/fire retardant labels;
2. about **the reasons why** some items cannot be reused; and
3. on **how to store items** to preserve them in the best possible condition for reuse.

The research in Oldham showed the following key points:

- use a simple message;
- produce leaflets in colour with photographs;
- use clear language and translate not all, but the key call to action; and
- provide information on what happens to the materials and who benefits.

Barriers

Research shows that there are a number of barriers specific to reuse that may prevent householders from participating fully. The barriers for donating and purchasing are different. In summary these are broadly shown in the table below.

Donating	Purchasing
Convenience	Undesirable activity
Trust that the item is going to be used and/or used by a specific charity or cause	Quality issues
That the item has value for someone else	Hygiene concerns
Cost	Value for money
Lack of knowledge and confusion about what to donate and where to donate	Risk
	Lack of choice and knowledge of where to buy items

Listed below are some of these and how communications should seek to address and overcome them, where possible.

Barrier 1: *the hassle factor*

Affects: donors

Some householders are put off arranging a bulky waste collection, because they do not want the hassle of making the arrangements or waiting for the collection or having to contact different organisations for different items. This is even more likely where they are expecting the delivery of a

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new, replacement item and lack space to store the unwanted item. Communication should seek to emphasise the simplicity of arranging a collection and the speed and efficiency of the service provided.

In addition householders are put off using reuse services if they get “knocked back” when items are not accepted for reuse. Communication needs to explain clearly what is not accepted and why. This could be through call centre scripts (example available through the main webpage for the Communications section) and press articles about the outlet for the items to demonstrate what items are needed. Using unable to collect notices (example available through the main webpage for the Communications section) is an option, but these should be seen as a last resort; unsuitable items should ideally be filtered out before a collection vehicle arrives to avoid wasted journeys and householder frustration.

Barrier 2: *who takes what?*

Householders dislike having to ring around several different service providers, be told conflicting ‘stories’ about whether their items are indeed reusable.

A service can be designed to ensure that it is more convenient to the householder by:

- providing a central call centre – the operators can pass the collection request to the most suitable service provider.
- designing a service that collects all bulky waste whether the items are suitable for reuse or not.

If this is not possible providing information about the range of options available in a local area, with clear information about what is accepted will help householders choose the best option. Developing messages in partnership with the local services providers will help to provide consistent messages. Some local authorities have produced A-Z guides for example.

Barrier 3: *it's of no use to me, so it's of no value to anyone else*

Affects: donators

When a householder plans to dispose of an item, it tends to be because it is no longer of any use to them. When they become detached from an item and its functionality, it is easy for them to believe it has no value, either to them or anybody else.

Some reuse organisations, such as Furniture Plus in Fife, WasteSavers in Newport, Wales, Encore Reuse in the Derbyshire Dales and Bulky Bob's in Liverpool, have avoided using words such as ‘old’ and ‘second hand’ to describe bulky items for reuse and instead use terms such as ‘pre-loved’ or ‘pre-owned’. However the term ‘pre-loved’ was not popular in the Oldham research.

<http://www.furnitureplus.org.uk/>

<http://www.wastesavers.co.uk/>

<http://www.encorereuse.org.uk/encore/>

<http://www.bulkybobs.co.uk/>

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Try using language creatively in your communications to help overcome this particular barrier. Reassure donators that their item is worth something to someone else. The table below illustrates examples of items that are described as pre-loved or pre-owned by some organisations.

Pre-loved	Either	Pre-owned
Clothing - especially wedding gowns		Computer games
Maternity wear and baby clothes		Golf clubs
Jewellery		Cars and motorcycles
Home furniture		Office furniture
	Guitars	
	Records	

Barrier 4: *second hand goods are poor value for money: some cost nearly as much as new items!*

Affects: purchasers

Some householders are of the opinion that second hand goods represent poor value for money, sometimes costing more than the same item bought new. Emphasise that it is a way of getting something special or unique and potentially better value for money e.g. buying higher spec used items for less. Use alternative terminology to encourage purchasers to break with their attachment to newness. For example:

Term	Usage	Previously
Retro	Describes items with the style of a previous era	Old fashioned
Vintage	Describes items from pre-1920 to 1980	Second hand/old
Re-giving/gifting	Offering something to friends or family	Handing down (hand-me-downs)
Up-cycling	Describes items that have been improved	Refurbishing

Further terms, some of which come with a health warning, include: classic, antique, good as new, pre-enjoyed, previously-cared-for and seasoned.

Barrier 5: *the I factor (ick)*

Affects: purchasers

Some householders have reservations about buying items that have been used by other people. Research would suggest this applies in the main to certain items in particular, and how they have been used previously in relation to hygiene/cleanliness: fridges (other people's food); washing machines (others' dirty clothes and/or nappies) and beds/couches (sitting/sweat/spills). Yet, many of us do not seem to mind buying houses and cars second hand or sleeping in hotel beds! It would seem that the more expensive or indulgent the item, the more open we are to reuse. You might want to point this out, and it could be the basis of a really creative communications campaign. Alternatively, provide information about what happens to bulky goods once they have been donated in order to prepare them for reuse. This might help to alleviate hygiene concerns in the same way that emphasising the speed and the efficiency of a collection can help to overcome the hassle factor.

Barrier 6: *second hand means second rate*

Affects: purchasers

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Some householders are put off purchasing reused goods due to the perception that second hand items are of a poorer quality than brand new. This is especially pertinent for electrical goods, which are often thought of as being faulty (even when this is not the case), and which could be because householders often only go through the process of disposal when an item is broken. Emphasise the quality (and safety) of second hand items in your communications, and work in partnership to develop or draw attention to guarantees, warranties or no-quibble returns policies – if applicable and where available – to provide reassurance.

You could consider adding information about PAS 141 when promoting electrical item reuse in the future. Publicly Available Specification (PAS) came into effect on 31 March 2011 although no accreditation has taken place to date. The PAS is designed to provide a framework for assuring consumers of the quality and safety of electrical items that have been reused. The organisations who are accredited will have prepared the items within certain guidelines. These activities include visual inspection, safety testing and function testing, data eradication, software removal/loading, repair and cleaning. The product will also be subject to a warranty and items will have labelling either on the items itself or the packaging. For more information see <http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030245346>

Barrier 7: *where does it all go/end up?*

Affects: donators

Some householders express confusion or concern about where their donation ends up or how it gets used, and this can be a barrier to participation in reuse. In addition research has shown that householders believe items are being reused when they visit a Household Waste Recycling Centre because of the separation systems in place and think they are doing the “right thing” when they take items to the sites.

Providing information about the ‘transformation’ of their item to clarify where it is being used can help to reassure and this can provide an opportunity for interesting and creative ideas for Public Relations.

Online barriers

There are a number of online auction and swap shop web sites. One of the most popular is eBay, where individuals can buy and sell a wide variety of items. Charities too can raise funds through eBay, by selling items or via donations from the sale of individuals’ goods. Alternative sites such as www.preloved.co.uk exist to provide a different online shopping experience that acknowledges the environmental benefits of selling second hand items online. Perhaps the best-known online swap shops are Freegle and Freecycle.

However, there are some disadvantages and barriers to these online options. They can be socially exclusive, because of the need to have access to a computer and transport. Furthermore, not all householders will find these websites easy to use or register with, and they may be uncomfortable about paying for goods over the Internet.

Some householders may prefer to use council-branded facilities, especially for online transactions, because there is a perception of quality, trustworthiness and familiarity. One example of this is the Freeuse site developed by North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC)

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www.nwleics.gov.uk/freeuse. The site is a portal within the council's website and has been designed to be easy to access and use.

Strategy

The next stage is to select the strategy most suited to achieving the aim and objectives. Using the information from the background research, the knowledge about the people living in your area (target audience), and taking into account the budget you will need to decide which communications methods will be the most effective. Questions to ask include:



- Broad brush approach and reach everyone across the area or segment?
- Target particular audiences or people in particular neighbourhoods?
- Target donators or purchasers or both?
- Communicate simple or detailed messages?
- Combine council service information with other reuse options such as charity shops and online?

Use your answers to help select your communications methods. There is a range to choose from:

Method	Broad brush	Targeted
Advertising	✓	✗
Public Relations (PR)	✓	✗
Direct marketing	✓	✓
Community engagement	✗	✓
Online	✓	✗
Internal communications	✗	✓

Although often high profile, advertising, especially outdoor and television and radio advertising, can be expensive and therefore might not be the most appropriate method for bulky waste communications.

Public Relations is more cost effective, but need creative ideas to capture the imagination of the local media and secure good coverage. Highlighting the successes of your scheme and demonstrating local benefits can be useful.

Direct marketing requires careful targeting and identification of your target audience. Community or face-to-face engagement is popular and can be effective. Events such as swap shops, roadshows and working with community groups allow you to match your message to your target audience, and can help to build good links with community groups and individuals active within their own communities, who can champion your cause.

The local authority website is often a cheap and effective method of communicating with householders about reuse. Instead of simply providing information on the waste/recycling or environment pages of the website, add reuse options to the life events pages, or a link to a charity

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shop map to the “What’s On?” guide. There are also a number of no-cost and low cost online social networking sites such as Facebook and NING, where a page can be set up in addition to the information published on your website. The main advantage of these networks is that they offer interactive functions, such as discussion forums, which can be expensive to build onto your corporate website.

Campaign activities

Within each of the communications methods (advertising, Public Relations, direct marketing, community engagement, online and internal communications) there are a number of individual campaign activities.

Advertising, for example, includes billboards, adshels, bus, train and tube, TV and radio, online, press, poster sites (your local authority may have its own), containers and boxes, stickers, vehicle livery, signage and point of sale.



Therefore, if your strategy includes advertising, you may decide that the best campaign activities might be:

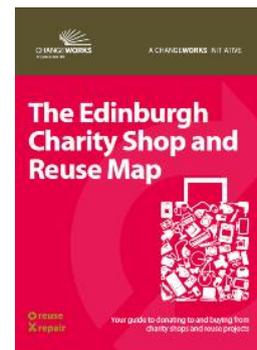
- press adverts in the local paper;
- posters displayed at your local authority’s own sites; and
- point of sale posters for independent retailers of bulky goods.

Some examples of campaign activities undertaken by other local authorities are provided below:

Charity shop and reuse maps/guides

To encourage householders to donate to, buy from (and even volunteer for) charity shops and reuse projects, a charity map or green guide can help to connect with reuse. It can appeal to a range of stakeholders, from the hard-pressed looking to save money to affluent fashionistas on the hunt for a rare designer bargain.

A number of areas have produced popular charity shop maps and green guides, including Edinburgh, Glasgow and Otley in West Yorkshire. Potential PR opportunities around activities such as these include: fashion shows in conjunction with local charity shops or second hand retailers and design students; and charity shop/reuse project bus routes and guided tours.



Individual aims and objectives for each activity along with a breakdown of the tasks involved will help ensure your communications are effective.

Although in Oldham messaging around the idea of “ A guide to” was not popular.

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Planning activities

This is where the strategy (the why, who and how) becomes a plan (the what and when). The implementation plan ensures the campaign activities are completed within the timescale and to budget.



Remember to take account of any national activities to which to link to and generate added media and public interest.

You will need to schedule all your communications activities and costs to finalise the budget. The overall timescale will depend on how far into the future you need to plan, and how far you can accurately forecast your budget levels and make decisions. In most cases the best approach is to plan and review over a 12-month cycle, although occasionally, for shorter campaigns, your plan may only need to cover a few months. Finally, consider the level of detail. Consider producing:

- a simple overview of the main activities for your steering group and other key stakeholders; and
- a much more detailed version that you and your team will use on a day-to-day basis.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Defining your aim and setting objectives are a vital part of the communications planning process, as it is against these that you will monitor your campaign activities in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign, and determine whether it has been a success.



WRAP has developed comprehensive guidance on monitoring and evaluation. Refer to this for information about the range of methods that can be used to measure the impact of your campaign.

For more information about monitoring and evaluation see: [Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance](#)

Summary

When communicating about bulky waste services there are a number of key points to consider;

- motivations and behaviours are different for donation and purchase;
- the difference between reuse and recycling is not fully understood by householders;
- messages need to demonstrate the convenience of the service;
- messages need to draw on the benefits to the householders of carrying out the action; and
- internal audiences are vital to the delivery of a good service.

WRAP will be carrying out further work in the next year to better understand how reuse behaviour can be encouraged.

Bulky Waste Guidance: Communications

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