



The Greening of the Supermarket

At Dillons Supermarkets, a concern for the environment and the bottom line can go hand-in-hand.

Just about everything that comes out of a grocery store can be recycled. Today, progressive supermarkets are working with Waste Management to implement sustainable practices in a big way.

Dillons is an 88-store chain founded in 1913. Now a division of The Kroger Company, it entered into a relationship with Waste Management's sustainability services team in 2010. The mandate? To control costs and also find ways to more intelligently analyze and handle waste removal.

Shortly thereafter, one area came to the forefront – better management of organic waste. And it surfaced in Dillons' Lawrence, KS market – home of the University of Kansas. University towns are often early adapters of emerging trends, especially where sustainability is involved, and Lawrence was no exception.

The goal was to implement a better, greener way to manage organic materials, keeping them out of landfills. The solution delivered did just that and it did it in an easily executable manner, according to Sam Blaine, Strategic Account Manager at Waste Management.

"Typically, much of a grocery store chain's waste is organic material. Dillons' Lawrence stores were already donating a portion of their organics to a local food bank. We set them up with a third-party partner to divert the rest to a composting solution."

What started as a "right for the planet" idea has also become a "good for business" process that involves formal analysis, ongoing checks and complete assessments of each store's entire waste stream.

Not only did Waste Management provide grocery store knowledge, but Blaine and another team member added some 30 years of hands-on grocery experience themselves. Together, the team worked with Dillons to put an analytically based plan in place. Results soon followed:

- For the Dillons chain, waste expenses are being identified, analyzed, tracked and managed:
 - Trash is now minimized and recycling maximized – with a minimal impact on labor
 - Loss prevention opportunities and best practices were identified and undertaken – following upfront waste assessments

More specifically, the four Dillons stores in the Lawrence area have implemented additional organics-driven approaches of their own, enhancing their reputations as businesses that care about the quality of life in the communities they serve. Expansion to other stores is anticipated in the months ahead.

"Waste Management's industry professionals can almost profile store sales, shrink, operational execution and overall operational efficiency by simply looking at the waste and recycling streams."

*Jeremy Maples, Expense Manager,
Dillons Supermarkets*

KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- Set clear goals upfront – for Dillons, this meant sustainability and efficiency
- Know that each market is different – for Waste Management, this meant developing a plan uniquely suited for stores in Lawrence
- Think big – this meant implementing a solution sensitive to both economics and environment

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