



## Design with Intent

Recycling is an admirable practice. Yet every day, countless tons of valuable materials are sent to a landfill instead of being returned to the value chain.

The reasons are many. For starters, well-intentioned sustainable design initiatives often focus on material reductions and lowering the amounts of embedded energy in a product. The result? Products that may achieve other sustainability goals at the expense of recyclability. Other designers may select traditionally recyclable materials, but combine them in ways that make them difficult to disassemble, compost or recycle. This demonstrates the potential disconnect between sustainable product design and product recyclability. Fortunately, there is way to make products both sustainable and recyclable. Central to this is a concept called Design with Intent.

### **Making recyclable achievable.**

Design with Intent takes a systems-thinking approach to product design and considers the true recyclability of products early in the design phase. Doing so helps to ensure that resources return to the value chain after a product's initial use by being mindful of three factors – material selection, ease of disassembly and recycling infrastructure capabilities.

As one of the nation's leading recyclers, Waste Management can help put a Design with Intent approach in place for your company to help improve a product's recyclability and its chances of returning to the value stream.

Here's how our approach takes hold:

- 1. Initial Discovery Sessions** facilitate all stakeholders coming together to discuss current product specifications and performance needs and to outline a plan of action for moving forward.
- 2. Analytical Testing** determines all constituents of product components to identify any materials or additives that may prove problematic for material processors.
- 3. Material Recovery Facility testing** will allow you to understand how your product performs at a typical recycling collection facility and identify any potential issues.
- 4. Reporting and Recommendations** will detail the entire process, identify barriers to recycling or composting, and offer paths to improvement – including material selection recommendations, innovative product take-back opportunities and potential alternatives to traditional recycling.

Working with us can help reduce the risk of “greenwashing” or overstating a product’s recyclability, which can lead to a damaged brand reputation and potential legal action. Additionally, thoughtful materials selection and a Design with Intent approach can have positive impacts on sales and market share, as customers may be willing to pay a premium for products viewed as more environmentally responsible.

Our partnership can also increase the overall sustainability of your products and processes. By keeping sustainability in mind upfront, you can be confident your products will be recovered and have a second life, thereby closing the loop on waste and increasing the sustainability of your organization.

## About Sustainability Services

Waste Management Sustainability Services is a nationwide network of environmental professionals offering sustainability advisory services, environmental and project management experience to help companies advance along the path toward sustainability. By leveraging the network of assets and expertise of WM, the leading provider of comprehensive waste and environmental services in North America, our team can design and implement value-driven solutions unrivaled in the industry.

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