



purchase more trucks, so we could separate the trucks that pick up recyclable waste from those that pick up normal waste.

“Then we had to spend a lot of money on, not just marketing, but education. Because if people aren’t educated in separating the garbage, then recycling becomes an absolute nightmare. In other countries, in Europe and Canada, you have one bin for paper, one for cans, one for plastics, and different trucks pick up the separated garbage. We knew that wouldn’t work here because it’s just too much of an effort.

“We simplified it into separating only organic waste and all other recyclables - one division of separation. Initially, what we recycled was very limited; cardboard and PTI plastic, aluminum cans, and glass bottles. Now, we recycle all plastic except Styrofoam. I’m talking shrink wrap, PT1, PT2, aluminum cans, electronics, batteries, office paper, cardboard, copper, magazines. In-

terestingly enough, that change, and the increase in recyclables, happened after a huge fire where our whole facility burned down.

“It was a three-day fire that ended recycling in this country for two years. Then, I had to rebuild the facility. It started operating again about a year ago. I tried to turn sour lemons into lemonade by using the advantages of what I learned previously and the mistakes I made, and fixed those when we built the new facility.

“Our main long-term plan is to get to zero percent landfill, through a process that’s still being tested; a way of recycling organic waste at a much quicker rate than composting would, and using much less space. If we’re successful with that, we can start taking the first big steps toward zero landfill.

“The other goal is to reduce shipping costs. Because we’re an island, everything has to get sent away. And the one way I can reduce my

shipping costs is by shipping more stuff; by increasing the number of containers of recycling we send out. By far, the most important business relationship I have is with the people who purchase my recyclables. Currently, it’s around 55,000 pounds per week to recyclers in Miami. From there, depending on what it is, some recycling goes to China to get processed. The only thing we keep is glass. We crush it and turn it into aggregate for small projects like building tarmac roads; or we separate it into colors and crush it to the size of small crystals for decorative purposes.

“I’m actually lowering my prices because of the recycling. Take a hotel, they are charged a certain amount every time I collect their normal waste. So, I tell them, if I give you another bin to fill with recyclables, I’ll take those away for free.



That means your normal bin won’t be collected as often, because it won’t fill up as many times. I do that to motivate people to segregate their garbage. If you modify behavior, in the long run, it’s profitable for both parties.

“Environmental impact is always at the forefront in Turks and Caicos. This island is completely and utterly dependent on the tourism industry. Even the big power companies, their best customers are the large hoteliers and restaurants. The tourism draw is our beautiful waters, so if we don’t keep the island clean and we don’t environmentally sustain it, we’ll lose the tourists, and that would be disastrous because we literally have nothing else to fall back on.

“There’s another vital element at play in Turks and Caicos, beyond the environmental debate. It’s the limited amount of land. We’re a tiny island, and this is just pure math. I respect the fact that there are differing scientific theories and personal beliefs on global warming, but no one can argue the fact that we will run out of room if we don’t start sending stuff out of here.”

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