Recycling Gains Ground
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Abstract (Document Summary)
Recycling has gained increased acceptance throughout the retail industry as a way to increase resource productivity and demonstrate environmental commitment. It can also yield significant savings in avoided materials and disposal costs. Target Corp participates in the EPA's WasteWise, a free, voluntary program through which companies can tailor a solid-waste plan to their specific needs. Alberton's takes a proactive approach to waste reduction that includes working with suppliers to redesign packaging. Starbucks Coffee Co's recycling efforts include a Starbucks's Green Team, which provides support and advice to store managers for "behind-the-scenes" recycling programs of plastics, paper and cardboard.

Full Text (528 words)
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Chains take proactive stance on waste reduction

Recycling has gained increased acceptance throughout the retail industry as a way to increase resource productivity and demonstrate environmental commitment. It can also yield significant savings in avoided materials and disposal costs. Here is an update on what some retailers are doing:

* Target Corp. participates in the EPA's WasteWise, a free, voluntary program through which...
companies can tailor a solid-waste plan to their specific needs (www.epa.gov/wastewise). The chain was honored in the program’s 2004 awards. Since joining WasteWise, Target has reduced its solid waste by more than 30%.

Among its initiatives is a plastic-hanger recycling program that keeps up to 500 million hangers a year out of landfills or incinerators. The hangers are made from recycled content and are reused until damaged, at which time they are ground for remanufacturing into post-consumer goods. Target recycles more than 1,800 tons of plastic hangers and recycles or refurbishes more than 44,000 shopping carts annually.

* Gap Inc.: In 2004, the chain estimated that it reused more than 10 million boxes and recycled 38,000 tons of cardboard and paper. But it wants to do more and, this year, has been focusing on its 13 distribution centers, encouraging them to increase reuse of their boxes. The chain estimates the move could cut its cardboard supply dramatically, saving it an estimated $3.5 million annually.

* Albertson's takes a proactive approach to waste reduction that includes working with suppliers to redesign packaging. Recycling is incorporated into the supermarket chain's standard operating practice manual.

* Giant Eagle, which maintains an extensive plastic-bag recycling and waste reduction program, recycled more than 322 tons of plastic in 2004. At the store level, cashiers credit customers with 50 for each bag reused.

* Safeway, named 2005 Waste Reduction Awards program "WRAP of the Year" by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, has been particularly aggressive when it comes to sending less garbage to landfills. The chain operates 557 California stores through its Vons and Northern California divisions. In 2004, the two divisions diverted 210,926 tons from landfill disposal through composting and recycling (both divisions have a composting program for green waste at their stores), resulting in cost savings in waste disposal and landfill costs.

* Office Depot: The last few years have seen growing focus on electronic waste, driven by the rapid obsolesce of cell phones, computers and other electronic products. Office Depot won plaudits for its companywide electronics recycling program which, in seven weeks, collected more than 10 million lbs. of electronic gear. It trained some 5,000 employees to handle the influx of recycled material.

* Starbucks Coffee Co.’s recycling efforts include a Starbucks Green Team, which provides support and advice to store managers for "behind-the-scenes" recycling programs of plastics, paper and cardboard. It has come up with some innovative ways to reuse waste, such as reusing or donating packing materials and packaging from its gift packs to local schools for art projects. The chain is looking for additional ways to divert waste through packaging reduction, reuse and recycling. It is rolling out new cups that incorporate 10% post-consumer fiber to its U.S. stores.

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