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Goals & Progress: Cup Recycling



Goal: Develop comprehensive recycling solutions for our paper and plastic cups by 2012

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We demonstrated the viability of our cup recycling solution in the U.S. and Canada and are working to bring these solutions to scale globally.



When many people think of Starbucks, they think of our iconic white cup. That's a meaningful connection that we're proud of, but at the same time we are mindful of the impact our cups have on the environment, from the way they are manufactured to their final disposal. To mitigate these impacts, we have set a goal to make 100 percent of our cups reusable or recyclable by 2015. We're currently working on a number of complementary initiatives with a variety of stakeholders to advance progress in this area. By collaborating with key industry leaders – even competitors – we aim to reduce the global impact of food and beverage packaging.

Starbucks beverages account for approximately 4 billion cups globally each year. As one of many operating foodservice businesses, Starbucks is working to lead the entire industry toward greater access to recycling for cups and other packaging. Ultimately we want our cups to be recyclable in both material and practice, so that our customers have access to recycling services wherever they choose to dispose of their cups.

Some communities already recycle our paper and plastic cups, but due to a traditional lack of demand for cup material by the recycling industry, many don't have the infrastructure in place to handle collection, hauling and processing. For stores operating out of leased spaces, recycling is also dependent upon landlords who control waste collection and recycling. With more than 17,000 retail locations globally, conditions vary from city to city and from store to store – making it a challenge for us to efficiently and effectively implement uniform recycling strategies.

We embraced this challenge and in 2008 Starbucks engaged Peter Senge from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Society for Organizational Learning to help explore a systems-based approach to cup recycling. This led to three Cup

Recycling & Reusable Cups Goals



Front-Store Reusable Cups
ON TRACK MODIFIED GOAL



Energy & Water Conservation Goals
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Energy Conservation
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Renewable Energy
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Green Building Goals
Water Conservation
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Cup Recycling
LEED® Certified Stores
Learn more about the journey of our cup.
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[Recyclable Cup Journey Factsheet](#)

Learn more about the cup recycling industry and process from [International Papers](#).

Summits (in 2009, 2010 and 2011), where we brought together government officials, raw material suppliers, cup manufacturers, retail and beverage businesses, recyclers, competitors, conservation groups and academic experts to craft comprehensive recycling strategies for Starbucks and others in the foodservice industry.

Since our first Cup Summit, we've learned that success has been a combination of forward-thinking collaborations along with innovative approaches to widespread challenges. When we started on the journey, we felt that the cup material was the key contributor to recyclability. But as we've learned more, we now believe that the improvement of local recycling infrastructures and commercial markets for used paper and plastics will ultimately drive recyclability.

After our second Cup Summit, we began a pilot project with cup supplier International Paper and recycled pulp producer Mississippi River Pulp, in which we demonstrated the viability of recycling used cups into new cups. We also sent used cups from Chicago Starbucks stores to a Georgia-Pacific paper mill in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where they were used to make napkin paper for Starbucks and other customers. With these efforts and with the success of comprehensive in-store recycling for our customers in major municipalities, we believe we have achieved our goal to identify the best comprehensive recycling solutions for our paper and plastic cups in the U.S., and are now working to bring these solutions to scale globally.

At our third Cup Summit in September 2011, Starbucks and other strategic businesses in the cup value chain announced a relationship with the [Foodservice Packaging Institute](#) to form the Paper Recovery Alliance (PRA), a coalition of restaurant and food packaging industry leaders whose work will bring to scale solutions to the issue. The PRA is taking a systematic look at how to develop and promote the recovery and processing of single-use cups and other used paper foodservice packaging. The organization will set up pilot projects to build on the work we've all done to understand and overcome the existing challenges to paper foodservice packaging recovery. Our work on the cup has shown us that by joining with other companies we can have meaningful impacts on the industry.