

Waste Management Case Study Meadowhall Shopping Centre

Meadowhall Shopping Centre is based in the Lower Don Valley region. The centre has over 270 stores, attracts over 25 million visitors a year and directly employs 379 people, with up to 7,500 employed by the retailers. By managing waste responsibly Meadowhall has improved its reputation and relationships with retailers as well as reducing its costs and impacts on climate change.



In 2005 Meadowhall became the first UK shopping centre to develop an on-site Resource Recovery Centre, to sort, separate and send materials for recycling. The team now recycles cardboard, glass, paper, aluminium cans, wooden pallets, soft and hard plastics, coat hangers, fluorescent tubes, retailer cages, toner cartridges and electrical goods.

Over the last two years more than 90% of the waste entering the Resource Recovery Centre has been recycled. In 2007 the team recycled over 1,525 tonnes of waste including 1,256 tonnes of cardboard, 40 tonnes of coat hangers, 72 tonnes of paper and 128 tonnes of polythene.

The Centre originally invested £35,000 in the Resource Recovery Centre. Over the last two years the return on investment is estimated to be over £250,000, thanks to the savings on transport and disposal costs, combined with the revenue from the segregated materials. Some of this is reinvested in additional recycling initiatives and some of it is passed on to retailers.

“It is essential that we continue to drive service charge value for our retailers whilst at the same time achieving our corporate responsibility aims. Advances and improvements in our recycling efficiencies are a perfect example of doing the 'right thing' having a very tangible business effect, in essence with rising transport and landfill costs Meadowhall would have been in a more costly situation without the savings we've made through good recycling processes.” Darren Pearce, Finance Director



The Resource Recovery Centre has created social as well as environmental and business benefits. By working in partnership with Crown Hill Employment, adults with learning difficulties have benefited from work experience. With the support of the Resource Recovery Centre Manager, these adults have been developing their skills and sense of independence. They are now able to work without the support of carers from Crown Hill Employment. They are also extremely good at running the facility while maintaining an excellent working atmosphere.

“The partnership working with Meadowhall has been extremely successful. It has enabled service users to experience a main stream working environment in which they are valued as employees. Ideals of inclusive community participation have been met for individuals who work there. It has increased individuals' self esteem and promoted a greater level of independence.” Tricia Higgins, Crown Hill

Over the past few years climate change has risen up the agenda for **retailers**. Many major UK retailers are making public commitments to manage their waste responsibly, such as M&S through its Plan A. The waste management initiatives at Meadowhall help the Centre retailers to achieve their own recycling objectives, helping the Centre to meet the needs of its primary customers, its occupiers. Retailers are kept informed about waste management performance through monthly Retail Partner meetings. Posters in service corridors also help to ensure that retailers' employees were also aware of the initiatives in place at Meadowhall.

"Across the business, Meadowhall is passionate regarding limiting its effect on the environment. This is not just good for the reputation of Meadowhall Shopping Centre but demonstrates true commitment to developing environmental good practices. This is more than evident with the level of recycling and the innovation used to tackle all aspects of waste management, ensuring we support our retail partners, customers and employees."
Alice Truswell, Transport and Travel Plan Manager

Consumers are also increasingly aware of environmental issues. 96% of people completing a survey for British Land in 2007 rated reducing environmental impact as very important/important for companies to do. Shoppers at Meadowhall can bring their recycling with them and deposit it in the recycling banks in the car parks. They can also recycle plastic bottles, paper and aluminium cans in recycling bins around the centre.

In August 2007 the Centre hosted the Business in the Community Climate Change Exhibition, providing over one million shoppers with the opportunity to see the simple environmental messages. The exhibition featured a series of giant stands displaying practical information and easy measures that will help everyone to make good environmental choices and reduce their carbon footprint. Waste management messages included:

- Recycle food and paper... and save over 50% of your household waste from ending up in landfill.
- Recycle and re-use your mobile phone... and we could save 7,500 tonnes of landfill waste.
- Recycle your plastic... 25 recycled plastic bottles can make one adult-size fleece jacket.
- Re-use plastic bags... and cut back on the number that end up as landfill.
- Recycle your glass... recycling just two glass bottles saves enough energy to make five cups of tea.

The exhibition will be returning to the Centre in May 2008.

In 2007 the Operations Team introduced an on-site plastic recycling facility for **Meadowhall staff**, as plastics are not currently collected for recycling in most local council areas. Plastics make up 11% by weight of the contents of the average household bin. Staff can now deposit their plastic waste for recycling when they come to work.

"Most local councils do not recycle plastic products, however Meadowhall does and we communicate this to our staff through our environmental training. Staff therefore have the opportunity to reduce the amount of waste going into their black bins by recycling all their plastic products at Meadowhall."

John Lynch, Human Resources Manager

Following the introduction of a recycling scheme for **shop-fit waste** in 2006, 73% of all Meadowhall shop-fit waste was recycled in 2007. This was recognised with a national award.

"Meadowhall is one of the most actively managed shopping centres in the country carrying out around 50 shop-fits each year. As you can appreciate this has the potential to generate a substantial amount of waste. We recognised that this presented a huge recycling opportunity... A site management approach has been adopted to ensure that the process of collecting the materials is controlled, safe and minimises costs."

Peter Bellhouse, Head of Design and Development

Meadowhall's waste management programme has won a range of **awards**, generating positive publicity and raising awareness of how the centre takes its environmental responsibilities seriously. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the Centre's reputation. Recent awards include:

- Sceptre Environmental Management of the Year Award 2007 for shop-fit recycling
- The Sheffield Business Award for Recycling 2007
- Business in the Community (BitC) Big Tick for Waste Management in 2006 and 2007
- BitC Yorkshire and Humber Environment Index 2006- Retail Sector Leader and Premier League Status.