

Reducing waste at The Cut Salon – a Case Study

Background

The Cut Salon is a small independent hairdressing business located in Nelson that has been working towards implementing a range of sustainable work practices. In 2011, Nelson City Council (NCC) funded Waste Education Services (WES), part of the Nelson Environment Centre (NEC) to work with The Cut Salon on reducing waste from their business.

The Challenge

- To reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- Improve waste management systems and cost efficiencies

The Process

- A waste audit was undertaken by WES in May 2011 - the audit represented one week's worth of waste from the salon
- Findings from the audit indicated that there were a number of actions that could be taken to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- Recommendations were made to support the salon in their journey of waste reduction

The Results (up to November 2011)

- Since June 2011 The Cut Salon have implemented a number of measures to reduce waste
- The overall outcome – waste to landfill has been reduced by two-thirds!
- This not only improves the local environment but saves the salon money on waste disposal, and provides them with an edge in a competitive market
- Changes at work have led to changes at home – some staff estimate reducing their household waste by 50%.

Implementing Change

- There was real buy-in and ownership of the process from everyone - staff were enthusiastic, committed and keen to see real change
- Implementation of recommendations were staggered over time to help staff adapt to new practices and systems
- Some 'easy wins' were implemented before more difficult changes were attempted

The Changes

- All recyclable materials like cardboard, metal cans, paper, cardboard (packaging) and plastics (1-7) are now separated out from the general waste and recycled.

- Hair is collected in a separate bin from the general waste and taken to Green Waste to Zero in Richmond where it is composted. A small charge (\$3-\$4 per bag) is made for this service. In three months, the salon has required only one trip.
- Some purchasing practices have been changed to reduce the amount of packaging, particularly non-recyclable food packaging, generated. Changes have included:
 - Purchasing packets or tins of biscuits rather than individually wrapped items
 - Coffee contained in a glass jar or wrapped in paper, rather than foil/plastic
- Foils are separated from the general waste and taken to SIMS Pacific Metals in Tahuna for recycling. SIMS pay the salon \$1.60/kg for the foils as aluminium has a value as scrap metal. This system was implemented only recently and to date the salon has not collected sufficient amounts of foils to require a trip to SIMS.
- Metal tubes containing remnants of hair dye are also being collected and will be taken to SIMS to see if they can recycle these too. Collection of these items will be reviewed following discussions with SIMS.
- The salon is trialing use of an EM Bokashi system to deal with their food scraps. Although some concerns were raised about what to do with the end product as they have no access to a garden at the salon, it is hoped that one of the staff will take the compost to use in their garden. Staff will review the system over the next few months.
- Contact has been made with companies sending circulars etc to reduce the amount of junk mail received at the salon

Implementing these changes has reduced waste from The Cut Salon by two-thirds. Instead of three Nelmac 'Blue Bags' every two weeks, they now have one bag every three weeks.

Future areas for development

Significant progress has already been made. Areas for future consideration include:

- Purchasing a lolly dispenser that will no longer require lollies to be individually wrapped
- A wider review of all practices at the salon including use of power and water
- WES organising a workshop with The Cut Salon to share lessons learnt about waste reduction with other hair salons working in the region.