

Make Your Waste Program Smarter with a Monitoring System

Technology continues to transform every aspect of our daily lives professionally and personally. In the waste management industry, there are a wealth of opportunities for improving everyday waste processes with technology—from cost savings and rightsizing to consolidating services. That is where developing a smart waste program can increase efficiency and provide insightful analytics to improve your overall waste management strategy.

Performing a Waste Audit

Creating a smart waste program starts with performing a full waste audit and outlining the structure of your current waste program as it stands today. In doing so, you can analyze all of your equipment, haulers/vendors, recycling initiatives, technology components and costs associated with the overall program. Some questions to consider when analyzing your waste program include:

1. What equipment do you have and is it sufficient to handle your waste and recycling needs?
2. How much are you spending on your waste program? This includes fees associated with equipment, hauling and disposal.
3. Are you working with a single vendor or hauler? Or do you have multiple contracts?
4. How many locations do you have?
5. Are you analyzing month-over-month waste consumption?

Answering these questions will give you a good baseline to assess where and how to make improvements to make your waste program smarter. From there, you can identify how technology can assist and improve waste management practices.

An Intelligent Waste Monitoring System

One of the most common—and extensive—technologies that transforms traditional waste programs into smart waste programs is an intelligent waste monitoring system. Implementing an intelligent waste monitoring system enables you to keep a close eye on your current waste streams and how much you are generating. Here are five key benefits to an intelligent waste monitoring system.

#1: Real-Time Access to Waste Data

Analyzing your waste program should not end after the initial waste audit. Consistent monitoring will enable a more efficient and cost-effective waste program over time. Today, there are a variety of waste monitoring systems available, typically via a cloud platform, to help keep an eye on waste management. This ensures that there is always a line of sight into waste expenditures.

The key to an efficient waste monitoring system is capturing metrics and analyzing information regularly. The data produced from this type of system holds the key to new efficiencies, pertinent updates or improvements to your waste and recycling program over time. Detailed reports and insights show a variety of key data buckets that will help keep you informed. These can include waste spend, service insights, statistics on tonnage, number of hauls and historical program data.



#2: Easily Right Sizeable Equipment

In many cases, your waste program can only be as efficient as the equipment you have onsite. It is important to make sure the equipment you have is sufficient to handle your waste flow. A monitoring system can provide a quick snapshot of the equipment you have onsite, the average tonnage and hauls for each type, and how full they are when they are picked up. This can be a key performance indicator of whether the equipment you currently have is fit to handle your waste needs—and if not, adjustments can be made.

There are a variety of equipment options available, from small and large containers to compactors and balers, and your managed waste service provider or vendor can help determine which is best for your business needs.

#3: Maximize Pickups

Having a glimpse into waste streams allows businesses to know how often hauls are taking place and at what capacity levels. A monitoring system can track receptacle fullness and identify any inefficiencies or opportunities to adjust pickups as needed. Think of it this way: what if a container was being picked up and hauled away only half full once every week? This presents an opportunity to readjust hauling frequency and save money.

The reverse is also true. Perhaps a business is experiencing a busy time and the amount of waste has doubled, causing it to need more frequent hauls to handle the waste flow. The monitoring system can help show the data for waste being produced verses equipment capacity to help determine the optimal hauling schedule for a dedicated period of time.

#4: Improve Diversion Rates

Today, many businesses are looking to move towards more sustainability-focused waste and recycling practices, and diversion rates are often a common metric that come up in such conversations. Diverting waste from landfills or incinerators involves having a good handle on the types of waste you are producing, and the frequency. The data from the monitoring system will help uncover any opportunities to increase the diversion rates as high as you can realistically get them.

Be sure to analyze the cost structure of diverting to ensure it makes the most sense for your business and bottom line. Your program's cost will depend heavily on the type of materials, the current market value of those materials, the volume your business is producing and hauling costs.

#5: Reduce Downtime

The reality of having any type of equipment naturally means that there are going to be instances where it needs to be serviced or problems arise that need to be addressed. With a waste monitoring system, a business can keep an eye on equipment controls in real time to make sure everything is functioning up to par. The system can show a variety of key indicators including status of the whole power unit, oil temperature, switching controls, safety features, container connections and system operating performance.



Depending on the problem at hand, oftentimes a technician can remotely patch in to solve the issue. On the flip side, if something does need to be addressed by a technician, the system can help prompt appropriate support to take care of the issue in a timely manner, reducing downtime so that it does not interfere with day-to-day waste management needs.

Putting Smart Practices into Place

By adopting a smart waste program, you can better understand your business' waste creation habits, enhance internal policies and resolve pain points. With these smart practices put into place, you will be able to continually find ways to streamline, reduce costs and troubleshoot any equipment issues that may arise, freeing up your time to focus on your business and customers.

