



# Zero Waste Business Principles

The **GrassRoots Recycling Network** adopted the following [ZWIA Principles](#) in toto on January 13, 2004 to guide and evaluate current and future Zero Waste policies and programs established by businesses. These *Zero Waste Business Principles* establish the commitment of companies to achieve Zero Waste and further establish criteria by which workers, investors, customers, suppliers, policymakers and the public in general can assess the resource efficiency of companies.

- **Commitment to the triple bottom line** - We ensure that social, environmental and economic performance standards are met together. We maintain clear accounting and reporting systems and operate with the highest ethical standards for our investors and our customers. We produce annual environmental or sustainability reports that document how we implement these policies. We inform workers, customers and the community about environmental impacts of our production, products or services.
- **Use Precautionary Principle ?** We apply the precautionary principle before introducing new products and processes, to avoid products and practices that are wasteful or toxic.
- **Zero Waste to landfill or incineration ?** We divert more than 90% of the solid wastes we generate from Landfill and Incineration from all of our facilities. No more than 10% of our discards are landfilled. No mixed wastes are incinerated or processed in facilities that operate above ambient biological temperatures (more than 200oF.) to recover energy or materials.
- **Responsibility: Takeback products and packaging** - We take financial and/or physical responsibility for all the products and packaging we produce and/or market under our brand(s), and require our suppliers to do so as well. We support and work with existing reuse, recycling and composting operators to productively use our products and packaging, or arrange for new systems to bring those back to our manufacturing facilities. We include the reuse, recycling or composting of our products as a design criteria for all new products.
- **Buy reused, recycled and composted** - We use recycled content and compost products in all aspects of our operations, including production facilities, offices and in the construction of new facilities. We use LEED-certified architects to design new and remodeled facilities as Green Buildings. We buy reused products where they are available, and make our excess inventory of equipment and products available for reuse by others. We label our products and packaging with the amount of post-consumer recycled content and for papers, we label if chlorine-free and forest-friendly materials are used.
- **Prevent pollution and reduce waste ?** We redesign our supply, production and distribution systems to reduce the use of natural resources and eliminate waste. We prevent pollution and the waste of materials by continual assessment of our systems and revising procedures, policies and payment policies. To the extent our products contain materials with known or suspected adverse human health impacts, we notify consumers of their content and how to safely manage the products at the end of their useful life.
- **Highest and best use ?** We continuously evaluate our markets and direct our discarded products and packaging to recover the highest value of their embodied energy and materials according to the following hierarchy: reuse of the product for its original purpose; reuse of the product for an alternate purpose; reuse of its parts; reuse of the materials; recycling of inorganic materials in closed loop systems; recycling of inorganic materials in single-use applications; composting of organic materials to sustain soils and avoid use of chemical fertilizers; and composting or mulching of organic materials to reduce erosion and litter and retain moisture.
- **Use economic incentives for customers, workers and suppliers ?** We encourage our customers, workers and

suppliers to eliminate waste and maximize the reuse, recycling and composting of discarded materials through economic incentives and a holistic systems analysis. We lease our products to customers and provide bonuses or other rewards to workers, suppliers and other stakeholders that eliminate waste. We use financial incentives to encourage our suppliers to adhere to Zero Waste principles. We evaluate our discards to determine how to develop other productive business opportunities from these assets.

- **Products or services sold are not wasteful or toxic** ? We evaluate our products and services regularly to determine if they are wasteful or toxic and develop alternatives to eliminate those products which we find are wasteful or toxic. We evaluate all our products and offer them as services whenever possible. We design products to be easily disassembled to encourage reuse and repair. We design our products to be durable, to last as long as the technology is in practice.
- **Use non-toxic production, reuse and recycling processes** ? We eliminate the use of hazardous materials in our production, reuse and recycling processes, particularly persistent bioaccumulative toxics. We eliminate the environmental, health and safety risks to our employees and the communities in which we operate. Any materials exported to other countries with lower environmental standards are managed according to the current standards in the United States.

GRRN's 'Zero Waste Business' Project contains links and information originally compiled by [Gary Liss](#) of Gary Liss & Associates - a recycling consultancy in Loomis, California.

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