



ANG Newspapers

ANG Newspapers (ANG) has the largest daily circulation among newspapers in the East Bay and the third largest in the San Francisco Bay Area. There are six papers in the newspaper group, including The Oakland Tribune and The Daily Review. The newspaper publisher employs 500 people in its four Alameda County facilities. ANG was formed in 1985; several of its newspapers have been in circulation for over 100 years.

Facts-at-a-Glance

Challenges

- High costs from wooden pallet handling and breakage
- Tons of wood waste
- Need to improve distribution system performance
- Limited capital to fund major projects

Solutions

- Research and cost-benefit analysis
- \$75,000 Business Waste Prevention Fund Award
- New equipment purchases with Award funds
- Hot-stamped pallets to make tracking easier
- Improved signage to increase recycling

Benefits

- Annual labor costs reduced by \$46,000
- Prevention of 37 tons of wood waste a year
- Less space needed to store pallets
- Improved operations and worker safety
- 125% return on investment (ROI)

The Story

ANG already had some environmental accomplishments, including pioneering the use of recycled content newspaper. StopWaste got involved to determine how ANG might further improve its environmental performance. StopWaste experts assessed the publisher's operations and determined that ANG had an ideal distribution system for reusable plastic pallets.

StopWaste also helped set up a recycling system that captures over 13,000 pounds of plastic film a year. ANG's ability to implement such projects combined with StopWaste's resources made for an effective partnership.

Challenges

The costs associated with repairing, storing, and handling wooden pallets were eating into the company's profits. Although ANG had a distribution system well suited for reusable plastic pallets, it had little internal capital available to fund major projects. So the company would need financial assistance to purchase the plastic pallets. ANG then had to develop a tracking system to ensure that the pallets didn't wander off-site, and figure out how to backhaul them for reuse.

"We've enjoyed a good return on the reusable plastic pallets. They've cut costs, improved operations and reduced our wood-waste."

SAM LOVATO
Property and Telecommunications Manager,
ANG





Solution

Improve ANG's distribution system and reduce wood waste by switching over to reusable plastic pallets.

"Implementation was easy, five hours of employee training, five hours of management time."

"There is no extra work we have to do with plastic pallets that we didn't do with wood."

RANDY McLEOD
Packaging Plant Manager, ANG

Waste Prevention

In order to get their environmental project rolling, ANG applied for and received a \$75,000 StopWaste Business Waste Prevention Fund Award to purchase 1,700 reusable plastic pallets. The project cuts labor costs by \$46,000 and prevents 37 tons of wood waste a year.

Reusable plastic pallets also offer many safety and performance advantages. If a wooden pallet is damaged or broken, it may collapse under a heavy load; but the durability of reusable plastic pallets improves worker safety. To improve efficiency, ANG color-coded its plastic pallets. The color-coding helps drivers know instantly which loads they are to pick up. Plus, the standardized shape makes handling and storage easier than with a fleet of mismatched wooden pallets. And finally, because workers are freed up from repairing wooden pallets, they can now focus on activities that add to customer value.

Tracking

Tracking the pallets has not been a problem. Every day, the four production facilities coordinate delivery needs and existing pallet inventory. The packaging plant manager says this work hasn't changed significantly from how it was done with the wooden pallets. The plastic pallets are hot-stamped for identification to help keep them in the system.

About Reusable Plastic Pallets

Reusable plastic pallets are often made of recycled content plastic and molded of tough, reinforced nylon. They can sustain static loads of 15 to 20 tons and are compatible with most equipment, including standard forklifts/lift trucks, standard pallet jacks/racks, and automatic palletizers. Most producers offer a five-year warranty, and one study shows that plastic pallets last for an average of 300 trips without any repairs.

Backhauling

ANG's closed distribution system makes backhauling easy. Trucks make deliveries and then pick up and return empties.



The StopWaste Partnership

StopWaste is a free technical assistance service dedicated to improving the environmental performance and reducing costs of Alameda County businesses and public agencies. The program provides expert support and funding to prevent waste, conserve water and energy, and use all resources more efficiently.

The bottom line:

- 125% return on investment
- \$46,000 labor savings a year
- \$75,000 Business Waste Prevention Fund Award
- 37 tons of wooden pallet waste prevented

For more information about reusable plastic pallets, go to StopWaste's Best Practices Database at www.stopwaste.org/partnership/best.html.

Visit www.stopwaste.org/partnership or call 1-877-STOPWASTE.