

Final Report

CIF Project 434.2: City of Toronto Superintendent and Property Manager Workshop

Background:

The City of Toronto has been working towards improving waste diversion for our multi-residential customers by implementing a number of measures such as a volume based rate system for waste, initiating organics collection, implementing a free in-unit recycling container program and hiring a 3Rs Ambassador Volunteer Coordinator dedicated to training residents living in apartment and condo buildings. The City of Toronto Solid Waste Management Services staff have also organized workshops for their multi-residential customers. These workshops in the past have been few and far between.

Encouraged by a report undertaken by Genivar (May 26, 2010) for the City's Tower Renewal Office (funded in part by CIF Project #178) recommending that the City sponsor building management training workshops; it was decided to host a workshop for our customers. Building superintendents and property managers play a key role in the success of any diversion program in high rises, thus it is imperative to get them on-board and keep them updated on the City's programs.

Solid Waste Management Services hosted a Multi-Residential Waste Reduction Workshop on June 1, 2011. The workshop hosted in 2011 was attended by approximately 160 people. It was very much a lecture style workshop and did not leave much room for discussion and interaction amongst the attendees. Wishing to build on the success of this workshop and incorporate the latest information on adult education, we wanted to use the best practices developed as part of the Superintendent and Property Manager Workshop Project funded by the CIF Project #434 for our workshop this year which was held on October 18, 2012 at the North York Civic Centre.

In addition to facilitated discussions on capture rates, barriers, challenges and successes related to recycling in multi-residential buildings, facilitators led workshop participants through several worksheets (see attached) including a worksheet to create the beginnings of a waste reduction plan for the attendees' buildings. Along with the more active format of the facilitated discussions, and the tools provided, it is expected that participants will take the information back to their buildings revitalized to carry out changes to improve waste diversion at their locations.

Objective:

With the objective of carrying out a workshop with focussed facilitated discussions to involve all participants and still reach a larger audience, we decided to host two workshops in one day accommodating close to 50 participants for each session. A large number of staff were involved in making the workshops a success. Betty Muise, Adult Educator, assisted us with the overall facilitation of the workshop and eight staff (plus a back up) facilitated group discussions at tables. Additionally, two staff from the billing section answered questions about bills, as this was identified as a concern in the pre-workshop needs assessment survey that was administered to participants that attended the 2011 Multi-Residential Waste Reduction Workshop. We also had staff from contracted collections available to answer any particular questions about collection issues at buildings with contracted collection. Finally, an interested staff person from Tower Renewal was in attendance in order to speak to anyone interested in improving their building's performance beyond waste reduction and foray into energy and water conservation. Of the nine staff designated as table facilitator six have gone through the "Multi-residential Recycling Train the Trainer" workshop (CIF Projects 379 and 434). The number of staff on hand allowed for ample opportunity for individual one-on-one time with staff for questions.

Goals:

Our goal for the workshop was to improve customer service and to use adult education techniques to aid in the "development of skills and the long term retention of information." We wanted to provide tools to building managers and superintendents in such a way that they would be inspired to take action to improve their waste diversion program.

Discussion:

A smaller team of five staff were involved with the workshop content development. We began by reviewing CIF's "Multi-residential Recycling Train the Trainer" slide deck and information binder and made edits and adjustments to better suit our customer base. We then had an initial meeting with Betty to review our changes. Her input was invaluable. We had removed some of the activities such as the motivations for recycling warm up exercise and the sorting of recyclables exercise – fearing that the former would cause people to focus overly on the negatives and for the latter that a sorting exercise was a bit basic and an unnecessary use of precious time. Betty, however, explained the rationale behind the warm up exercise and sorting exercise, which was to engage participants right from the start and to gauge the mood (in support for or against recycling) of the audience. Betty was also able to tell us of from her experience in facilitating other municipality's multi-residential workshops that the sorting exercise was popular and well received by workshop attendees. I feel that without Betty's guidance on our first attempt

at the facilitated discussions we would have drifted closer to a lecture style format again – if inadvertently. At Betty's recommendation we also added some "virtual tour" slides of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF), since it was not possible to take the group to the MRF under the time constraints. This turned out to be extremely popular.

Once the presentation materials were close to being finalized, Betty led the entire staff team of facilitators through a workshop practice run. This allowed everyone to become familiar with the way in which the workshop would be structured it also gave facilitators a chance to make some suggestions to fine tune some of the information on the slides. It is estimated that the team of 5 staff involved in planning the workshop invested a total of approximately 91 hours in preparing for the workshop.

The morning and afternoon workshops were 3 hours long plus half an hour extra for registration and networking. The workshop was promoted initially with a 3Rs Ambassador Recruitment letter sent out in August to our multi-residential customers based on mailing lists used by our Revenue Services for billing purposes (Attached). Presently, the City of Toronto services approximately 4,500 multi-residential dwellings. For the purpose of our mailing, we removed duplicates so that only one invitation was sent to a property management company (even if they managed several buildings). For example the Toronto Community Housing Corporation manages close to 500 buildings, but would have received one invitation. Thus our mailing list was reduced to approximately 2,500.

As we approached the end of August it was felt that in addition to the letter, we would have to send out a targeted direct mail piece as well to ensure adequate registration. Thus a second piece was mailed out in the first week of September (see attached).

A good mix of property managers, superintendents, volunteers and some residents involved in waste management attended the workshops. We attempted to separate people from the same company or building by having table assignments for the participants and facilitators.

Evaluation of Workshop:

On the day of the workshop we had already received positive feedback. One person who had attended last year's workshop told me that this year's format was 10 times better than last year! From listening to comments at the workshop we realized that not all property managers were aware that we provided a recycling calendar to all multi-residential residents. In 2011, we began producing a recycling calendar for our multi-residential residents as a way of getting information on recycling directly to the unit level. We send out the calendars through Canada Post. This year as a result of feedback, we will do a mailing to

property managers as well including a calendar. We do provide extra calendars for new move ins or welcome packages.

At the conclusion of each workshop session, participants were asked to complete a workshop evaluation form (see attached). We received 50 completed evaluation forms which represented a 50% return rate. To briefly summarize the findings we received overwhelmingly positive ratings, with 100% of respondents finding the workshop helpful and 78% preferring the facilitated discussions over lecture style format. The respondents indicated that what they liked best about the workshop was the following: handouts, sorting exercise, contact with staff, update on recyclables, sharing information/discussion, learning how the recyclables are processed, having a group leader at each table and the real case scenarios. (Refer to the evaluation summary spreadsheet). One participant remarked "One of the better seminars I have attended." We got feedback in the evaluation forms as well as verbally on the day, that property managers would like a CD or downloadable virtual tour that they can use to show their residents.

A personal email from one of the property managers is also attached thanking staff for the abundance of information provided at the workshop.

Additionally, in the week following the workshop half a dozen property managers ordered additional in-unit recycling containers (could be more but these identified themselves as having attended the workshop).

Evaluation by staff:

A debrief was held with Betty Muise via teleconference on October 31, and a final debrief meeting was had with all the table facilitators and support staff on November 8, 2012.

All of the staff involved in the workshop felt it was a great success and very well received. Everyone agreed that having a group leader at each table was key to relationship building and fostering an environment of customer service. Everyone was impressed with how well the sorting exercise and virtual Material Recovery Facility (MRF) tour was received.

There was some concern about the capture rate exercise and some of the facilitators indicated that interest and attention started to wane when it got to the calculations. This part of the workshop needs to be discussed and potentially revised. While this information is key, we need to give some consideration to delivering it using simpler messaging.

Initially there had been some thought about undertaking targeted workshops for property managers vs. superintendents and for contracted front-end bulk customers vs. in-house curbside 95 gallon customers. However, at the group debrief session, several of the facilitators felt that there had been benefit to the "inter-pollination" of the different groups and that having the mix promoted more discussion. Thus, we will continue to mix the various groups at future workshops.

Next Steps:

The workshop was a success. It was also very staff intensive. Thus, we would ideally like to make it an annual event; however, it is unlikely that we would increase this frequency. Additionally, we would like to work on the concept of a shortened version of the workshop that could go "on the road." This workshop would perhaps be one and a half to two hours long and focus on a recycling update, a MRF virtual tour, a sorting exercise, a presentation on capture rate and goals, a case study and the waste reduction work plan. This could be carried out by one staff at a time for smaller groups such as at property management corporate meetings, apartment and condo association meetings and the like. We plan to pilot this concept starting early next year.

Additionally, we had a lot of interest in the virtual MRF tour and will investigate the development of a virtual tour video that could be used by property managers and superintendents to show to their residents.

Project Budget:

Description	Amount
Printing invitations	\$1,067
Lasering addresses	\$143
Canada Post	\$1,464
Photocopying Kits	\$178.33
Colour Photocopying of Flyer	\$340
In-unit bags	\$86
signs	\$96.80
Catering/dish rental	\$2073.16
Facilitation	\$3966.3
TOTAL	\$9,414.59