Elemental Impact

SC Department of Commerce: Food Waste Recovery Event
October 6, 2015
Greenville, SC

Holly Elmore
Founder & CEO
Elemental Impact

www.elementalimpact.org
Sustainability in ACTION

Work with industry leaders to create best operating practices where the entire value-chain benefits, including corporate bottom lines and the environment. Through education and collaboration, establish the best practices as standard practices.
Ei Creates Corporate | Community Initiatives

- What could be done
- That is not being done
- Ei gets it done

Brings the Possible out of Impossible

Identifies Pioneers & Creates Heroes

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Launched in February 2009

THE forerunner in the commercial collection of food waste for compost

Required food donations in accordance with the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

Major media: CNN prime time, NY Times front page

Quotes: “This is easy, a no brainer – why would you not collect food waste for compost?!”

2012 Sold to National Restaurant Association

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Ei Platforms:

- **Product Stewardship**
  *Integrity throughout the entire product life-cycle*

- **Recycling Refinement**
  *Moving beyond landfill diversion*

- **Water Use | Toxicity**
  *The Water Footprint: the new sustainability standard*

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Recycling Integrity:
*Maintaining maximum Material Value With Minimal Energy Expended*

Contamination:
*An expensive trip to the landfill*
Contamination is a mistake
Sustainable Food Court Initiative
An Integrated Approach to Sustainability

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Active Pilots

- Airport - Atlanta Airport
- Shopping Mall - Concord Mills (Charlotte)
- Event Venue - Georgia Dome (Atlanta)
- Event - LDEI | ATL (Afternoon in the Country)

Focus: Post-Consumer Food Waste

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Food Court Challenges

- Waste | recycling & custodial services contracted by landlord or property manager.
- Contractual legal restrictions and obligations:
  - Landlord | tenant
  - Franchisee | franchisor
- Consumer separation of food waste, recycling and trash.
- Third party products brought into food court by consumer.
- F&B packaging used in front and back-of-house by foodservice operators

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Atlanta Airport

- Concessionaire contracts compostable packaging provision
- Compostable Foodservice Ware Packet
- Materials Usage Form

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Georgia Dome

- Compostable packaging
- Tailgate recycling
- Suites zero food waste
- Source-separated materials

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Compostable F&B Packaging Education Session

- Requested by GWCCA Director of Sustainability for Levy Restaurants
- Developed by SMAT – Sustainable Material ACTION Team
- Valuable industry tool
- Bottom line: BPI Compostable Certified!

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Concord Mills

- Back-of-the-house food waste collection for compost implemented in 2011
- Plastic film recycling program initiated in 2012
- Food donation program launched in 2012
- Overhauled food court in 2015 - in holding pattern

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EPA Grant Scaling Up Composting in Charlotte

- Ei Strategic Ally Sustainable Packaging Coalition is Grantee; Ei is subgrantee
- SMAT - Sustainable Materials ACTION Team - formed during Charlotte visit to support the grant, SFCI & S-SMRT
- Solid Charlotte relationships from early SFCI - Concord Mills formation days growing stronger
- Grant extension

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### Event Challenges

**Afternoon in the Country**

- **Annual Event** – challenging to set standard operating practices with one year intervals; may lack consistent contracted staff & volunteers.

- **Event Facility Parameters** – recycling & food waste programs may experience limitations due to existing facility contracts with haulers or other parameters.

- **Donated Food from Multiple Chefs | Restaurants** – coordinating new food serviceware and other restrictions on what may be brought to event with a multitude of chefs & restauranteurs.

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Afternoon in the Country

- Focus on zero food waste in 2015; move to zero waste in future years
- Ensure all F&B serviceware at AITC is reusable, recyclable or compostable
- Work with Serenbe on on-farm food waste composting
- Craft an event day game plan for clean recycling & food waste stream.

Baby Steps, lots of baby steps, are Key!

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Sustainable F&B Packaging Value Chain Annual December Meeting

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Sustainable F&B Packaging Value Chain
Annual December Meeting

- Hosted at Global Green’s D.C. offices
- Leadership from trade associations & NGOs within entire F&B packaging value chain
- Powerful industry discussions & strategy sessions
- Mission accomplished!

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The Earth’s soils are depleted AND disappearing:

- Since 1960, an estimated 33% of the world’s arable land was lost through erosion & other degradation.
  - Due to soy production, Brazil loses 55 tons of topsoil each year.
- 33% of soil is moderately to highly degraded due to erosion, nutrient depletion, acidification, salinization, compaction and chemical pollution; farmers abandon depleted soil and move to productive soil.
- Globally, the land used and abandoned in the last 50 years may be equal to the amount of land used today.

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Sediment is the #1 pollutant in US waterways

The cost of soil erosion in the U.S. is an estimated $44 Billion

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Photo courtesy of FAO
Healthy Soil = Well-Structured Soil

Soil is a living eco-system filled with active microbial communities

Healthy, well-structured soil:
- Retains approximately 40% more water.
- Cleans storm & surface water as it filters to aquifers & underground waterways.
- Produces nutritious food for humans, animals, birds, insects and plants.

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Compost is Nature’s food for the soil microbial communities.

Food waste is a key ingredient in the compost recipe.

Soils rebuild when the microbial communities are well-fed and nurtured.

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Contaminants in compost may result in poison to the microbial community.

Microplastics are an increasing issue in soil contamination.

Collecting clean food waste streams for compost is key to rebuilding our soils

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