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2015 RecycleMania Waste Less-Promote More: Engagement and Innovation Competition Case Study – Clemson University

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2. Category: Recycling and Other
3. Type of Promotion: Other – Recycling in an Unconventional Setting
4. General description of Promotion

The theatre industry is said to be an intrinsically wasteful business. For this very reason, the Clemson Theatre wanted to challenge themselves into seeing if they could have a production produced in an environmentally conscious matter.

In efforts to reduce their waste, the Clemson Theatre department decided to upcycle their February bi-annual production of the play, *Eurydice*. All aspects of the play were recycled or reused from all aspects of the production. This included everything from the design set to the reused costumes. The set they decided to use consisted of almost 18,000 plastic water bottles that had been collected over a span of four months. The fishing line used to string the plastic bottles were sent to a company that recycles the line.



5. Planning Steps to prepare for Promotion

- Start collecting bottles from football game days (the department started in October and the production was at the end of February)



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- Collect plastic and other plexiglass from various dumping and recycling sets
- Promote the upcycling theatre production and the collection of water bottles via social media (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook)
- Ask teachers to get student involvement and volunteers by collecting water bottles from classrooms
- Brainstorm other ways to produce an upcycling theatre production

6. Resources and people involved

Volunteers were the main source of success for the production of Eurydice. 124 people were involved in the production. The Clemson Players even got help and volunteers from the local high school in Easley, High School. These students were



taught how to upcycle a theater production. Even Clemson students not involved with the theater department helped out in the upcycling process by bringing in used plastic water bottles for the set production. As far as resources and money involved, the theater department saved money on renting the stage platforms and reusing most of the costumes from previous productions. Not only was the production environmentally conscious but it was also economically conscious, too.

7. Describe the Results of the Promotion

The plastic bottle set was successful in reducing overall waste in the production of the play. From reusing white fabric that was used at a gala earlier in the year. Volunteers and members of the drama department totaled 584.25 man hours in efforts to complete the upcycled set. Everything from fabric to plastic pieces on the set were reused. The metal mesh that





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was used on the set also was reused from a previous show. The metal washers used to suspend the water bottles will be used in future productions. Volunteers collected 909 pounds of recycling from Clemson football games. A grand total of 17,814 plastic bottles were reused and given a second life. At the end of the production the fishing line the plastic bottles were strung together with was sent to a company that recycles the wire. After the show, all of the plastic bottles



were recycled at Clemson’s Kite Hill recycling facility. The theatre department estimates that around 80% of the entire show was recycled, reused, and given some sort of second life. Also, the collaboration of the theatre department and the recycling department helped each department gain exposure. The recycling department was able to have a table outside of the production, which the interns were able to talk about on campus recycling and waste reduction.

8. What would you do differently in the future?

The theatre department agreed that the whole process of having an upcycled play production worked much better than they had anticipated. The production team had expected to originally only use 12,000 plastic bottles but ended up needing over 5,000 more. The collection process could have started a little bit earlier so that they would not have been so rushed for time, but the volunteer help went very well for the department. Our department would have liked to have marketed and promoted the production and the presence of recycling, but overall the show was successful.