



## Temple University 2020 RecycleMania Case Study

### **1. Contact info (name, department, school, email, phone)**

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### **2. Focus of Case study**

Unique partnership for unprecedented access to affordable triple-bottom, zero-waste personal care products. High-quality digital media visual education campaign fueled sustainable behavior and lifestyle change.

### **3. Detailed description of campaign component:**

We invited the sustainable personal care company Generation Conscious to campus to host a museum-style, pop-up sales experience that simultaneously served as a high-impact educational campaign spotlighting the plastic crisis and resultant environmental justice issues.

This retail exhibition took place in our Howard Gittis Student Center, the heart of campus and student activities. It was bolstered by hard-hitting, key facts about the plastic crisis featuring large, prominently displayed posters stating that only 9% of plastic is ever recycled and that college students throw out over 500 million single use plastic personal care containers each year.

They sold eco-friendly body wash, tooth tablets, and tooth powder in reusable containers and together with Temple Sustainability staff, spoke with students about identifying ways to reduce the plastic footprint on campus and integrate zero waste solutions in their lives. They also employed student ambassadors to help guide this discussion, serving as in-group peer validators.

The display itself was a striking, highly Instagram-able, minimalist aesthetic not unlike popular, zeitgeisty brands such as Reformation or Glossier. The students had the opportunity to customize their body wash scents, an opportunity to enjoy a luxury good at an affordable accessible price point.

Students also filled out a brief survey which allowed for Generation Conscious and Temple's Office of Sustainability to jointly learn more about students' consumption patterns and institute a more responsive marketing campaign to attempts to instigate more long-term sustainable behavior change.

All participating students signed the Office of Sustainability's Plastic Free Pledge. A select group of students received free product subsidized by the Office of Sustainability as a giveaway and a promotional campaign. All the students were also offered the opportunity to take photos at the GC photobooth, which served as very popular organic digital marketing content for RecycleMania and future waste reduction efforts at Temple.

#### **4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:**

List out in bullet format each of the steps involved in planning.

- Spoke with Generation Conscious to learn about the idea, products, and goals of the pop-up.
- Spoke with students on campus to hear their thoughts on the pop-up.
- Coordinated with Generation Conscious to identify an ideal location, time, and date for the pop-up.
- Coordinated with our TU Student Center Operations staff to reserve space on campus and plan for the event.
- Collaborated with Generation Conscious to design user surveys and develop metrics of evaluation with respect to both Recyclemania campaign and institutional climate action planning goals.
- Aided Generation Conscious in promoting the event on campus, via email, and on social media ahead of the pop-up.
- Provided storage space and staff support for Generation Conscious during the pop-up.
- Developed social media content following the event to maintain digital and in-person engagement with participating students.

#### **5. Resources and stakeholders involved**

The Office of Sustainability spent \$250 to purchase 50 reusable containers and a single product refill to facilitate student adoption in line with goals of RecycleMania. Both parties collaborated with the Student Center to host the event and Generation Conscious paid a small vendor fee. Generation Conscious provided original signage and pop-up display materials. Generation Conscious also hired several Temple students to help run the workshop for \$15 an hour.

Office of Sustainability assisted in promotional efforts and generated social media content. Temple University Sustainability Manager helped lead student ambassador recruitment efforts. Some of these students volunteered to promote the educational campaign and retail experience and others worked for compensation. Students leaders worked to coordinate with student organizations, successfully engaging such groups as Temple Student Government, Fox School of Business Student Professional Organizations, Black Student Union, Net Impact, Public Health Without Borders, Temple Community Garden, S.M.O.O.T.H. and the Progressive NAACP chapter.

#### **6. Describe the Results of this campaign component**

## **General results:**

300+ students engaged with zero waste personal care product popup sales and interactive visual product and marketing campaign display in high-traffic area over two days; nearly 2/3 of those participating signed our Plastic Free Pledge;

Made progress towards our internal climate action goals and fulfilled our office mission by:

- Incorporating environmental justice principles into education campaign around global plastic and recycling crises;
- Increasing awareness of sustainability initiatives around campus through the produced high-quality digital marketing and social media content on-site at Temple with student creatives
- Making progress in creating a zero-waste culture at Temple, and achieving a 50% diversion rate

## **Specific measurable impact figures, if applicable:**

103 students purchased eco-friendly products and reusable refillable containers. 21% of those students bought 2 or more products. 100% of those students signed up for a 2-month plan, showing commitment to refill. Students from over 26 different majors participated, showing demand for this service that extends far beyond the traditional environmentalist groups and existing sustainability volunteer network.

## **7. What would you do differently in the future?**

We would have liked to have held more pop-ups. Campus closures due to the Covid-19 epidemic prevented us from holding an additional six days of pop-up sales. Beyond that more obvious obstacle, we would have liked to start holding these pop-ups on a recurring basis starting at the very beginning of the fall and spring semester. Our goal is to make the next class of students aware of the option to refill before they arrive on campus to discourage them from buying single use plastic toiletries in preparation for move-in. Ideally, we would like to find a way to engage with students before arriving on campus -- both with our office of Sustainability to commit to go plastic free and to coordinate with Generation Conscious to deliver their refillable toiletries upon arrival at Temple.

## **8. What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?**

I would strongly recommend it. This pop-up was neither costly nor energy intensive for the Sustainability Office, yet it showed the potential to have a huge impact in our zero waste and sustainability campus culture and our strategic waste minimization goals, if executed on a regular basis.

Generation Conscious was an enthusiastic and willing collaborator. They came on campus with an amazing attitude and authentic commitment to triple bottom business and social entrepreneurship. Beyond giving students a way to reduce their plastic waste, their highly visible and strategic marketing and education campaign facilitated a great deal of discussion around zero waste on campus and encouraged students to generate their own innovative solutions to the waste crisis by seeing young go getters do it in style in real-time.

## 9. Photos and Graphics

Content captured by @GenerationConscious and @BlooBandit  
Netflix star, Felisha George (women in a winter hat, looking up at a 45 degree angle at her reusable container) from Rhythm + Flow attended the event and posted about her experience (see below).







