

Title page:

## **AN EFFECTIVE COMPOSTING SYSTEM BENEFITS BOTH A BUSINESS AND ITS CUSTOMERS**

Introduction page:

**As composting popularity grows, businesses are seeking a durable, easily identifiable composting receptacle that works for both employees and customers.**

More than ever, consumers are looking for composting solutions, both in the home and in public. That means there's an opportunity for businesses to meet this need while also helping visitors make informed disposal decisions at their commercial locations.

There are several reasons why some business owners don't compost in their commercial spaces. Some businesses believe composting will be too complicated for employees to manage. Others feel customers won't be able to distinguish compost receptacles from others, or they won't know how to use them. There is validity to each fear, but businesses can mitigate these pain points through effective composting receptacles that are simple to use for both employees and customers.

This whitepaper will discuss how composting regulations shift from state to state, what customer expectations are on composting programs and how businesses can meet these expectations to implement a successful and planet-friendly solution.

**Problem: Consumers are looking for composting solutions in commercial spaces.**

**Solution: Businesses need a more effective composting solution.**

### **STATE AND LOCAL COMPOST REGULATIONS**

According to The Business Research Company, [the global compost market grew from \\$6.82 billion in 2022 to \\$7.4 billion in 2023](#). Composting is on the rise globally, especially when looking at rising trends in organic farming.

At the same time, the generation of food waste in the USA is still on the rise: [80 million tons of food waste](#) in 2021 according to ReFed, with only 20.8% of that landing in compost bins. This disparity means that, while there are more resources to ethically discard our trash, Americans are still sending about 73.6 million tons of food to landfills.

**Callout: Of 80M tons of food waste, only 16.6M was composted.**

Some states are aiming to meet the food-waste-to-landfill challenge with stricter composting mandates and more readily available resources.

Those composting mandates direct individuals and businesses to compost their organic waste and keep it out of the trash. Some require the separation of yard waste, such as grass clippings, while others regulate food waste and other organic waste alongside yard waste.

Other states encourage composting by providing public education via websites, brochures, and other research material, but do not legally mandate it. These states provide organic waste pickup services, which is often limited to lawn trimmings and yard waste.

Some states devote fewer resources to composting. In these spaces, there are no composting regulations, and they rarely offer organic waste pickup programs or encourage citizens to compost.

However, the number of no-mandate states is dwindling as composting awareness and access increases.

#### Chart: Mandate levels:

**MANDATE COMPOSTING: states with regulations that require composting (19 states)**

**ENCOURAGE COMPOSTING: states that provide resources such as websites and brochures to encourage composting (14 states)**

**LESS FOCUS: States that devote few, if any, resources to encourage composting (17 states)**

While the strongest potential market for commercial composting bins is in states that mandate composting of organic material, interest is also growing in states that encourage composting and states that put less focus on composting efforts.

**Callout: The strongest potential market for commercial compost bins is in mandate states, but interest is growing everywhere.**

## **BUSINESSES AND COMPOSTING**

While mandate states are more incentivized to compost, more businesses are choosing to compost whether it's mandated or not. In a survey commissioned by Commercial Zone and conducted by Briar Cliff University, supervisors, owners, and managers from restaurants, C-stores and grocery stores were asked how they'd best describe their current composting system.

From the sample, 42% use municipal or private pick-up services to dispose compost-ready waste. A smaller 24% either transports the waste or composts themselves. While just 20% do not compost, citing that there are no municipal or private organizations ready to pick up organic waste.

#### Callout:

**42% use municipal or private pick-up**

**24% transport or compost themselves**

**20% do not compost**

**14% did not respond**

Out of this same sample of businesses, 82% report they believe that adding composting solutions will improve customer perception of their business. This includes 44% who said their customers would view them much more positively.

**Callout: 82% believe compost systems will improve how customers view them.**

Simply put, many businesses want to lessen their impact on the planet independent from state or local mandates but need the resources to do so.

### **Problems with composting in businesses**

For businesses that already compost, finding the perfect composting solution can be a challenge.

Businesses struggle to find composting solutions that are odorless, leak proof, and easy for their customers to understand. The latter point is critical: when customers do not fully understand how to compost, they often place things in compost bins that don't belong—[tossing items such as plastic and citrus fruit can ruin composting efforts](#).

Many restaurants keep their bins in back-of-house, meaning composting responsibilities lie solely on the employees. This also keeps odors away from common public high-traffic areas but increases the workload of back-of-house employees.

To lessen the strain on employees, foodservice operations are seeking composting receptacles that are easy for their staff to maintain and for their customers to understand.

## **THE CUSTOMER AND COMPOSTING**

Though many commercial composting systems are located at back-of-house, consumers would like to see more composting options in the commercial spaces they visit.

In the same survey conducted by Briar Cliff University, individuals were asked about their recycling and composting habits both at home and away from home. Of those who responded, 47% report already composting within their homes.

Those same individuals often do not participate in composting in commercial areas simply because composting bins are not available in the businesses or restaurants they visit. They are not able to compost outside of their homes, even though they'd like to.

Even when compost bins are available, many customers need further instruction.

Of consumer respondents, 34% indicated they only have a minimal understanding of what can and can't be composted. This complements the 52% reporting a self-defined "good understanding" of composting, and 14% with an in-depth understanding (the latter skewing younger). Overall, our study shows that interest in composting is increasing, especially in the younger generations.

**Callout:**

**Problem:**

When asked about their knowledge of what can and can't be composted:

34% consumers: minimal understanding

52%: good understanding

14%: in-depth understanding

**Solution: Businesses need a clear way to guide their consumers right on the composting bins.**

Simply put, if a business provides adequate, clear composting solutions, customers will use them and will think more favorably of the businesses providing these solutions.

**A solution for businesses and customers.**

Businesses would like to start composting without overburdening their workforce, and consumers would like to help. However, there's one thing in the way—an effective composting solution that doesn't smell and is easy for customers to understand, while also being simple to clean and maintain for businesses.

**Callout: KEY FEATURES IN A COMPOSTING SYSTEM**

- **EASY TO UNDERSTAND** Include decals that clearly communicate what can and cannot be placed in each receptacle
- **LEAK-PROOF** Food waste is about 70% water. Preventing the liquid in composting material from leaking will reduce odors and pests
- **BRAND IDENTIFIED** Composting improves business perception. Reinforce your commitment to the environment by adding branding

It's clear that consumers are looking for easy-to-use and clearly labeled composting solutions that help them easily make the best eco-friendly decisions outside of their homes. Businesses that adopt a quality composting system that's odorless and seamless to implement will not only yield happier customers but will also contribute to a greener planet.

**CTA Block: The right composting solution can help create a disposal system that works for your business and your customers. Commercial Zone receptacles are effortless to use and maintain. And through mindful design, they're easier than ever to understand—for both you and your customers.**

Your perfect composting solution may be [just a click away](#).

CTA: Let us find the perfect disposal solution for you.

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Sources:

Briar Cliff University composting slide deck

<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/composting>

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>

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<https://www.commercialzone.com/product-category/by-category/waste-containers/>

[Compost Global Market Report 2023: The Business Research Company](#)