

Boost recycling with effective bin placement

We spent three years researching, designing, prototyping, getting tooling made and manufacturing – all to introduce the world to the award-winning, ultimately behaviour-changing Method recycling bin.



To start our research, we interviewed three successful corporates who allowed us access to parts of their business that proved insightful and informative. From these experiences, we mapped out the waste streams that companies would need, organised focus groups, created affinity maps, and talked to cleaners and waste collectors; Method's co-founder Steven Korner even went on a midnight cleaning shift to discover how to make recycling more user-friendly.

Slowly we began to piece together the values of different customer personas. This allowed us to have clear insights and goals for our design, addressing the needs of all the stakeholders involved.

What have we learnt? The simplest way to divert more from landfill and make a visible difference is with better bin placement.

The rules of effective recycling:

-Convenience is key

Bins should be no more than a 10 second walk from the desks of your employees, this way they are always accessible. Behaviour change is inspired by having bins that are visible and easy to use, not hidden away out of sight or too far from the natural flow of your space.

-The more, the better

After three years of testing, we found that recycling stations of 3-5 bins are best to service between 30-50 staff. By this logic, we can reason that for effective recycling you will need one recycling station per every 400-500m² (4,300 - 5,400ft²) of space.

Open Plan Recycling

Our philosophy of Open Plan Recycling revolves around the idea that bins should be flexible and simple to move around – beautiful enough to be out in the open, modern enough to fit in with your aesthetic. By having recycling stations placed in areas where they can be clearly seen, people will automatically work more to recycle better through an increased sense of accountability inspired by the visibility of their actions.

Adapt to suit your space

Unsure about the placement of your bins? We encourage you to tweak it while you see what works for your organisation, and to add more bins as your staff numbers grow.

When choosing your bin placement it's worth considering multiple factors about where you work:

- Is your space open plan or an office with cubicles?
- How many employees do you have?
- What are the activity levels of your staff – how present are they within your space?
- Do your employees bring their lunch in reusable containers or do they consume food that comes in lots of packaging?
- Do you require secure bins for document destruction, alongside your Paper recycling bins?

All of these can affect how many bins you require in your space to work effectively.

How full should my bins be?

It is important to see how full your bins become when you first implement them. Most offices will have their bins emptied once a day – if your bins are consistently overflowing with recyclables before 5pm you may need to add more of that waste stream to your space. Not having enough bins to fit the need of your employees may lead to contamination, as people may react by depositing their waste into the wrong recycling bins instead.

If each Method bin has a 60L capacity, and a recycling station of four bins works for 50 people, that's a 240L capacity across four waste and recycling streams. This allows each person in your space to deposit 1.2L of landfill waste per day, and 1.2L each of the other streams (Paper, Mixed Recycling, Organics, etc) if your bins are emptied at the end of the day.



Example:

If you have two recycling stations on a 1,200 sq m office floor and notice after a week of having them they are quite full, then we might recommend you to add another station to your floorplan, or a couple of the highly used streams to your existing station.



Adding more waste streams

If your bins are becoming too full, you could look into implementing Organics collection from a waste service provider specialising in compostable materials – lessening the waste going into your Landfill bins. Some offices place Organics bins only in kitchen areas and others prefer them in every station, including near desks, to provide consistency.

We often see companies work out what they need at first, and then later add to their order to make their recycling stations more effective.

Need help?

Method staff often work with fit-out companies or businesses to look into floor-plan layouts/designs to recommend where and how many bins may be required. Contact us at hello@methodrecycling.com if you have a new project you would like advice on.

We have also created a quick video on Open Plan Recycling you can view [here](#).