

# Optimizing Our Recycling Education & Outreach Efforts

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Reduce, reuse, recycle-palooza! | November 19, 2020



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Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection





BY THE NUMBERS - SEPTEMBER 2020

#### SOCIAL MEDIA



**26,496 followers**

across the Recycle Smart MA Facebook, Twitter & Instagram social channels

#### WEBSITE



**360,749 unique visitors**

landed on the Recycle Smart MA website

#### NEWSLETTER



**4,115 subscribers**

have signed up to receive monthly Recycle Smart newsletters.

#### RECYCLOPEDIA



**135,255 unique users\***

utilized the Recyclopedia search tool to determine if an item was recyclable or not.

\*as of Nov. 12, 2020

LEARN MORE AT RECYCLESMA.TMA.ORG



**Recycle Smart MA** @RecycleSmartMA · Mar 30

March is going [#OutLikeALamb](#) (weather-wise) but it feels like a lions' den out there. While staying safe at home, test your recycling knowledge by searching the Recyclopedia. Type in an item and find the answer to hundreds of recycling questions! [recyclesmartma.org](https://recyclesmartma.org)



# Agenda

Where are we going?

- Recycle Smart MA Background
- Tips + Tricks for Recycling Outreach
- Q&A

# RecycleSmartMA.org

[HOME](#)[SMART RECYCLING GUIDE](#)[FAQ](#)[BECOME A PARTNER](#)[RESOURCES](#)[QUIZ](#)

English -

 Learn more about COVID-19 impacts on trash & recycling here

Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

[Join our mailing list](#)A background image showing a family scene. An adult's arm is visible on the left, and a young girl with long brown hair is smiling on the right. They appear to be in a kitchen or dining area.

**DO YOUR PART.**

**RECYCLE SMART**



**Food and Beverage  
Cans**  
empty and rinse



**Bottles, Jars, Jugs  
and Tub**s  
empty and replace cap



**Bottles and Jars**  
empty and rinse



**Mixed Paper, Newspaper,  
Magazines, Boxes**  
empty and flatten

## NO!



**Do Not Bag Recyclables  
No Garbage**



**No Plastic Bags  
or Plastic Wrap**  
(return to retail)



**No Food or Liquid**  
(empty all containers)



**No Clothing or Linens**  
(use donation programs)



**No Tanglers**  
(no hoses, wires,  
chains or electronics)

Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

Enter name of item (ex. bottle)

Search

Use our online search tool at: [RecycleSmartMA.org](http://RecycleSmartMA.org)



**RecycleSmartMA.org**

*All recycling programs in Massachusetts  
accept the items pictured above.*

Printed on Recycled Paper





# Recycling Confusion

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According to our 2015 market study:

- 77% of Massachusetts residents “strongly agree” they know what they can and can’t put in their household recycling bin
- 8 in 10 think any plastic with a number on it can be recycled
- Nearly 50% believe plastic bags can go in the recycling bin

**There is a big gap between what people think they know and what’s actually correct**





# Our secret sauce

Tips & tricks for breaking through the noise and inspiring behavior change

1. Get to your point, fast
  2. Show, don't tell
  3. Know your audience
  4. Remove the hurdles
  5. Ask for help
  6. Iterate, iterate, iterate
-

Tip 1.

Get to your point, fast

The average attention span today:

8 seconds

Short & to the  
point

**DO NOT  
BAG**  
Recyclables



**NO PLASTIC BAGS OR  
WRAP IN THE RECYCLING**

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# Go ahead, get emotional



Drowning in packing peanuts? Many pack-and-ship stores (FedEx, UPS, Kinkos, etc. will accept them for reuse! Remember: they do NOT belong in your recycling bin!

# Use Humor



# Frame the message

Negative messages work best  
when combined with clear  
instructions



# Frame the message

Positive messages work best  
when paired with abstract  
concepts

RECYCLING FACT



Recycling one  
ton of paper  
saves 15 trees



# Tip 2.

## Show, don't tell



almost

**50%**

of your brain  
is involved in

**visual  
processing**<sup>[5]</sup>



**70%**

of all your

**sensory  
receptors**

are in your eyes<sup>[4]</sup>



we can get  
the sense of a

**visual  
scene**

in less than  
1/10 of a second<sup>[6]</sup>



# A pictures is worth a thousand words

More accessible:

A study found that when it comes to comprehension rates of medicine labels:



70%

rate of understanding for labels with text only [13]



95%

rate of understanding for labels with text and pictures



**Food and Beverage  
Cans**  
empty and rinse



**Bottles, Jars, Jugs  
and Tubs**  
empty and replace cap



**Bottles and Jars**  
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**Mixed Paper, Newspaper,  
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## NO!



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Printed on Recycled Paper



# The power of videos



# The art of storytelling



# *Moe Says No*

Telephones are  
not recyclable

Recycle  
 Smart



# Tip 3.

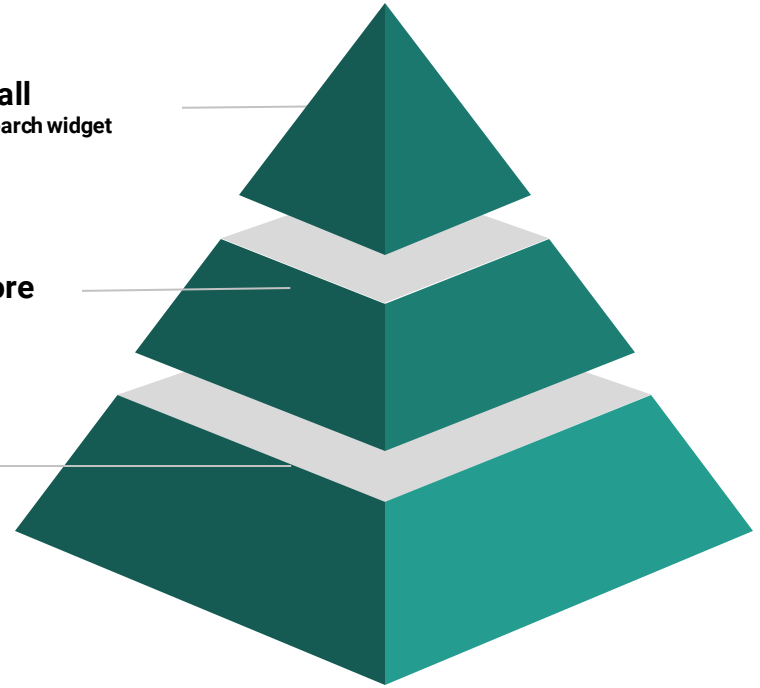
## Know your audience

# The Information Hierarchy

1 **One simple message**  
Do not bag recyclables

2 **Some want a little more**  
The Smart Recycling Guide

3 **A few want it all**  
The recyclopedia search widget





# Where we look for information





## INFORMATION SOURCES

### WHERE WOULD YOU TURN FOR INFORMATION ON RECYCLING?

#### Information sources

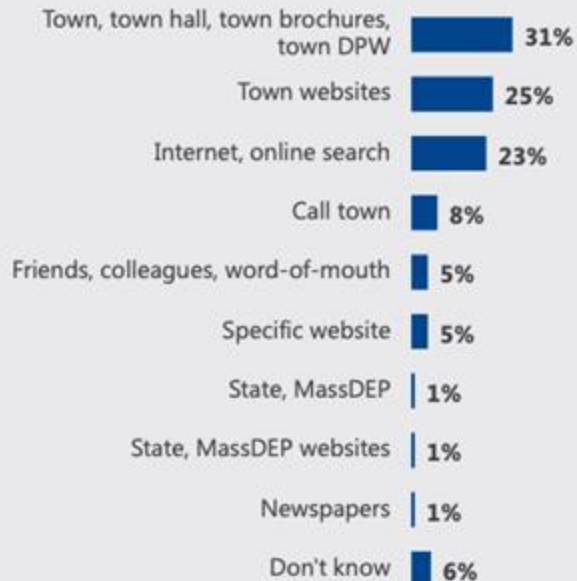
Internet is the go-to resource, whether search or to a town website (48% + 6% who use MA state or other sites).

But, significant numbers go directly to town resources or look to town supplied information. (31% + 8% who would call their town).

Very few look to mainstream media for information on recycling.

In general, younger residents are more apt to use the internet and older residents are more likely to use an in-person approach.

#### WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR INFORMATION ON RECYCLING?



Base: 600



# CONTAMINATION OF RECYCLABLES

## WHAT'S THE BEST ARGUMENT TO GET PEOPLE TO BE MORE CAREFUL?

### WHAT'S THE BEST ARGUMENT?

(Percent of Respondents who said "Much more likely" to each argument)



Base: 333 residents who said "Much more likely" to at least one argument

# Tap into local pride







# Tip 4.

## Remove the hurdles



# Make it easy

(or at least easier!)



“If you want people to change, you can provide clear direction or boost their motivation and determination. Alternatively, you can simply make the journey easier. Create a steep downhill slope and give them a push.”

- Chip Heath and Dan Heath  
Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard



Make it  
accessible,  
clear &  
consistent

# GARBAGE [NOT

- Coated paper or plastic cartons (e.g. shelf-stable food containers)
- Black microwave plastic containers
- Produce baskets
- Plastic food “clamshell” containers
- Incandescent lightbulbs
- Single-use household alkaline batteries
- Potato chip bags



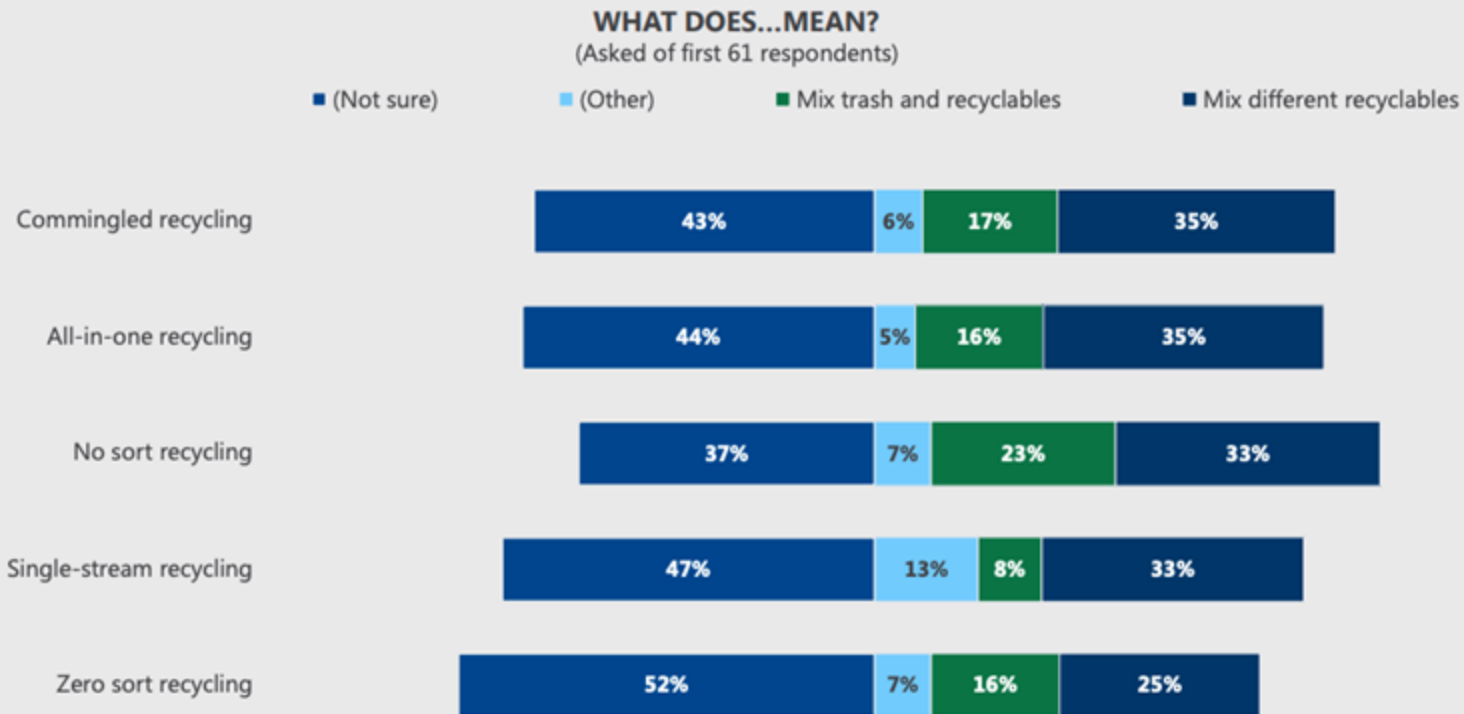
- Plastic bags/film (recyclable at participating retail stores)

- Pla
- Dia
- Sty
- Drin
- Win
- Pres
- Gard
- Fenc
- shelv
- Kiddi
- Autom
- Plastic
- Latex,
- Utensil

**\*\*IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT AN ITEM  
\*\*PLEASE ASK!\*\***

## RECYCLING VOCABULARY

AS FAR AS YOU KNOW, WHAT DOES...MEAN?



Base: 61



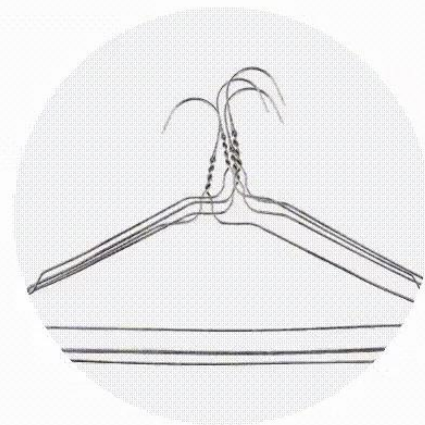
# Provide direct feedback





# Recycle Smart Quiz

**Which of these metal items  
is recyclable in your  
recycling bin?**



☐ Tanks

☐ Hangers

☐ Pipes

☐ None of them

# Which of these metal items is recyclable in your recycling bin?



☐ Tanks

☐ Hangers

☐ Pipes

☐ None of them

☒ Tanks

☐ Hangers

☐ Pipes

☐ None of them

## Oops!

Yes, it's metal, but the sorting equipment at the recycling sorting facility is not designed to handle metal items that aren't container-shaped (cans and bottles). Bike wheels, clothes hangers, broken gutters and even old frying pans (aka "scrap metal") are not OK in your household recycling bin.

Search the [Beyond the Bin](#) directory to find a scrap metal drop-off site or visit your municipality's recycling web page.

☐ Tanks

☐ Hangers

☐ Pipes

☒ None of them

## Correct!

Yes, it's metal, but the sorting equipment at the recycling sorting facility is not designed to handle metal items that aren't container-shaped (cans and bottles). Bike wheels, clothes hangers, broken gutters and even old frying pans (aka "scrap metal") are not OK in your household recycling bin.

Search the [Beyond the Bin](#) directory to find a scrap metal drop-off site or visit your municipality's recycling web page.

# Tip 5.

## Ask for help

# Tap into local influencers





SIGN UP TODAY

## RECYCLE SMART PARTNER PROGRAM

Hundreds of organizations have become Recycle Smart Partners.

Are you one of them?

Learn more at: [RecycleSmartMA.org](http://RecycleSmartMA.org)



Informative content for  
your recycling  
education efforts



Massachusetts recycling  
updates



Partner badge for your  
website and email  
signature



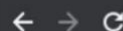
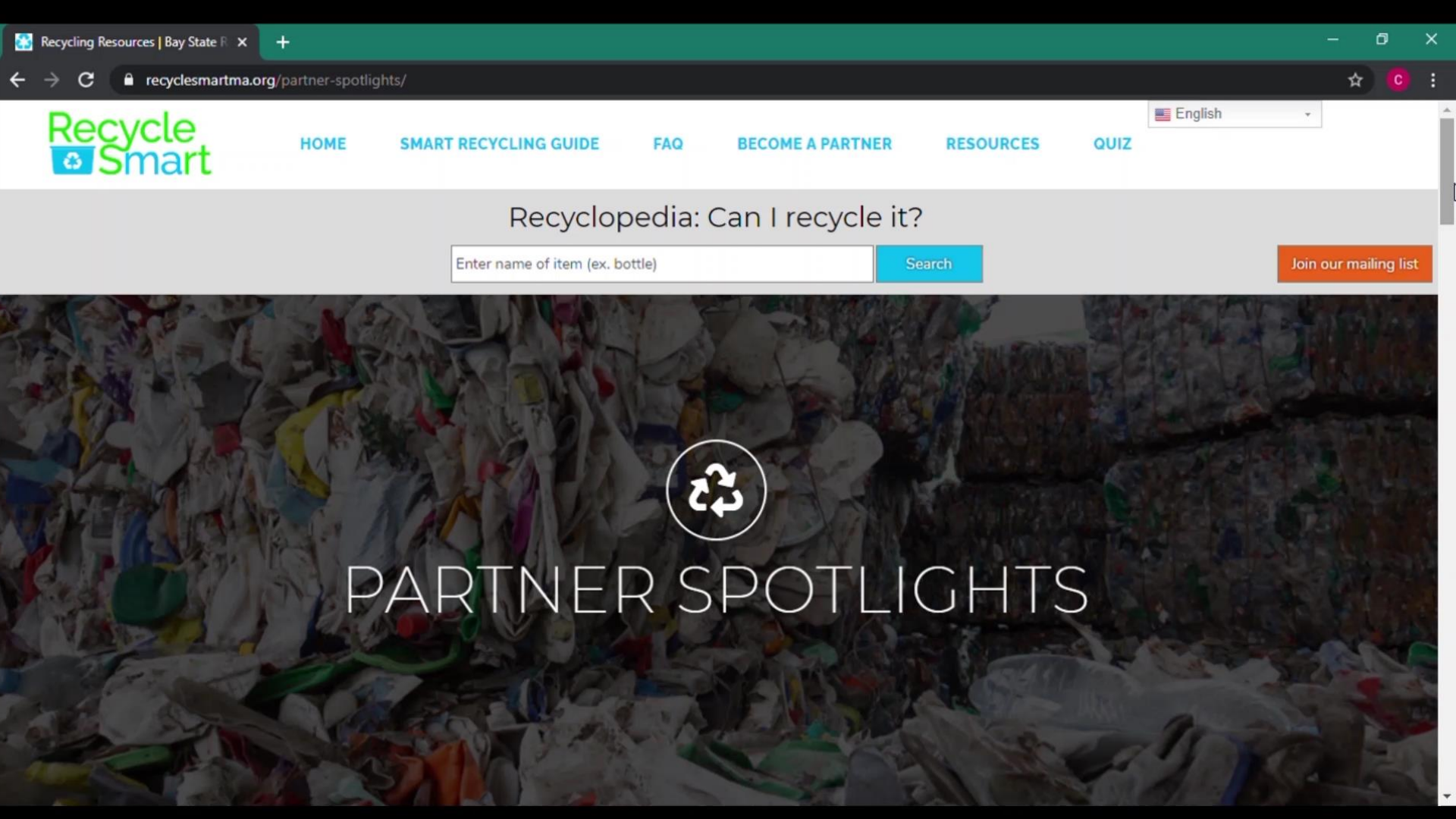
"Binspiration" from our  
featured partners



Integrate Recyclopedia  
search widget on your  
website







HOME

SMART RECYCLING GUIDE

FAQ

BECOME A PARTNER

RESOURCES

QUIZ

English

## Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

Search

Join our mailing list



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

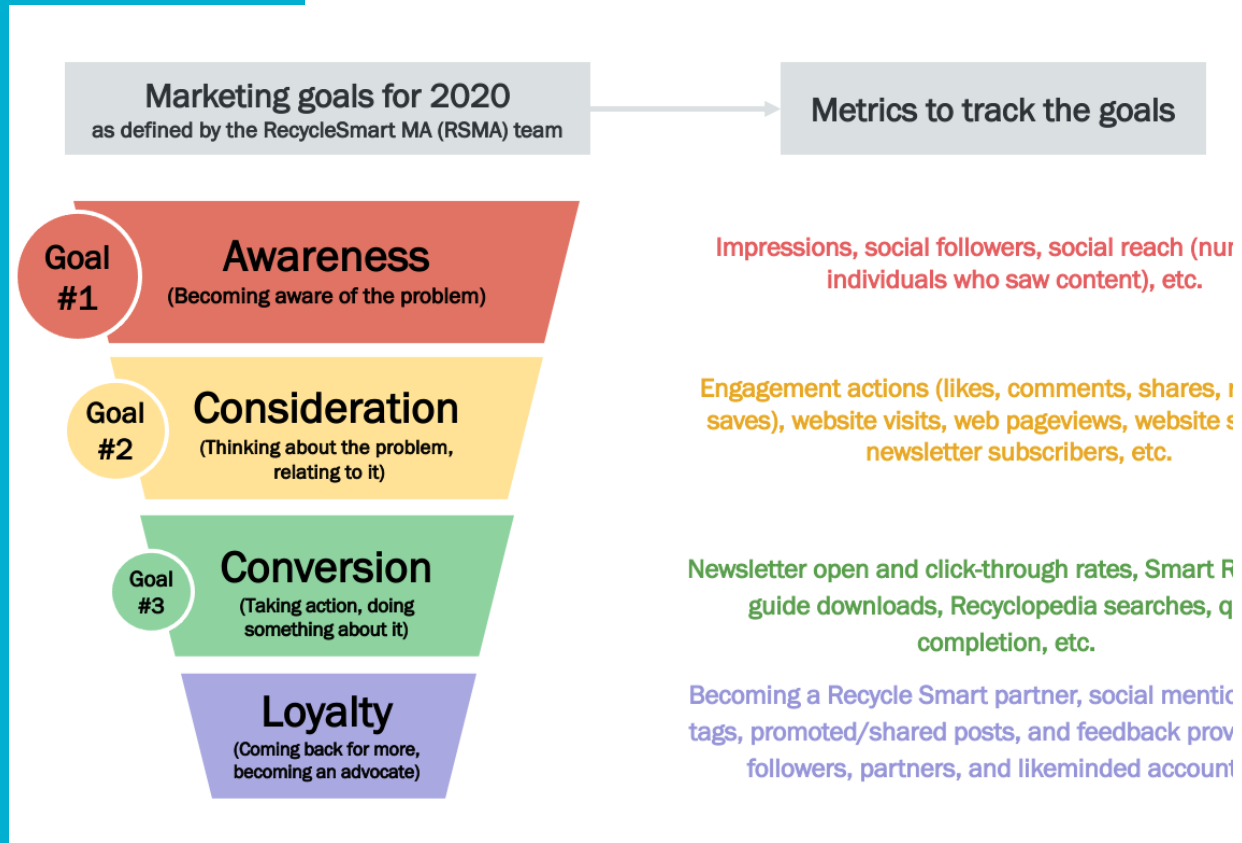


# Tip 6.

# Iterate, Iterate, Iterate

# Use Data

## Recycle Smart Marketing Goals for 2020

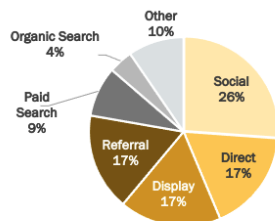


# LIFETIME WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER

## WEBSITE TRAFFIC SOURCES



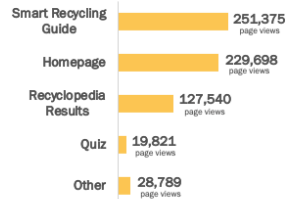
**335,985** people have visited the website



## MOST-VISTED WEB PAGES



Webpages were visited **678,135** times

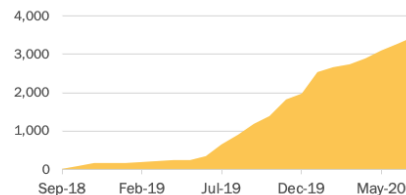


Other pages include FAQ, Resources Page, Become a Partner, COVID-19 Updates, and Featured Stories.

## NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS



The monthly\* newsletter has **3,469** subscribers



\*From 11/2018-4/2019 MassDEP distributed two newsletters per month.

## RECYCLOPEDIA STATS



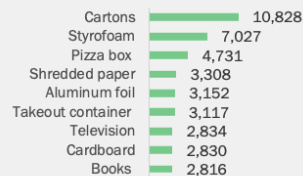
The Recyclopedia was used **267,047** times.



The Recyclopedia was used by **136,443** users, of which **96,050** were unique visitors.

### Most searched materials

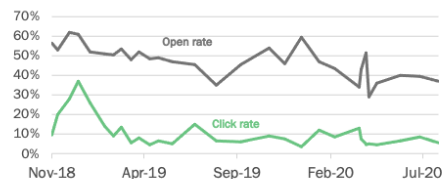
Number of times a material was searched




## NEWSLETTER CONVERSION



Newsletters were opened **47,333** times  
News articles were clicked on **7,130** times




# Social Media

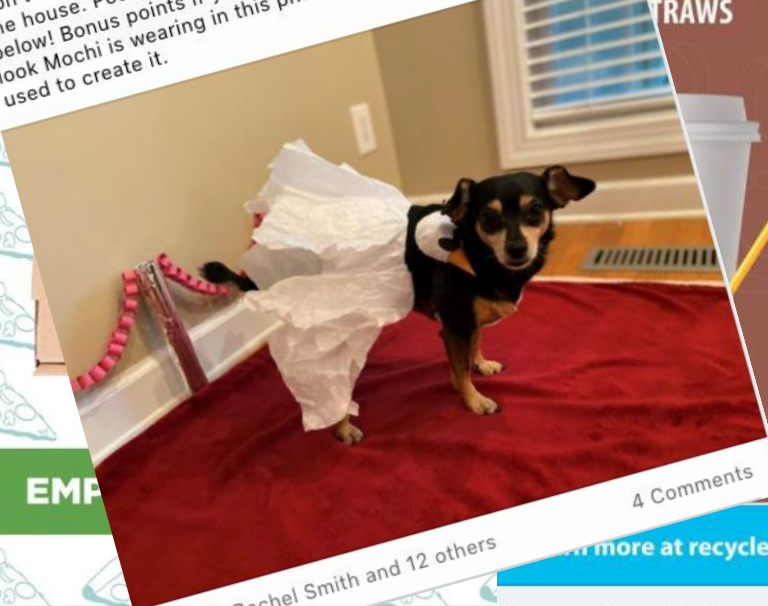
**Recycle Smart MA**  
September 16 · 🌐

No matter how you slice it, pizza boxes CAN be recycled. The paper recycling industry recently announced they want pizza boxes back (without the pizza). Grease and cheese don't affect the recycling process. <https://bit.ly/33AYxse>. Cheese +

Pro tip: Fold + recycle! 🌱


**Recycle Smart MA**  
October 30 at 1:14 PM · 🌐

#DY Don't have a costume yet? 🤖? Make one from materials around the house. Post your upcycled Halloween costume ideas below! Bonus points if you can guess the iconic red-carpet look Mochi is wearing in this photo (Hint: 🍷) and the materials used to create it.




4 Comments

Rachel Smith and 12 others

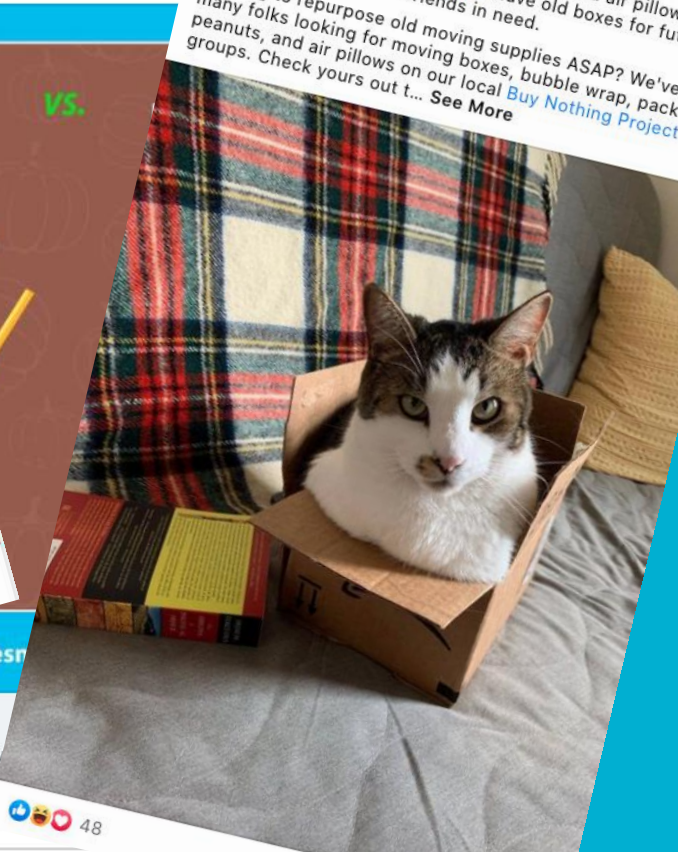
**Recycle Smart MA**  
October 2 · 🌐


Spice season is here to stay 🌶️🔥! Whether your latte iced or hot, remember that paper cups and lids go in the trash too. Next time, if your coffee shop accepts th

**Recycle Smart MA**  
August 19 · 🌐

Feeling a little boxed in this moving season? Don't throw cardboard boxes away! Just make sure to recycle them and remove all foam, bubble wrap, and air pillows. It's ok to leave tape on. #ProTip: save old boxes for future moves or lend them to friends in need.


Looking to repurpose old moving supplies ASAP? We've got many folks looking for moving boxes, bubble wrap, packing peanuts, and air pillows on our local [Buy Nothing Project](#) groups. Check yours out t... [See More](#)



**Recycle Smart MA**  
Public & Government Service


121

31 Comments 117 Shares

**Recycle Smart MA**  
Public & Government Service

48

Rachel Smith and 12 others

 Recycle Smart

# Summary of Tagging Rate Improvements (2017–2019)

- Tagging rates have **DECREASED** in all communities using the IQ Kit.
- The average decrease in tagging has **ranged** from 20% to 86%
- The **average** decrease in tagging is 62%
- The **median** decrease is 68%

**Takeaway: Our methodology works!**





# Experiment



Message  
Today 1:26 PM

Hey, can I recycle a necklace?

Nope, it'll get tangled in the sorting equipment.

But it's made of plastic.  
And it's from the 80s!!!

More reason to throw it in the garbage or donate it 😂😂



Recycle Smart MA

· December 30, 2019 ·

Even if they're plastic, necklaces should not go in the recycling bin. They can get tangled in recycling machinery and cause equipment damage or injury to workers.

If you don't want to throw them in the trash, donate them or reuse them at your New Year's party! 🥳



Tag Photo



Add Location



Edit



54

5 Comments 10 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



Most Relevant ▾



**Lance Kelly** It all ends up in landfills anyway. Do research people and stop falling for the single stream recycling dream

Like · Reply · Message · 24w



**Amy Sharpe** Recycling rule: when in doubt, throw it out.

Like · Reply · Message · 24w



3



**Maggie Sadoway** Can photos be recycled along with regular paper? I heard once they can't.



Comment as Recycle Sm...





Air pillows



Packing peanuts



Plastic shipping bag



Bubble mailer



Paper filler



Cardboard box



recyclesmartma



**recyclesmartma** While delivery services are great for #SocialDistancing, remember not all shipping materials are created equal! Cardboard boxes are recyclable, but plastic mailers, packing peanuts, and bubble mailers should be reused or go in the trash 📦👍.

Don't worry, we didn't forget about plastic bags and air pillows. Most grocery stores collect these items for recycling. For more info, check out <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/>.

#RecycleSmart #RecycleSmartMA  
#RecyclingInMA #Recycling  
#ShopSmart #OnlineShopping



Liked by micaela\_guglielmi and 192 others

3 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



# Information is not enough

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“We know there’s a difference between knowing how to act and being motivated to act. But when it comes time to change the behavior of other people, our first instinct is to teach them something.”

- Chip Heath and Dan Heath  
Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard



# Quick Recap

Tips & tricks for breaking  
through the noise and inspiring  
behavior change

1. Get to your point, fast
  2. Show, don't tell
  3. Know your audience
  4. Remove the hurdles
  5. Ask for help
  6. Iterate, iterate, iterate
-

# Questions?

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Contact us at:

Erin Victor

[erin.victor@mass.gov](mailto:erin.victor@mass.gov)

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# RecycleSmartMA.org