

PLASTIC BAG FREE RIT

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A proposal created by

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INTRODUCTION

“Many places have begun to do away with plastic bags. It is time RIT caught up to New York City, Connecticut, Maryland, Seattle, and Portland who are all pushing to get rid of plastic bags in return for a more sustainable future”, this comes from a PawPrints petition created by an RIT student by the name of Mark Brown in October, 2015. In total, 150 students signed this petition in support of eliminating plastic bags on RIT’s campus.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is initiating different programs in order to become a more sustainable campus. According to Senior Sustainability Advisor, Enid Cardinal, the university pursued a ban on water bottles and now Student Government is taking on the challenge of eliminating plastic bags due to the problems they cause. RIT uses a single stream recycling system, however the plastic bags are too light for the machines to sort and they get caught in the gears of the machines that sort the recyclables, leading to more maintenance issues (personal communication, February 2016). Student Government confirmed that they received a petition to eliminate the plastic bags and decided to research the success of other universities, such as Humboldt State University, that has implemented a plastic bag elimination program. After Student Government did their research, they decided to look into finding a solution to the issue of plastic bags on campus in order to align their efforts with RIT’s values (personal communication, Student Government President, February 17, 2016). The challenge is to identify the best way to implement this kind of initiative in order for it to be most successful on RIT’s campus.

Our competition for this problem includes the outside companies that sell goods and utilize plastic bags when delivering their products on campus at RIT and the pre-existing habits of the students on campus. Over one half of the undergraduate student population is classified as someone who lives off campus and one third of the undergraduate student population is estimated to commute to RIT (Association for Commuter Engagement, 2014). As it is estimated that one third of students travel from other places to get to class, it cannot be assumed that they only use plastic bags from on campus sources. The potential for commuters to bring plastic bags from other locations back onto campus brings another element to consider while implementing a ban initiative. Another element that should be considered is the pre-existing habits of the students on campus in regards

to plastic bags. If an initiative to eliminate plastic bags were to be successful, the students need to be encouraged to change their ways otherwise there will be no progress.

PUBLICS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The publics for this campaign include consumers purchasing products bagged at the dining services and retail stores on RIT's campus. Specifically, this includes RIT students, RIT staff, RIT faculty and miscellaneous visitors to the campus. Stakeholders include those financially impacted by a ban on plastic bags, such as students who pay tuition, Dining Services, and the RIT Board of Trustees.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

We surveyed the publics identified to help better understand their attitudes towards plastic bag use on campus. In particular, we were interested in students' perception on the impact of their own behaviors.

The survey consisted of nine questions and included demographic information (academic year, on-campus or off-campus students, etc.). The remainder of the questions were about plastic bag usage habits and attitudes towards changing.

The survey was created using multiple-choice questions and hosted by SurveyMonkey.com. The link was shared to with the 2016 Campaign Management class and was posted on the RIT Accepted Students of 2014 Facebook page. The results were collected and managed using SurveyMonkey analytics and displayed on graphs with the answers chosen by all respondents.

Results

We asked students a couple questions about their willingness to use an alternative to plastic bags, such as reusable bags, but we phrased the questions in two different ways. We first asked if students were willing to use an alternative or "open to the idea", and of the 16 respondents 75% of students surveyed said that they would be "open to the idea". The next question was phrased slightly different, by asking directly if they were given an alternative would they use it. Rather than asking if students were open to the idea, we wanted to take the question further and ask if they believe they would honestly change

their behavior. When asked, “If given an alternative, such as a reusable bag, I would use it in place of plastic bags on-campus”, 62.5% of respondents said they would actually use an alternative to plastic bags.

We also found some unexpected results around the questions regarding the importance of eliminating plastic bags and individual attitudes towards its impact on the environment. 75% of those surveyed said that they believe they personally can have an impact on the environment by eliminating their individual plastic bag usage, but only 62.5% of those surveyed think eliminating plastic bags is important.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

Plastic bags have continued to impact the environment across the world in a negative way. In 2002, plastic bags clogged drainage systems in Bangladesh causing deadly floods. This resulted in a ban on plastic bags. China also implemented a plastic bag restriction order that prohibited production, sale or use of thin plastic bags. In addition to the restriction order, China imposed a tax on all plastic bags thicker than 0.025 millimeter. This ban reduced plastic bag usage by 24 billion, about a two-third reduction by 2011 (Plastic Bag Reduction Around The World, 2012). Many other countries and cities have started to reduce their environmental impact by eliminating plastic bag usage. In order to find out the most effective way to reduce plastic bag use, we took a look at the various places and studies that have successfully reduced plastic bag usage and the tactics they used to achieve this.

Within the research, one strategy that was found to be effective in multiple places was to impose a fee on plastic bags. In 2002 Ireland passed a law implementing a 15 (Euro) cent tax, which is about 19 cents in the U.S. on plastic shopping bags that were previously offered for free (Convery, 3). This tax was shown to be extremely effective. By April 2003 the number of areas in Ireland that had no evidence of plastic bag litter increased by 21%. The amount of litter caused by plastic bags continued to fall, dropping from 5% before the tax to 0.22% in 2004 (Convery, 7).

In 2001, Taiwan introduced a 3-cent fee on single use plastic bags, which resulted in a plastic bag reduction of 69% (Romer, 12). Humboldt University also introduced a 10-cent

fee on plastic bags on campus, following in the footsteps of the city Arcata. At HSU, students could use a paper bag for free or they could purchase a reusable bag for a small fee. The major push was to not offer bags unless a customer specifically asked for one. HSU plans on eliminating plastic bags altogether, but they will initiate the changes in phases in order to make the adjustments easier on the campus. (“HSU Phases Out,” 2014).

Negative Reactions

In 2003, shortly after Ireland's success, the state of California tried to impose a 2% tax on plastic bags and cups offered in retail stores. Called the “Litter and Marine Debris Reduction and Recycling Act,” the proposal received heavy criticism. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsome agreed to take the proposal under his review. In 2005, a unanimous vote recommended a 17-cent tax in San Francisco on all single-use paper and plastic bags (Romer 12-13). Proceeds were intended to be divided among the city's supermarkets to pay for environmental programs, but the tax was never implemented due to campaigns put together by the plastic bag industry groups throughout the city (Romer, 14). San Francisco still faced an issue with the large sum of plastic bag usage so they had to reduce usage in a different way. In 2007, the city banned the use of single-use plastic bags and mandated that compostable bags, recyclable paper bags and/or reusable bags be available for use at grocery stores. With the price of compostable bags higher than the standard plastic bag, grocery stores have pushed the usage of reusable bags on consumers (Romer, 19). Stores have since considered offering a grocery credit to shoppers who bring their own bags; this could change the habits and attitudes of consumers (Romer, 26).

Various other studies have shown that certain advertisements and prompts could be successful in reducing consumer usage of plastic bags. Studies conducted on the effect of personal or social norm messages, resulted in showing that behaviors are triggered by these normative messages (de Groot, 1830).

SHOPPERS IN THIS STORE*
BELIEVE THAT RE-USING
SHOPPING BAGS IS A
WORTHWHILE WAY TO HELP
THE ENVIRONMENT

Please continue to re-use your
bags.

*Based on a survey of 28 shoppers.
Produced in cooperation with Bournemouth University for research purposes.

(a) Injunctive Normative Message.

WE THANK YOU FOR
HELPING THE
ENVIRONMENT BY
CONTINUING TO RE-
USE YOUR BAGS.

*Based on a survey of 28 shoppers.
Produced in cooperation with Bournemouth University for research purposes.

(b) Personal Normative Message.

SHOPPERS IN THIS STORE* BELIEVE
THAT RE-USING SHOPPING BAGS IS A
WORTHWHILE WAY TO HELP THE
ENVIRONMENT



WE THANK YOU FOR HELPING THE
ENVIRONMENT BY CONTINUING TO
RE-USE YOUR BAGS.

*Based on a survey of 28 shoppers.
Produced in cooperation with Bournemouth University for research purposes.

(c) Combined Normative Message.

In a study done to test how many hotel guests would reuse towels, messages such as “join your fellow citizen in helping to save the environment” we're more successful than a standard ‘save the environment’ message. The same types of messages were shown to be effective in reducing the number of plastic bags used by consumers in a grocery store (de Groot, 1830-31). This theory was tested by using four separate uses of the messages, injunctive social messaging alone, personal normative messaging alone, both or just the standard environmental messages, all placed around the store.

The study concluded that advertisements that use both injunctive and personal normative messages yielded the best results in lower plastic bag use (de Groot, 1838).

(Images found in de Groot, 1838)

Another persuasive form of advertising is the use of voice prompts. A study was conducted to compare the effect of voice prompts on initiating change among consumers of plastic bags. Over the course of one week, some shoppers heard a voice prompt, from nearby shoppers in regards to their necessity of a plastic bag. By the end of the week, plastic bag refusal rate grew from 20% to 25%. Six months later, the refusal rate grew to 40%, indicating that the prompts caused consumers to consider the bags after they finished shopping for that day (Ohtomo).

This is helpful for our campaign as it shows that with the correct type of advertising, we could potentially be successful in changing RIT students' behaviors.

SWOT ANYLASIS

STRENGTHS

Bans in other cities and countries

- A key strength in the plastic bag campaign is the progress that other cities and countries have made in implementing bans against plastic bags. For example, San Francisco was a pioneer in this movement, and over the course of time, succeeded in this endeavor proving to the state of California as well as other U.S. cities that such an action could be taken. On January 23, 2007, San Francisco passed the Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance that officially prohibited the usage of traditional plastic bags and required grocery stores to provide more environmentally conscious options such as reusable bags as well as compostable bags (Romer, 19). On a global scale, Ireland has had one of the most successful campaigns against plastic bags. Ireland introduced a 19 cent tax on plastic bags in what is known as the Waste Management Act of 2001. This piece of legislation had astounding results as the consumption of plastic bags decreased by 90%. In 2007, Ireland further increased the tax to 22 cents per bag (Sujji 64-65).

Bans on college campuses

- Humboldt State University has successfully banned plastic bags on-campus. At HSU, students were charged ten cents per plastic bags, and reusable bags were available for purchase at various locations throughout the campus. The ban at HSU was in alliance with the state of California's efforts to ban plastic bags. The university projected that the initiative would save 300 plastic bags a month at the bookstore ("HSU Phases Out," 2014).

RIT's core values and plans of becoming a zero-waste campus

- RIT has had success with sustainability endeavors in the past after successfully banning water bottles on-campus. Thus, given the campus' prior success, RIT has proven that it is ready for a new challenge. The movement to ban plastic bags was initiated by a student driven petition which adds yet another strength because if students are the ones seeking the change, then they will be more likely to make the lifestyle changes needed to bring the change into fruition (personal communication, February 17, 2016).

WEAKNESSES

Plastic bags from off-campus locations

- Students receive plastic bags from locations such as Wegman's and bring them to campus for a variety of reasons. This sort of behavior would be a challenge to control, as RIT is not providing students with these bags. Businesses prefer to offer plastic bags since they are cheap to produce and convenient for both vendors and customers. In fact, 90% of shoppers prefer to use plastic bags (Romer, 4). Thus, these two factors are more important for some individuals than spending a little more money in order to be more environmentally conscious which will be a difficult opinion to change.

Finding a way to end the distribution of plastic bags at dining locations

- Firstly, if RIT chooses to implement a fee for each plastic bag students receive, students will have to pay with either Tiger Bucks, cash or credit as debit purchases can only be used for food. This could be problematic because not all students have Tiger Bucks, and some students may not always carry cash or credit with them all the time. Additionally, encouraging members of the dining services faculty to change their voice prompts may also be a challenge. It will be difficult to make sure that workers are asking if students need a plastic bag, and to make sure that different voice prompts are truly being used; developing new habits will be a challenge at first for employees if they are used to different dialogue.

OPPORTUNITIES

Information about repercussions of using plastic bags

- If given the opportunity to educate students on why plastic bags are detrimental to the environment, then the facts are striking enough that they will have a significant impact on students' future choices. For example, 100 billion plastic bags are used in the United States every year, requiring 12 million barrels of oil (Romer, 4-5). Furthermore, this accumulation of plastic bags has created a mass of garbage in the Pacific Ocean that is approximately 100 feet deep. Due to its location, removal of this garbage is not an option, proving to be a hazard to the various wildlife that live in the ocean (Romer, 6). Given that there is a wide range of information on this topic, the ability to educate students on the issue would be a key opportunity.

Change voice prompts at dining locations

- In a study conducted at a supermarket in Japan, employees asked customers whether or not they wanted a bag, and they would only distribute bags if customers answered affirmatively. Six months after the completion of the study, the plastic bag refusal rate increased to 40% of transactions. Thus, simply by encouraging customers to think about whether they truly need a bag can have effective results on changing the habits of consumers (Ohtomo).

Compostable plastic bags

- Although they look identical to regular plastic bags, compostable plastic bags are made of vegetable starch. These bags can be disposed of in compost bins rather than being treated as garbage. Due to the fact that these bags are so similar to traditional ones, they can be reused for the same purposes, such as garbage bags. As of 2010, compostable bags cost retailers 9-14 cents a bag; however, as demands are projected to increase, the cost will go down making them a more affordable option for businesses, and possibly even for RIT (Romer, 10-11).

Target the incoming freshman class

- Incoming freshmen are easier to persuade than upperclassmen, as they have not already developed habits on-campus. Thus, if instructed that RIT does not give out plastic bags, they will learn early on to use alternatives that may be provided for them at orientation, such as a reusable bag.

THREATS

Dining Services

- In order to fully implement this restriction, dining services would have to consent to halt the distribution of plastic bags at each of its various locations on-campus. Ideally dining service employees would at least be willing to utilize different voice prompts in order to force students to think about whether they truly need a plastic bag.

Barnes and Noble

- It is its own corporate entity and has the rights to distribute plastic bags even if RIT successfully bans them on-campus.

After evaluating the circumstances surrounding this campaign, we have elected to focus our efforts on the threat that is dining services in order to see if we can become collaborative partners in this effort.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS

1. Raise student awareness about the issue of plastic bags and the importance to reduce the usage of them on RIT's campus.

- 1.1 Studies have shown that increasing awareness of an issue will result in a change of behavior, so it is crucial that students become more aware that using plastic bags is problematic (Bekker M., Cumming, T., Osborne, N., Bruining, A., McClean, J., Leland Jr., L., 2010).

2. Reduce plastic bag usage on-campus.

- 2.1 A substitution for the use of plastic bags will be the utilization of reusable bags.

OBJECTIVES

By the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester, change the verbiage of the employees that give out plastic bags.

- Instead of asking someone if they would like a plastic bag, they should ask if the customer would like help placing the items in their backpack or purse.
- For those who are not carrying any type of bag, the employee should then ask if the customer needs a bag rather than wants a bag.
- It is necessary to educate the employees on the new policies and standard operating procedures; all employees should be trained on the changes that will take place by August 1, 2016.

From April 2017 to May 2018, have a series of five events to raise awareness on campus.

- There will be a major event held during the 2017 New Student Orientation to introduce the incoming students to RIT's sustainable culture and this initiative.
- Other events will include table-sitting events in the SAU and a plastic bag-recycling event.
- Reusable bags will be distributed to all of the event attendees free of charge. Additional bags will be available for purchase via cash, credit, or Tiger Bucks in all of the dining services starting Fall 2017.

Sell Reusable Bags on Campus and phase out the use of plastic bags by May 2018

- The reusable bags will be the result of a design contest that will conclude in July 2017.
 - Students will be encouraged to design a logo for the campaign and the logo will be printed on the reusable bags.
- Prior to the start of New Student Orientation, the reusable bags will also be for sale in all of the locations that give away plastic bags.
 - To purchase these bags, one must use Tiger Bucks, cash, or credit.

SEGMENTATION

There are two ways in which we will aim to segment the audience. We will segment the audience into the categories of students and RIT faculty, staff and administration. The student segment in particular, will be the primary focus and will be further divided into geographic segments, demographic segments and psychographic segments.

1. Students

Students need to be the primary segment in this campaign as it is ultimately the RIT student body who will need to embrace the ban on plastic bags. Students will need to be educated on the environmental significance of the issue as well as realize the benefits that they could gain through refraining from using plastic bags. There are several ways in which students may be further segmented in order to create appropriate messaging.

1.1 Geographic Segmentation

On-campus and off-campus students

The location where students live determines where they shop, which alludes to where they receive plastic bags as well. Messaging for students who live on-campus will be different than students who live off-campus. For example, students who live off-campus can bring plastic bags from other locations such as Wegmans and Wal-Mart.

1.2 Demographic Segmentation

Age

Incoming freshmen could be educated about plastic bags at freshmen orientation, and told that RIT does not allow plastic bags on campus. Thus, incoming freshmen will learn early on of RIT's decision before developing any habits. Upperclassmen will be more challenging to reach as they have already developed habits concerning plastic bag consumption.

Gender

It is possible that women would be more receptive to reusable bags than men as some men might find carrying a reusable bag to be feminine.

1.3 Psychographic Segmentation

Plastic bag habits

It is crucial to evaluate whether students currently use plastic bags or reusable bags, and why they use what they currently use. Through discovering if qualities such as

convenience play a role in this decision, it will be easier to come up with appropriate tactics to reach this segment of students.

Knowledge of how plastic bags affects the environment

Students who are interested in sustainability and the environment will not need to be motivated to use reusable bags as much as other students. Thus, these two types of student would receive different messaging.

2. Faculty and other staff

Faculty and other RIT staff should be placed into their own segment. We feel as though faculty and staff will be open to the idea of changing to reusable bags and banning plastic bags, as long as students are supportive of the notion. Furthermore, since the petition to ban plastic bags was student driven, we feel as though faculty and staff will be willing to help with this initiative. However, as with students, faculty and staff will also need to be educated on the benefits of banning plastic bags. It is not realistic to assume that all faculty members are aware of why this is a problem on-campus.

BRAND AND POSITIONING

In order to effectively achieve the goal of raising awareness of the impact of plastic bags on campus and to also put in place the idea of replacing plastic bags with reusable bags, we need to first, attract the attention of the RIT community. The brand will be a superhero, the notion will be similar to the way that a superhero fights villains, only now the RIT community members are the superheros and plastic bags are the villain. We want to brand this campaign in a way that is exciting to all RIT students and also give them the feeling that they are a part of something.

Our brand is going to focus on the idea of saving the environment, as well as eliminating any negative impact that RIT as a whole may be causing. Some adjectives that could be used to describe this brand are brave, caring, selfless, determined and fearless. These are all adjectives that a person would relate to a superhero, but could also describe the way that the audience should be feeling when they no longer use plastic bags. Thus, making people feel like their efforts are all coming together to help a bigger cause, gives them the

feeling of being a part of something, ultimately reducing any negative backlash that we saw in the efforts in the city of San Francisco, that sought to eliminate plastic bags.

Although, with the hopes of reducing backlash, there may still be some negative thoughts and skeptics of banning plastic bags on campus. Students may have the thought,

“What if I forget my reusable bag at home?”

or

“I don’t want to have to carry that big ugly bag around.”

If plastic bags are no longer available at any stores on RIT campus, then there will need to be reusable bags readily available for when someone may need a bag. To address the idea of not wanting to carry around an unattractive bag, we will make sure that the bags are something that RIT students find attractive. The superhero that we developed will be incorporated into all of the events and posters that are created. This will help to keep the message consistent across all platforms. There will be a design contest, in which RIT students will have the opportunity to create the superhero that will become the image of Plastic Bag Free RIT. In the future we may have more design contests to create different superheroes that will continue to shape the image of a plastic bag free campus, as it becomes more prevalent and known on campus.

Since previous attitudes and habits may become a challenge to change, we want to target the group that is likely going to be the most difficult to influence. Upperclassmen, faculty and staff are already used to being able to go to a store and obtain a plastic bag at their leisure. Therefore, a main focus needs to be motivating people to support the switch to reusable bags. The entire RIT community will need to be actively involved in order to effectively change the minds of upperclassmen, faculty and staff. By helping to create the brand, this will create a sense of community and involvement, as well as a sense of obligation to stop using plastic bags.

MESSAGES AND THEMES

In order for this campaign to be successful, the messages and themes need to be consistent throughout. The target audiences need to feel a sense of community, understanding, and heroism when receiving messages.

Community

According to research, when people are motivated to act as a community toward the greater good, they are more inclined to act towards the better interest of that community (Keim, B. 2012). If people feel like they are doing good and the good that they are doing will actually have an impact beyond themselves, it is going to result in a successful campaign.

Heroism

Heroism will be portrayed through the superhero branding. This will give the school the sense that they are heroes, by helping to better the environment and achieve the goals of this campaign. The themes of heroism and community will not initiate the change we seek on their own.

Understanding

The concept of understanding is necessary because people need to know that a problem exists before they can try to fix it. Plastic bags are not necessarily something that people consciously think about often. Therefore, we need to bring them to the consumer's attention and we need to have them understand what the issue is and what needs to be done in order for a solution to be successful. This concept of understanding will assist in increasing the audience awareness and it can also lead to the reduction of plastic bag usage.

In order to capture the attention of our target audiences, we need to incorporate an entertaining theme. Utilizing social media will be helpful since it is an effective way to send out humorous images that people will enjoy. The more interesting our messages are to the audiences, the more receptive they will feel toward them. After all, one of our major goals includes changing the behavior(s) of the consumer so we need to engage the consumer as much as possible.

PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND PRICING

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND PRICING

To encourage students to change their behaviors with plastic bag usage, RIT will offer reusable shopping bags with a custom design from an RIT contest winner. The reusable grocery bags will be made available at locations that currently distribute plastic bags. The bags will cost students a small fee to purchase, and prices will be based on the unit cost that RIT pays to purchase the bags. The reusable RIT designed bags will be provided at no cost to students at five RIT hosted events held between May and September 2016. The largest event is the 2016 New Student Orientation in which RIT will be welcoming a “freshman class of 2,940 students and about 600 transfer students” (Livadas 2015). A total of 3500 bags will be ordered for this event to be given to incoming students at the start of New Student Orientation. The other four events, held at a much smaller scale, will offer 500 bags to be distributed to students at no cost. The bags for the events will need to be paid for through RIT’s budget for plastic bags. Students will pay for the bags sold at RIT stores at the time of purchase.

We suggest RIT order bags with a winning student design from discountmugs.com. This site offers a discount on custom orders based on the quantity demanded. Other possible sites could be cheaptotes.com and reusethisbag.com. These sites have unit costs ranging from \$1.50 - \$2.00 per unit for the bags. Discountmugs.com has a unit cost of only \$0.67 per custom ordered bag. The bags in particular that we looked at are non-woven polypropylene with reinforced straps. The bags are of course, reusable but are also 100% recyclable. The site has these bags rated at 4.8/5 in terms of quality based on 31 customer reviews. The table below shows the orders of bags for each event and the quantity and cost associated with each event.

APPROXIAMATE COST OF BAGS IN RELATION TO EACH EVENT

Event	Quantity of Bag	Unit cost per bag	Total
New Student Orientation	3500	\$0.67	\$2,345
Event 1	500	\$0.67	\$335
Event 2	500	\$0.67	\$335
Event 3	500	\$0.67	\$335
Event 4	500	\$0.67	\$335
Total	5500	\$0.67	\$3,685

RIT can order bags from this company at \$0.67 per unit and can sell the bags for \$1.00 at locations where plastic bags are currently offered. This markup in the price of bags will go towards filling the budget deficit incurred from the purchase of the bags handed out for free at the events. After RIT sells roughly 11,000 bags, then the bags will have earned enough profit to pay back the budget used up to supply free bags for the events.

STRATEGY

EVENTS

In order to promote the campaign, "Plastic Bag Free RIT" there will be a design competition followed by four additional events on-campus. The events are imperative in order to actively engage students in the movement, and to make them feel like they are a part of the change. Student Government will plan and host the events, and the Student Environmental Action League will also be contacted to see if they would like to be a part of this endeavor and help out when necessary during the various events.

Plastic Bag Design Contest

The first event of this campaign is a design competition. The contest will be announced in mid-April and students will have until July 1 to submit an entry. Students will receive information about this event via RIT Message Center emails. Additionally, students enrolled in creative majors such as Graphic Design or Illustration will receive further emails since it could be an asset in their portfolio. Thus, advisors in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences will also be contacted so that they can encourage their students to participate. The entries must include a design of a superhero mascot for the campaign. All of the potential entries will be sent to Student Government for judging. The winning logo will be featured on reusable bags that freshmen will receive at their orientation, and the bags will also be sold at various locations on-campus. Ultimately, having upperclassmen design the logo as opposed to incoming freshmen will allow upperclassmen to also feel like they are contributing to this effort right from the start.

Freshmen Orientation Seminar

The next event will take place at Freshman Orientation and will serve as the “kick-off” for the campaign. Shawna Lusk, the Director of Orientation will be contacted in order to seek her approval for the event as well as begin the necessary planning once approved. At orientation, incoming freshman will receive reusable bags that will be designed over the summer. Freshmen will attend an educational seminar taught by a faculty member of RIT’s Sustainability program in order to learn the environmental hazards of utilizing plastic bags. Enid Cardinal will be contacted to see if she is interested in teaching this seminar. At this event, the standard will be set, and students will be told that they will need to use their new reusable bag on-campus or use an alternative such as a backpack. The seminar should be both educational and fun. After attending this seminar freshman will have the knowledge and the resources that are necessary in order to make a commitment against plastic bags.

Table Sitting in the SAU

The next event in this plan is regular table sitting in the Student Alumni Union atrium near Nathan’s and Ben and Jerry’s. Table sitting will occur five times each semester. Students (members of Student Government or SEAL) will table sit in order to sell reusable bags to students and faculty. The table sitting dates will be registered online via the Event Registration form or by contacting the reservations desk staff. The goal of table

sitting is to keep the movement alive by allowing upperclassmen and faculty to purchase a reusable bag of their own. Additionally, this will serve as an opportunity for students who may have misplaced their original reusable bag to obtain a new one. Regular table sitting will serve as a reminder to students that they should use alternatives to plastic bags. In order to make the table sitting more appealing to students, a bake sale will be incorporated. With every purchase of a reusable bag, students will receive a baked good. Student Government will purchase the baked goods necessary for the table sitting events.

Reusable Bag Giveaway at the Tiger Statue

Additionally, there will be an outdoor event at the tiger statue. In order to secure a date, the reservations desk staff will be contacted. At this event, reusable bags will be distributed to students for free. Students enjoy receiving free merchandise; thus, this will be an exciting way to raise awareness about the necessity of using plastic bags. Additionally, since the brand of the campaign is a superhero, there will be a student dressed in costume representing the mascot of the campaign. A costume will be purchased in advance for the purpose of this event. The superhero's presence at this event will make it a memorable and unique experience for students, and will make the plastic bag campaign fun and exciting.

Plastic Bag Recycling Event

There will be a plastic bag-recycling event located in the Fireside Lounge within the SAU. At this event, students will be asked to bring in all of their plastic bags. As a reward for ridding their dorm or apartment of plastic bags, students will be awarded free food, reusable bags and/or t-shirts depending on how many plastic bags they bring. Additionally, students will be asked to sign a pledge indicating that they will refrain from using plastic bags. The signatures from the pledge will be posted at an on-campus location as a reminder for students to participate in this movement. Members of Student Government will take all of the plastic bags to a location such as Wegmans or Wal-Mart where the plastic bags can be properly recycled. This event will be an effective way for RIT students to "start fresh" and get rid of all of their plastic bags. For this event, local media will be invited via a press release. The press release will be sent to local media such as the Democrat and Chronicle, 13WHAM and WHEC in order to create awareness about RIT's dedication to the environment by committing to eliminate plastic bags.

NEWS RELEASE

Prior to the launch of the campaign, a press release will be sent to local newspapers, news stations and the RIT reporter. The *Democrat and Chronicle* will need to be contacted mid-July, so that the story can be printed before the start of the Fall semester. Steve Bradley is the content strategists at the *Democrat and Chronicle* and can be reached by email at sbradley@democratandchronicle.com or by phone at 585-258-2569. News stations will also be a good way to inform the rest of the community outside of RIT. The RIT school magazine should also be contacted to print the story. The contact email for *The Reporter* is rptadsmgr@rit.edu and they can also be reached at 585-475-2213. The Chief Editor for The Reporter is Alyssa Jackson who could be contacted directly at rpteic@rit.edu.

A spread should be printed in the first issue in order to inform all students that may not have already heard about RIT being plastic bag free. The Reporter would also be a great source for all the additional events throughout the year and to have follow up reports on students' opinions and feelings a few months into the campaign. An example of the news release that could be sent to these news outlets could look as follows.

Example Press Release

Beginning in Fall 2016, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) will be phasing out the use of plastic bags on campus. A petition created and signed by RIT students has successfully created a change on campus.

RIT has taken multiple efforts towards becoming a more environmentally-friendly campus. Including the use of solar energy to generate electricity, recycling programs, a ban on plastic water bottles and other sustainable efforts.

"Many places have begun to do away with plastic bags. It is time RIT caught up to New York City, Connecticut, Maryland, Seattle, and Portland who are all pushing to get rid of plastic bags in return for a more sustainable future", stated in a PawPrints petition created by RIT student, Mark Brown in October, 2015.

The move towards a plastic bag free campus, will add RIT to the list of colleges and cities that have already eliminated plastic bags, including Humboldt University, Los Angeles, Chicago, Austin and more across the country. Plastic bags have shown to have a negative effect on cities and countries across the world, which is the causing factor for the elimination of plastic bags in many places.

One major problem is that because they don't break down, plastic bags cause problems for facilities and the campus wildlife and are costing the university a lot of time and money to clean up. Research shows that approximately 100 billion plastic bags are used in the United States every year, requiring 12 million barrels of oil. This accumulation of plastic bags has created a mass of garbage in the oceans, causing hazard to various wildlife.

RIT is going to replace plastic bags at all campus dining halls and stores with the option to use a reusable bag. Every student will be provided with one reusable bag for free and additional ones will be sold at campus stores. Additionally, there will be various events, such as reusable bag giveaways, a plastic bag recycling event and more, held throughout this upcoming year, that will help to promote and encourage the RIT community to strive for a more sustainable lifestyle into now and in the future.

The elimination of plastic bags on campus will help to rid solid wastes and create a more sustainable environment for future classes.

For more information or to help in RIT's sustainability efforts, contact xxx@rit.edu.

Super Hero Design E-Mail

RIT needs you and your design skills! We are looking for a Super Sustainable Hero, created by students like you. All you need to do is design our new Hero and send a .pdf of the design to xxx@rit.edu!

Submissions need to be sent in by July 4, 2016

If your design wins, you will see your Super Sustainable Hero as the new face of all of our future sustainability campaigns, starting with our plastic bag removal campaign!

For more information, please contact *Name* at xxx@rit.edu and *person* would be happy to assist.

On Campus Informational Event Invite

You're invited!

Stop by the *location on date and time of event* for donuts and coffee!

Start your day with delicious pastries and great coffee while learning more about RIT's Super Sustainability Hero! We hope to see you there!

BRANDING

After the announcement of the plastic bag free community, it will need to be reinforced with branding and events throughout the year. The brand logo used will serve as a reminder of why it is so important for RIT to eliminate plastic bags on campus. To start off the campaign, the logo will simply be a green recycle sign, placed onto a superhero. The superhero may change throughout the various design contests, so the posters will change with the new superhero that is chosen to represent the campaign.

There will also be posters hung around campus prior to the start of the Fall semester. Additional posters created for each event will also be hung to inform students of the events such as the Logo Design Contest, the Plastic Bag Recycling Event and the Reusable Bag Giveaway. These posters will help to inform students and also encourage them to attend.

Plastic Bag Free RIT

We need your help RIT!
Create the new Super Sustainable Hero and get your design
seen everywhere on campus.



The winning design will be featured on the reusable bags,
sold around campus.

Entries must be submitted by JULY 1st. Send designs to xxx-
@rit.edu

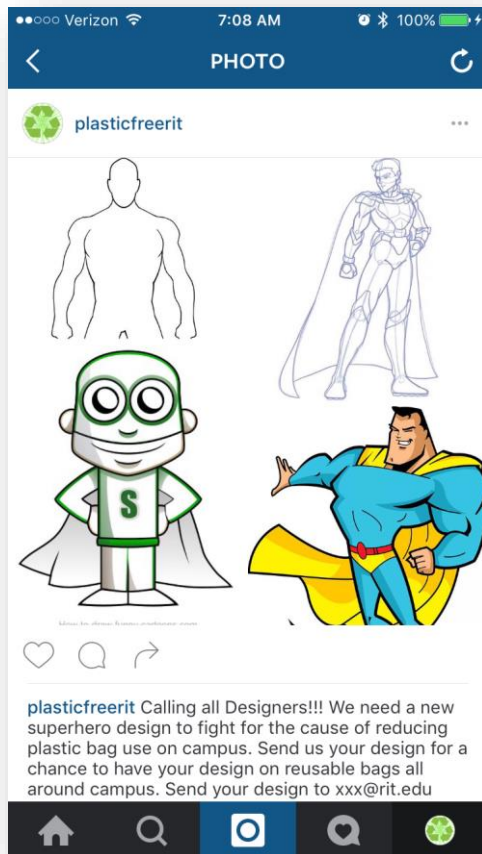
SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a critical component of our campaign to reduce the use of plastic bags on campus. Social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram are huge areas of opportunity to reach our target audience.

Instagram in particular will be useful for hosting contests for logo designs that will be printed on the reusable bags. Students will be asked to design logos and post them on their Instagram accounts with the hashtag #plasticfreeRIT or email their designs to our brands @rit.edu address. Based on the hashtag search and the emails received directly, all the designs entered into the contest will be reviewed and judges will choose from the most appealing designs.

Instagram will also be used as a general communication channel for the hosted events. Graphics will be posted with information about the events, locations and times, and other important information related to the cause. Our Super Sustainable Hero will be a key figure across our social media channels.

Instagram Mock-ups

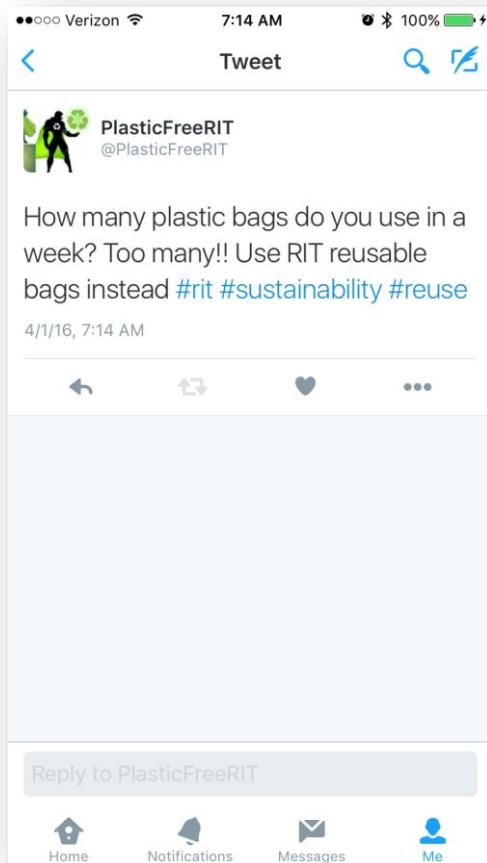


Facebook will be used frequently because it allows for more in-depth posting than Instagram or Twitter. Facebook will be used to provide more in depth information regarding raising awareness of issue of plastic bag usage on campus. These posts will include shared articles, cross platform posting from our Instagram and Twitter, as well as detailed posts about events and how students can make a difference.

Twitter is also a very useful tool for conveying key information quickly to a large audience. Tweet will be posted about events as they take place to get more awareness,

such as the SAU Table Sitting events and the New Student Orientation. Tweeting about the event could get people who are searching for #rit or #sustainability or other related hashtags to be involved and stop by the events.

Twitter Mock-ups



EVALUATION

GOALS

Raise awareness

Our first goal is to raise the awareness of plastic bags being an issue on RIT's campus. After the final event occurs, an electronic questionnaire should be sent out to all students. The questions of this questionnaire will be closed ended and ask how aware they are of the harmful impacts that plastic bags have on campus.

Reduce plastic bag usage

The second goal is to reduce plastic bag usage on campus. The best time to evaluate this is also after all of the events occurred. Having someone, such as a member of Student Government or SEAL, sit at the different dining service venues and counting the number of plastic bags taken by students before the first event and after the last event will be the most effective way to measure the usage. If the amount of plastic bags taken decreases by 70%, then this goal will have been achieved.

OBJECTIVES

Sell reusable bags on campus

We would evaluate this by checking on the sales of the bags at each location. By calculating how many bags are being sold and also which locations they are being sold most at, this will give us an idea of where more bags should be placed, and also which locations may need more advertising to increase sales, in those locations.

Change verbiage of employees

We can evaluate the success of verbiage first by making sure all employees have successfully completed the training by August 1, 2016. To test the success of the training we can have managers and/or members of student government observe employees to assure they are using the proper verbiage. Additionally, we could calculate the difference in number of plastic bags being taken at the check-outs now versus after the change in

verbiage. Although, a reduction in plastic bags may also be the cause of all the other efforts, this information would be helpful in testing the success of the campaign as a whole.

EVENTS

Reusable Bag Design Contest

We would review this contest by assessing how many students entered the contest. All of RIT will receive an email regarding this contest via RIT Message Center and professors and advisors will be encouraged to further remind students about the event. Students will also have the opportunity to enter the contest using the appropriate hashtag on Instagram. Ideally, given the large student body there should be at least 25 to 50 submissions. After students submit their design, there will be a survey for students to take asking how they found out about the competition and what made them want to submit an entry. This information will be useful for coordinating future contests.

Table Sitting

The success of this event will be evaluated by how many plastic bags are sold during the course of each table sitting session. We will keep track of how many bags are sold on different days and at different times in order to evaluate the most effective time to sell plastic bags.

Freshman Orientation Seminar

We will evaluate this event by mandating that student's RIT ID must be scanned prior to them entering the location of the event. This way, it will be easy to calculate what percentage of the freshman class attended the event. In a post-orientation survey, some questions about the event could be included such as whether students found it beneficial and engaging. This information would determine what changes need to be made in order to better the event.

Plastic Bag Giveaway at the Tiger Statue

We will evaluate how many plastic bags are given out as well as make notes afterward about the ease or difficulty of distributing the bags. Individuals who coordinate this event should keep in mind some observations while the event is going taking place. For

example, were students excited to receive something free unexpectedly? On the other hand, were students uncomfortable or wary to approach the giveaway?

Plastic Bag Recycling Event

For this event, firstly we would identify which of the media we contacted, actually attended the event. Additionally, we will keep a list running of the students who pledge to never use plastic bags on campus in order to see how many students attend the event. When students drop off their plastic bags, individuals running the event should ask them whether they would be open to having a plastic bag drop-off location on-campus permanently in order to evaluate the potential success of that idea.

NEWS COVERAGE

Press Release

After sending out the press release and asking various news stations to broadcast our event, we will evaluate by identifying which stations attend the event. If there is a large crowd that attends than this would be successful. For the press release being published in the Democrat and Chronicle, we will assume that all the readers, see the press release, which is a large audience. Additionally, publishing in the RIT Reporter, we will assume that the normal readers of The Reporter see the press release.

BRANDING

To evaluate the effectiveness of the brand, we would conduct interviews after the first semester and then again after a year, to see how many students recognize the Superhero and also ask them their feelings and opinions. If a lot of students are aware and know about the Superhero than the brand was effective, if students are not sure and don't care for it than this would be ineffective and may need to be changed.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Evaluating the success of our social media initiatives will be largely based on the awareness caused by social media exposure. Our brand is visible on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @PlasticFreeRIT. Based on the fact that the current RIT Sustainability Facebook page has 884 likes, we project that @PlasticFreeRIT should have at least 500 followers within the first 6 months of launching the campaign. A successful utilization of

Instagram and Twitter to spread awareness will result in followers on Instagram and Twitter as well.

More importantly we will also evaluate the engagement of the audience on our social media posts. This includes like, comments, and shares on Facebook, likes and tagging of others in Instagram comments, and likes and retweets on Twitter. We will evaluate which types of posts yields the largest response from our target audience and use this data to develop better content to post in the future. We can analyze the types of articles shared on Facebook have the most comments, and what types of tweets

The success of our design contests based on social media submissions is another method of evaluation. All students and staff will receive an email through RIT message center about entering the design competitions, but the social media entry method will be useful in gauging the effectiveness of Instagram in our social media plan. Out of the submissions we will observe how many designs were submitted via email compared to the number of submissions via Instagram using the “PlasticFreeRIT” hashtag. If the submissions from Instagram exceed the submissions via email, then we will continue to use Instagram and other social media outlets to engage our audience in future contests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the ideas presented hope to guide RIT in their efforts towards becoming a more sustainable campus. Through this campaign strategy encompassing the strategic usage of events, branding and social media, the elimination of plastic bags on RIT’s campus can be made a reality.

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