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incredible recovery rate. But *why wasn't waste diminishing?*

Problem is, we create waste at a rate as fast or faster than the rate at which we recycle. "So," she explains, "No matter how much we recover, we're still creating more waste." BRING realized that the educational component of its mission statement might be able to redistribute the energy people were putting toward recycling to include more deliberate reuse and reduction.

Daniel says, "We love recycling — but it has a bit of a double edge." The fact that something is recycleable, ironically, can justify its use and the creation of more waste. "The example that stares me right in the face," she says with a laugh, "is the plastic water bottle. I have two of them right here in my office. Instead of going to get a glass of water out of the tap, we're all buying water in a bottle."

"This is a completely recycleable item," she says. "But does it have a cost — to both extract the material and to manufacture and recycle this item? Absolutely." Daniel says that on top of that cost, "only about 28 percent of [the bottles] are actually going to be recycled — the rest will end up in the trash."

So recycling alone is a relatively small behavior change. "You're asking people to take an object they already use and put it in this bin instead of this bin," Daniel says. It's not the harder change of trying to figure out how *not* to use the object in the first place, which, Daniel says "is a much more radical change in behavior."

Seduce to Reuse

With a sly smile, Daniel calls it, "BRING's Cunning Plan for World Domination." BRING's formal goal is "to help people make the connection between the way they live, the stuff they use and discard, and the clean air, water and healthy environment we all depend on — without preaching or boring them to death ..."

Daniel believes that people — and a broader range of people than BRING is currently reaching — can be persuaded to make reuse an integral, interesting part of their lives.

"We do environmental education, which is essentially kind of serious and preachy — you're telling people, 'Do this. Do that. Don't do this. Don't do that ...' There's a real tendency for social change organizations and en-

vironmentalists to sound incredibly preachy."

Thing is, this doesn't really work. Daniel explains, "Very few people change their behavior because somebody says they should. You need to *inspire* them. You need to make them feel this is a lifestyle that looks fun and interesting and exciting and innovative — that it has some element of delight to it."

In the effort to promote reuse in the general public, BRING wants to emphasize the creative, visionary quality one exercises in the process. "Reuse," Daniel says, "is essentially a very creative act. To see a used sink as a birdbath or a discarded toilet as a fountain or a door as a desk takes vision. We want to promote the message that people should use used stuff because it's fun and creative, *and* it's good for the environment. We want to celebrate reuse as part of a lifestyle that is very much this community."


To Higher Ground

As with every public venture, BRING's ability to stay competitive and grow the way they want to is all about location, location, location. The center is currently located on a dusty corner lot of Franklin Boulevard, near

the I-5 and a big Texaco station out toward Mount Pisgah. The lot, as Daniel describes it, is "one and a half not very usable, swampy, flood-prone, blackberry-briared acres."

At a certain point in the growing popularity of recycling, the community made the leap that a resource was a resource. Daniel says, "They had glass jars that they could recycle, and they wanted to recycle window panes and windows, because they saw that glass was glass. And they saw that you could recycle a tin, and they wanted to bring in metal sinks. So they made that leap between how a resource is valuable, no matter its form, and we became a collection point for this wild assortment of junk and stuff."

It turned out that the "wild assortment of junk and stuff" was, in large part, a lot of used building materials, and BRING realized this specific reuse could be a focus for the organization. Damien Czech, BRING's operational manager, has been instrumental in, as Daniel says, "trying to make some kind of order out of the chaos of people's detritus and stuff — kind of putting all the windows in a row together and putting all the doors together, instead of it just being heaps of stuff surrounded by blackberries."



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