

COMPOSTING BUSINESS CASE STUDY

The VORTEX/Butterfly Bar – Winter 2016

Austin, Texas



“Recycling has always been a priority, but adding compost is the cherry on top.”

- Melissa Vogt, Managing Director, The VORTEX

THE VORTEX/BUTTERFLY BAR – Business Overview:

- Performing arts venue (VORTEX Repertory Co.)
- Bar (Butterfly Bar)
- Food truck (Patrizi’s)
- Produces 10 original productions annually
- Earns on average \$60,000 in bar revenue monthly
- Serves about 10,500 meals weekly

COMPOSTING HIGHLIGHTS:

- » Decreased weekly landfill trash capacity by 60% via composting
- » Saving \$600/year in trash hauling services
- » Using only compostable material at bar and food truck
- » Providing straws upon request
- » 80% reduction in straw usage
- » Saving more than \$500/year on straw purchases, after switching to compostable straws

Challenges. As a nonprofit organization, The VORTEX struggled to fund a composting program. The Zero Waste Business Rebate enabled management to jump-start a program for both employees and customers.

Solutions. The VORTEX/Butterfly Bar contacted Austin Resource Recovery's (ARR) Business Outreach Team for a free Zero Waste Assessment. ARR suggested the following actions to reduce waste:

- Start a commercial composting service
- Create collection stations for composting and recycling
- Provide straws upon request only
- Switch to all compostable or recyclable materials
- Require employee training on recycling and composting

Results. The VORTEX/Butterfly Bar held a kick off compost party featuring a themed drink to inform customers about composting and the new compostable materials at the bar and food truck. Changes resulted in:

- Decreased straw use by 80% (10,000 less straws/month)
- Reduced labor costs for daily clean ups
- Increased cleanliness of dumpster area and elimination of compost odors
- Implemented customer education at the bar
- Removed all landfill trash containers, except one

Success Factors. By adding compost collection, The VORTEX/Butterfly Bar cut weekly landfill trash service capacity by 60 percent. Bundling waste services (landfill trash, recycling and compost) to one hauler reduced costs and simplified billing processes. Easy-to-read signage and persistent education of staff and customers reduced contamination.

Looking Forward. The VORTEX/Butterfly Bar regularly monitors their trash volumes, looking for opportunities to decrease trash service. Currently, the business is searching for a way to dispose of materials from theater set breakdowns, when materials reach the end of their life (e.g. treated wood scraps, painted fabric).

BUSINESS PROFILE

Business Type » Theater, bar, food truck
Neighborhood » Manor Road
ZIP Code » 78722
Building » 14,987 sq. ft.
Employees » 25
New to recycling? » No, started in 1988.

AUSTIN RESOURCE RECOVERY

Austin Resource Recovery's Business Outreach Team offers free consulting services to help businesses reduce waste, recycle materials and comply with Austin's Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO). Please contact us at:
P » (512) 974-9727
E » commercialrecycling@austintexas.gov

RESOURCES

www.austinmaterialsmarketplace.org
www.austintexas.gov/department/austin-green-business-leaders



Outdoor disposal station.