



E-REUSE SERVICES TAPS NSF TO HELP SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING WASTE AT ELECTRONICS REUSE CONFERENCE

THE CHALLENGE

Every year, tradeshows and conferences generate thousands of tons of waste in the form of flyers, hand-outs, packaging, coffee cups and more. A closer look reveals an **estimated** 60 million people attend tradeshows each year—with each attendee generating up to 20 pounds of waste. Not surprisingly, this has a significant impact on the environment.

THE SOLUTION

Aiming to curb waste and avoid adding to the problem of conference waste generation, E-Reuse Services began working with NSF International in 2018 to make the Electronics Reuse Conference (ERC) in Nashville, Tennessee, a waste-free event. Using their expertise in materials management and waste reduction, NSF implemented several strategies that proved successful in diverting a total of 2,061 pounds of waste away from landfills. The total amount of diverted waste included 1,511 pounds of materials suitable for composting and 550 pounds of material for recycling.

After seeing the **reception** and **impact** the event made in 2018, it was no question that the 2019 event would continue building on what was started in Nashville.



THE RESULTS

In order to improve upon the successful outcomes of 2018, the team went back to the drawing board, coming up with ways to not only keep waste out of landfills by diverting it to recycling or composting, but by eliminating a number of materials from the outset, reducing overall material use significantly.

By the end of the conference, total material measurements were:

- > 265 pounds of material sent to compost
- > 307 pounds recycled
- > 56 pounds of materials that could be neither composted or recycled, including things like Styrofoam packing material, plastic wrap around shipping materials, etc.



A sign from our event.





These results represent a significant reduction in overall materials used and kept out of the waste supply chain overall. To achieve this, the team did many things in advance of the show to prepare, including:

- > Not printing flyers or materials for the show, instead relying on an app to house all relevant materials.
- > Reducing food waste, including purchasing produce without stickers on them.
- > Eliminating single-use dining materials, such as plates, cutlery, etc., from meals.

Additional things the team did to curb waste:

- > **Working closely with the venue and vendors to set expectations on waste:** It is important to determine where waste may come from during the event and ways to combat waste production. For the ERC event, both organizations work with kitchen staff on food preparation to limit waste, identify the placement of food and waste bins throughout the hotel's event space and encourage exhibitors to bring items that can easily be repurposed or that create less waste. Last year, several exhibitors brought items like biodegradable pens and reusable mugs as alternatives to traditional promotional items.

- > **Educating attendees before the event on the waste-free mission:** Prior to arrival, attendees are notified of the mission for a waste-free event. They are encouraged to bring items that are reusable or less wasteful and provided tips about how to best avoid waste in preparing for the conference.
- > **Creating signage and directing attendees to put waste in the correct waste bins:** Once the event has begun, the staff is available to help direct where waste should be placed, ensuring proper sorting of waste that helps the cleanup process after the event ends.

POTENTIAL STEPS FOR THE FUTURE

To get to a fully waste-free conference in the future, NSF and ERC plan to work closely with tradeshow exhibitors ahead of the conference to reduce materials brought into the show venue that are not easily recycled or composted, as well as informing attendees about our goals for fully eliminating waste and reducing impact.

For more information about reducing waste at your company or event, contact NSF at sustainability@nsf.org.