

Nomad Café, Oakland, California

Waste No Waste

In this small but cozy corner café, drinking coffee is good for both you and the environment.

Nomad's owner, Christopher Waters, set out to create "a community center where people can come together, practice whatever it is that they do" with sustainability as a core value. Since the business opened in May 2003, Nomad implemented environmentally-friendly product and material uses as well as solid waste reduction strategies, energy efficiency measures, operation conservation measures, and vehicle pollution prevention policies.

Nomad literally wastes no waste and has implemented a "zero-waste-over-the-counter" policy. These proactive waste reduction programs save the business over \$12,000 per year.



Christopher Waters, Nomad Cafe owner, encourages customers to be environmentally conscious consumers.

Business Snapshot

825-square foot café offering fair trade coffee and tea, locally-sourced foods and live performances

Actions to Cut Waste & Buy Green

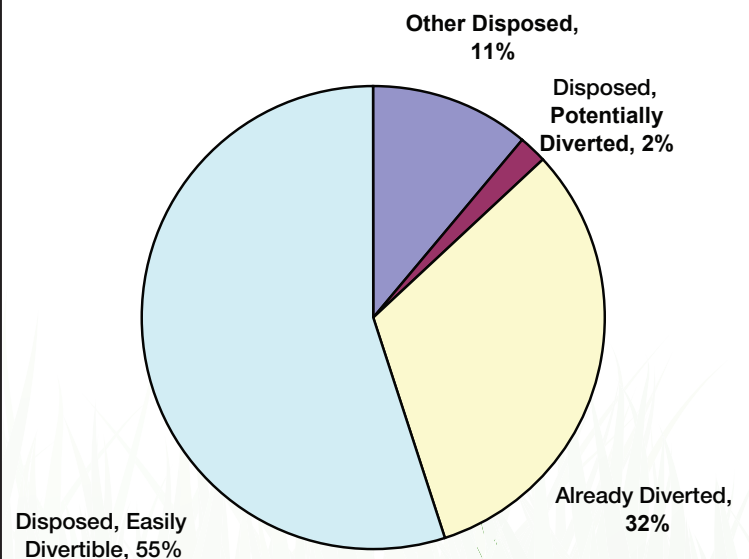
- Packaging and cups for to-go orders are biodegradable
- Surcharges on to-go packaging increase reusable container use
- Non-disposable dishes used in-house
- Printing utilizes 100% post-consumer content recycled paper (30% for colored paper)
- Recycled building materials used where possible
- 95% of waste is composted or recycled

Estimated Yearly

- Cost Savings: \$12,000
- Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions: 7 tons of CO₂

Oakland Full-Service Restaurants Waste Profile

The Waste Disposal and Diversion Findings for Selected Industry Groups, by Cascadia Consulting Group (2005), found that 55% of waste in Oakland could have been diverted from the landfill.



What Actions Did Nomad Café Take to Cut Waste?

The packaging is manufactured without the use of petroleum products. Nomad replaced "bring-your-own cup or container" discounts with surcharges for purchases when customers require to-go packaging. The surcharges resulted in a noticeable increase in customers' use of their own cups and containers and in both a reduction of Nomad's to-go container costs and the entry of to-go packaging into the waste stream.

What Actions Did Nomad Café Take to Buy Green?

Nomad preferentially orders products containing minimal packaging waste, participates in commercial recycling and composting programs, and consolidates vendors and delivery schedules. They use biodegradable waste receptacle liners and make their coffee grounds available to customers for garden or houseplant use.

What are the Results of Nomad's Actions?

All in all, 95% of Nomad's waste is composted or recycled. As a result, 29 tons of waste are diverted each year from local landfills and 7 tons of carbon dioxide emissions are prevented from entering the atmosphere each year. Additionally, all Nomad Café coffee products are organic and Fair Trade Certified to promote sustainable farming and a healthier planet.

How Have Nomad's Efforts Been Recognized?

The Café has been a winner of the California Integrated Waste Management Board's Waste Reduction Awards Program (WRAP) award for four consecutive years (2004-2007) and was awarded the "WRAP of the Year" award in 2004, (one of only ten businesses statewide to earn this distinction). Nomad Café is also an officially certified Green Business through the County of Alameda's Green Business program, an Oakland City Council "Community Hero," and an Oakland Indie Award "Greenie Award" winner.

Nomad Café has played a big role in turning the north Shattuck corridor into a greener, friendlier, more sustainable, more thriving, and more desirable destination.



"True change begins with a grassroots commitment to make our communities better places to live. The Nomad Café exemplifies sustainable business practices."

-Linda Moulton-Patterson
California Integrated Waste Management
Board Member 2004



Photo credit: Ian Martin

The Nomad Café is in a mixed use building with 3 residential units above and café space at street level. Neighbors supported this development.

Contact Information

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