



KeepCup

Spotlight on sustainable packaging practices

Keep it and use it again: the idea that launched KeepCup's sustainable practices in Melbourne's local cafes. Nearly ten years on, KeepCups are used in more than 75 countries around the world, diverting millions of disposable cups from landfills every day. KeepCup grew from coffee drinkers' concerns about the volume of packaging being consumed, particularly non-recyclable, disposable cups. The team at KeepCup saw a problem and innovated to deliver a solution.

Integrating sustainable practices

Reducing unnecessary waste is the core idea behind KeepCup. To provide a quality, eco-conscious product to customers, KeepCup has integrated sustainable practices throughout its processes by:

- partnering with local manufacturers and designers to ensure its packaging protects the product, is modular, uses minimal material, can be reused and is recyclable,
- producing retail packaging and outer mailer cartons locally from FSC certified cardboard, made from 100% recycled board,
- designing and introducing reusable pallet straps as an alternative to shrink wrap,

- working with stainless-steel manufacturers to ship their products without individual plastic bags for each item, and
- encouraging the delivery of products unboxed, such as deliveries to tradeshow and bulk customer orders.

KeepCup recognises that these sustainability practices are not always customer facing and may not be the attention-grabbing topics customers tune in for, but the impacts are significant and there is always room for improvement.



"At KeepCup we're committed to ongoing improvement," says KeepCup Co-Founder Abigail Forsyth. **"Recently we've redesigned our retail packaging and online mailers which led to a 91% reduction in breakage and reduced materials usage by 39%. Our goal has always been to kick-start a behavioural shift – from discard to reuse – and deliver a positive global campaign that changes the status quo."**

APCO CASE STUDY:

KEEPCUP

Beyond reusable coffee cups

KeepCup drives sustainable practices throughout its business by investing in renewables and constantly innovating. Their warehouses in Melbourne and London are entirely powered by solar panels, with excess solar power at Australian hubs being invested back into the grid through Planet Ark Power. These locations also harvest rainwater to flush toilets and water the plants.

In addition, KeepCup commits 1% of their global annual revenue to environmental causes, supporting those at the forefront of conservation and environmental protection.

"We've helped support over 800 cleanups and the removal of 5 million pieces of waste from our rivers, oceans and coastlines," says Abigail. **"Though our efforts are far-reaching, we're aware there's always room for improvement and KeepCup is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2025."**

In 2014, KeepCup became one of Australia's founding B Corporations. B Corp certification proves businesses are purpose-driven, and focused on making a positive difference to employees, customers, current and future generations, and the natural world. KeepCup has since joined the B Corp Collective's Net Zero 2030 initiative. The company is also a partner of Planet Ark's [Australian Circular Economy Hub](#) – a tool that highlights circular economy and design, deepening community, government and business understanding of what it is and the principles that drive outcomes.

Encouraging businesses

People can engage in sustainable actions, but they are not always able to do it on their own; to really make a difference, businesses must provide sustainable options at scale. KeepCup strives to lead by example and set attainable standards for others by creating a responsible supply chain, driving positive social and environmental impact upstream and down.

"We're not perfect," says Abigail, **"and we don't expect you to be either."**

KeepCup encourages other businesses to prioritise sustainability and make a start.

Abigail continues: **"Educate customers accurately and thoroughly on your business' sustainable goals and practices, wins and challenges. Businesses must make meaningful change for a better future, and it's important to bring consumers along on your company's environmental impact journey."**



Prioritise sustainability

"What makes small business appealing is also what makes it challenging – it's nimble, it's personal and it's independent." Abigail says. **"However, sustainability-based values, attitudes and preferences are driving consumer lifestyle choices and buying decisions. Businesses are responsible for utilising available resources and bringing customers on the sustainability journey with them."**

Research shows customers are keen on sustainability. 92% of the population support policies and action to reduce plastic waste, 81% feel strongly that companies should help improve the environment, and half are willing to forgo a brand name in order to buy environmentally friendly products.

Abigail continues: **"Set realistic and achievable goals, embed 'reducing impact' in every decision you make as a business, invest in local and long-term manufacturing, direct supplier relationships and renewable energy. From product creation, manufacturing, transport, and packaging – it all contributes to the impact your business has on the environment."**

Key recommendations

- Try to see past the initial commitment of time and the associated costs.
- Encourage someone in your business or take it upon yourself to drive sustainable packaging initiatives.
- Assess your packaging to understand whether you could transition to reusable packaging that consumers can simply refill with your product.
- Identify and work with suppliers that use materials that can be recycled to drive valuable end markets for packaging materials.
- Work with your wider supply chain to understand the impact of your packaging across its whole lifecycle.
- Review your packaging against the [Sustainable Packaging Guidelines](#) to implement the ten principles that drive sustainable packaging.
- Leverage your engagement in packaging sustainability to strengthen your brand.

More information

For more information about joining the APCO community visit www.apco.org.au

For more information on KeepCup visit <https://au.keepcup.com>

Contact APCO

Have a story to tell?

Contact [APCO](#) to determine if your story may support other APCO Members on their packaging sustainability journey

.....

DISCLAIMER: All rights reserved. No part of this case study may be reproduced in any material form or transmitted to any other person without the prior written permission of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation Ltd. (APCO) except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) (as amended) or unless expressly permitted in writing by APCO and all authorised material must at all times be acknowledged.