

“PeopleTowels - Engaging Students in Reducing Single Use Paper Towels”



Agenda

1. Introductions and overview
2. National case study
3. Unique approaches of three campuses
 - a. Principia College
 - b. University of Wisconsin La Crosse
 - c. New Mexico State University
4. UC Santa Cruz Video
5. Questions



Panel Members

Mary Wallace – Co-Founder, PeopleTowels, LLC

Karen Eckert – Professor and Director
Center for Sustainability, Principia College

Maggie McDermott – Associate Professor Marketing and
Sustainable Business Minor
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

joni newcomer – Manager, Environmental Policy and
Sustainability
New Mexico State University



Overview

- What is a PeopleTowel?
- Benefits of replacing paper towels with PeopleTowels
- Environmental ROI
- Financial ROI



What is a PeopleTowel?

- Personal, reusable hand towels
- Certified organic, Fair Trade cotton
- Lightweight, absorbent, dries quickly
- Non-toxic inks
- Custom sizes; machine washable
- Hang tag for easy access when clipped on water bottle or backpack
- Branded with college logo and/or sustainability message



Financial ROI

(Achieved in two months)

Annual cost for paper towels	\$661K
Cost to provide all students with PeopleTowels	\$36K
Annual savings	\$331K
Year 1 savings	\$295K



Environmental ROI

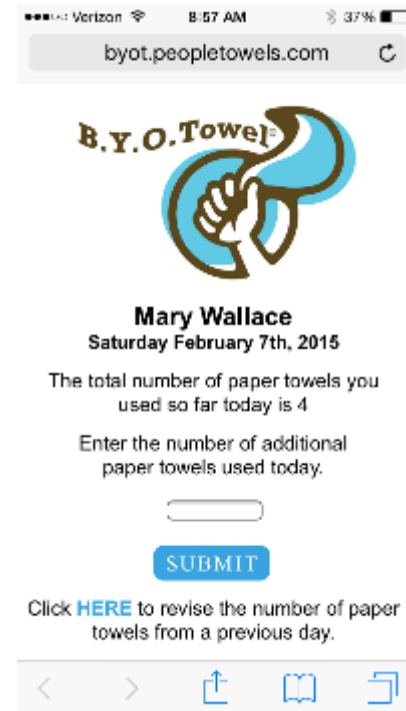
Annual Savings

Paper towels	6.3 Million
Trees	1863
Landfill waste	155,250 lbs
Water	1,552,500 gals
CO2 emissions	388,000 lbs



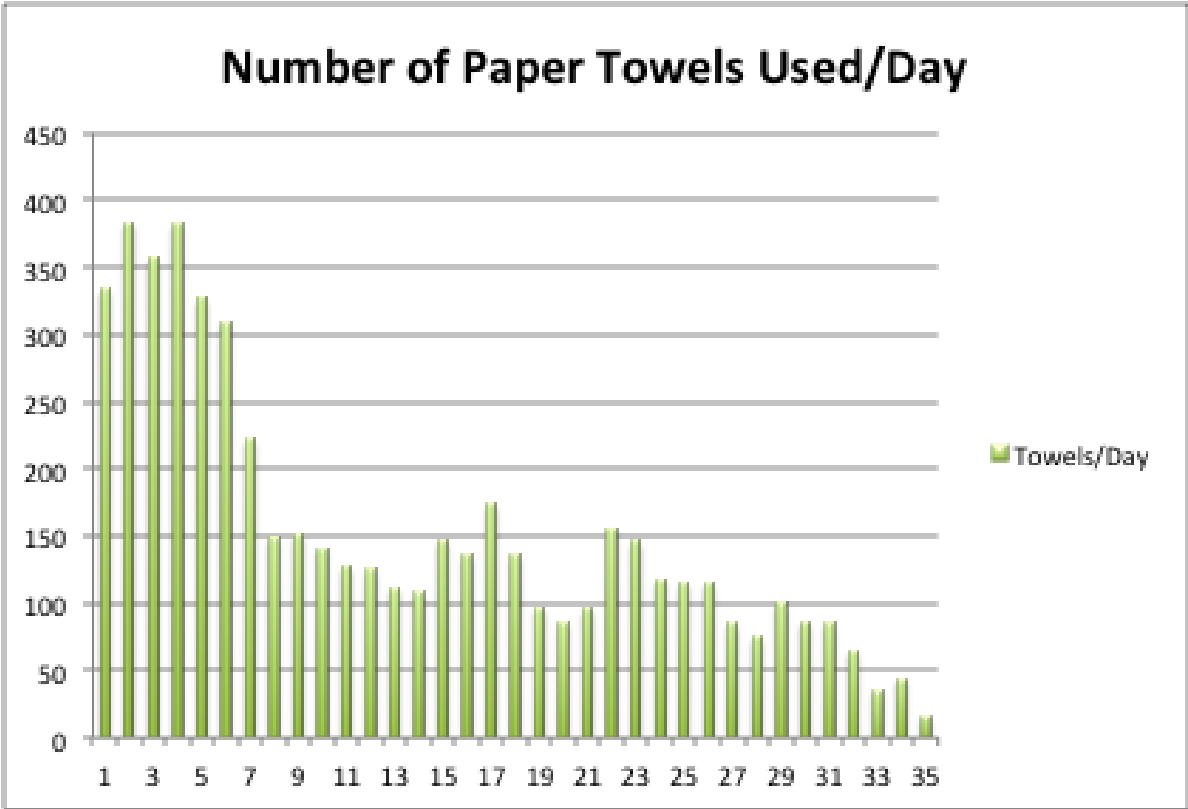
National Paper Towel Case Study

- Nine campuses
- 370 participants
- 5 weeks
- Qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed from
- Weekly surveys
- BYOT app



National Paper Towel Case Study

Key Findings



Campus Paper Towel Study

Key Findings

- 94% of students were more aware
- Paper and food waste were ranked the highest campus environmental issues
- Top 3 results of a campus implementing a “no paper towel” policy would be:
 1. Save the college/university \$\$
 2. Positive PR
 3. Reduce Waste



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Principia College

Karen Eckert, Ph.D.
Professor and Director
Center for Sustainability



Principia College Facts

- Founded in 1932
- National Historic Landmark in 1993
- 1 M ft² buildings; 500 students (7:1 faculty)
- Trifluence of Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois rivers
- 2,600 acres
 - 2,000 acres FSC-certified forest



Sustainability at Principia

“Sustainability at Principia: 2015-2020”

- Lead: Center for Sustainability (est. 2011)
- Embedded in the Principia College Strategic Plan (2014)

Targets

- Students are empowered as Change Agents
- Sustainable Food community
- Carbon Neutral community
- Sustainable Ecological community
- Sustainable Operations community
 - **Zero Waste community**



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Sustainability at Principia

Milestones

- Powered by 100% renewable energy (2009)
- Center for Sustainability (2011)
- FSC certification of forestry practices (2012)
- Single-stream recycling campus-wide (2013)
- Principia Beekeepers Association (2013)
- 100% pre/post-consumer composting (2014)
- E-vehicles (Flex crew); Plug-in stations (2014)
- Sustainability Minor (10% of students)
- STARS Silver (2015)



Waste Reduction Goals

Unmet Target: “Zero Waste”

Center for Sustainability conducted a waste audit (2014, 15)

- ~50% (vs 90%) of waste is diverted from the landfill
 - Composting more accessible (e.g., dorm kitchens)
 - Recycling more accessible (e.g., classroom bins)



Waste Reduction Goals

Unmet Target: "Zero Waste"

Making collection more accessible is not enough ...

- New partnerships to divert non-recyclables
 - Polystyrene, candy/chip wrappers, film plastic, Tyvek® (MLMC: 2015)
 - **Hand towels/napkins (PeopleTowels: 2015)**



PeopleTowel Pilot

The Challenge

- 2.2 M single-use paper towels/yr
 - ~ 2,750 per capita (similar to national average)
- Compostable, but not recyclable
 - Comprises 99%+ of bathroom waste
 - ... but no compost option in bathrooms

The Solution

- PeopleTowel Partnership: 5 wk Spring Semester 2015
- Student “EcoHeads” gave PeopleTowels to peers
 - PeopleTowel app monitored behavioral change



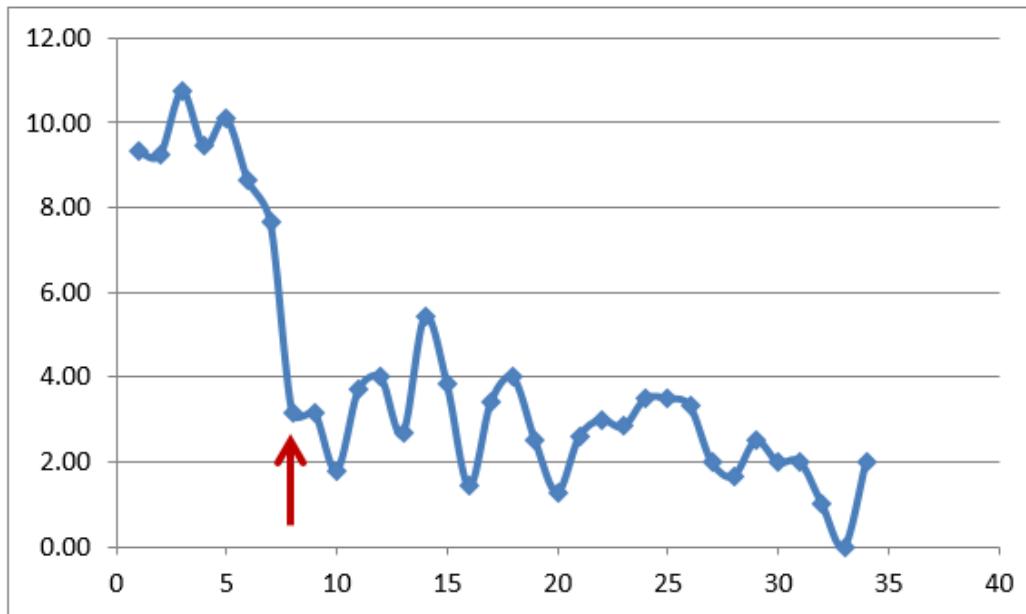
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PeopleTowel Pilot Results

Results

- WK 1 ... Baseline: average 9.31/day
- WK 2 ... Students receive PeopleTowels
- WK 5 ... 82.8% decline: average 1.60/day



PeopleTowel Pilot Results

Epilogue

- 2015, 2016 Freshman Orientation Packages
- Campus Store retails them to students, alumni
- Students continue to use them post-graduation
- Our Goal: reduce hand towel use by 50% !! (100% ?!)



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University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Maggie McDermott, Ph.D.
Associate Professor Marketing &
Sustainable Business Minor



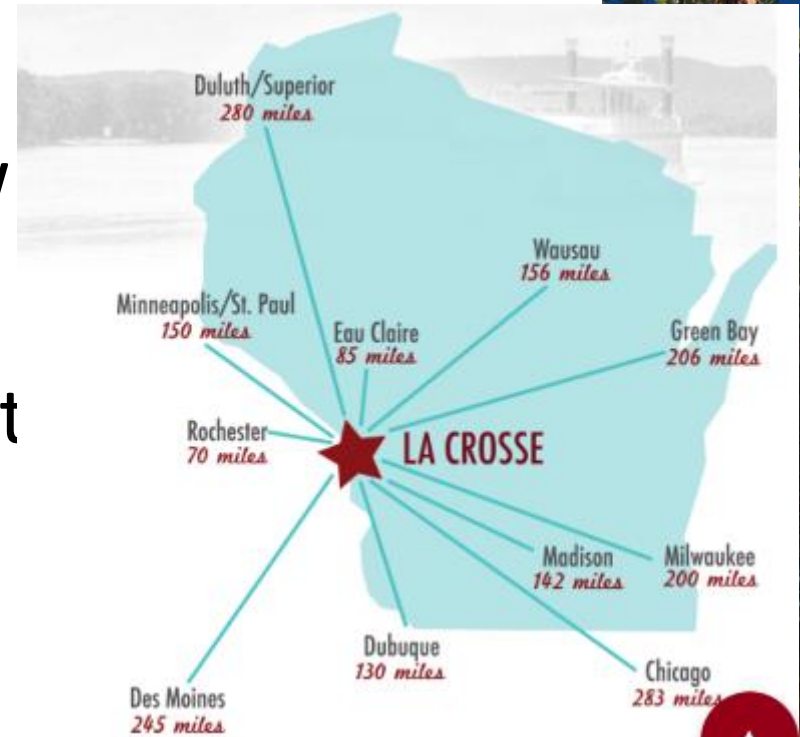
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UW-La Crosse Campus Facts



- Founded in 1909
- Regional comprehensive UW Campus
- 9,650 undergraduate student
758 graduate
- 18:1 student-faculty ratio



UW-La Crosse Sustainability Efforts

- STARS Silver in 2015
- Academic
 - College of Business Sustainable Business Minor
 - College of Health Sciences
 - Environmental Studies Minor
- Student Efforts
 - RecycleMania
 - Green Fund
 - Students for Sustainability



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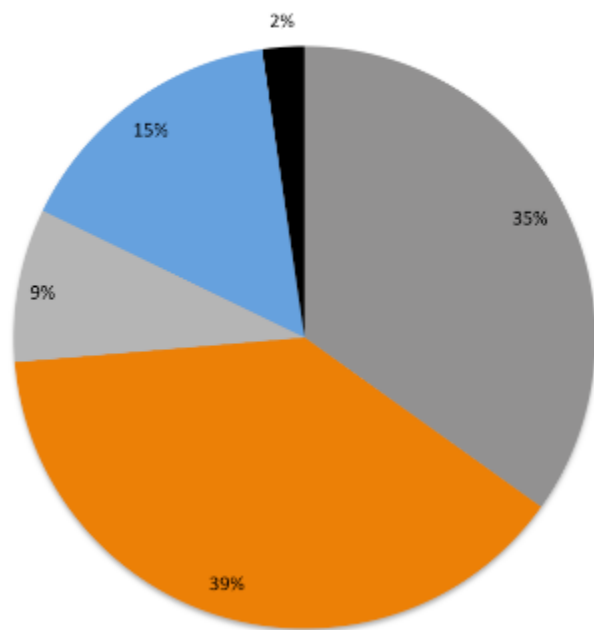
Sustainable Business Minor

- Sustainable Marketing Course
- Experiential Learning
- PeopleTowels Client Based Projects



PeopleTowels Pilot Study Project

Over the 4 weeks of using People Towels, did you feel this behavior became a habit?



- yes, the behavior became a habit
- it is not a habit yet, but may become one with more time
- neutral
- no, the behavior did not become a habit, but I am open to the idea
- no, the behavior did not become a habit and is not something I will do in the future



Survey Results



Overall Recommendations

Product

- Add a small carabiner to the towel
- Offer more/different colors

Price

- Increase Price
- Donate a % of profit to charity/
emphasize donations

Place/Positioning

- Distribute to a hypermarket chain
- Position as a "lifestyle" towel

Promotion

- Emphasize various alternative uses
- "How do you...?" campaign



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New Mexico State University

joni newcomer, ND, LEED AP BD+C

Mgr. Environmental Policy and Sustainability

Mgr. Environmental Education Center



NMSU Facts

- Land-grant institution, established 1888
- Five campuses around the state; ~20,000 students
- Cooperative Extension Service offices in all 33 counties
- 5.8 million sf bldgs. on main campus
- Climate zone 8a 'High Desert'
- Summer temp highs: 90° - 105° F
- Winter temp lows: 25° - 35° F



Environmental Education Center



Go Aggies! Go Green!

- Green Cleaning policy
- 49 hydration stations
- Four solar arrays
- STARS Gold 2012



- 16 LEED buildings
- \$12M Energy Performance Contract
- All-volunteer Sustainability Council



Go Aggies! Go Green!

Waste reduction is central to NMSU philosophy



PeopleTowels Research
Study



Lessons Learned - NMSU



NMSU – Beyond the Campus

Zero Waste



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Paper Towel-Free Dorms

Living Paper Towel Free in the Residence Halls

Expanding on a successful program launched by Stevenson College students, paper towels are no longer in bathrooms in college residence halls. This initiative was led by students whose commitment to sustainability led them to identify opportunities to make our colleges more green.



To view the video, visit <https://youtu.be/GFvIJOTJbts>



How are you reducing paper towel waste on your campus?

For additional information, please contact:

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888-237-2498 (o) or 305-937-6279 (m)



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