

Does Recycling Really Pay (£££)?

ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER'S TREASURE

The modern minds and technology has shown us the true meaning of the statement above. Waste is no more than just discarded material – it is equally valuable and important to a different set of people.

Environmental services company named Veolia recently issued a report stating that the world market of for waste (including collection and recycling), is worth almost US \$410 billion. Shocked?

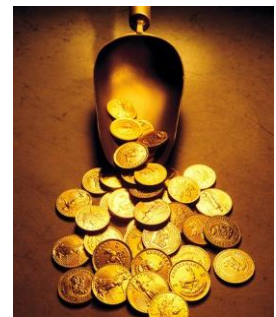
Here's another fact: In the UK, the recycling sector alone generates more than £10 billion in sales, employs 30,000 people and generates £3 billion in GVA (Gross Value Added).



As the facts indicate, waste production has a huge impact on a country's GDP. However, the recycling rates, collection and recovery all vary from country to country. For example, Netherland disposes only 1.7% of waste to landfill, whereas Poland disposes 90% of its waste to the landfill sites. On the other hand, Japan and South Korea have the best recycling rates of 74% and 49% respectively.

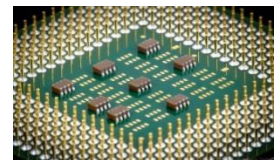
There are many factors that contribute to these rates including legal constraints, ecological awareness, climatic factors and the scale of economic development. Those who do understand these factors have understood how to deal with them to make money, a lot of money.

I've been in the waste management industry for a number of years. Recently, I uploaded a video to my website about recycling of computer parts and this got me thinking about how people/companies are making good money and in some case turning it into gold, all from other people's unwanted items. ([See link](#))



As a responsible society, we have always known that recycling is good for the environment and contributes to a sustainable future. What interests me, is that some of the big waste collection companies are now focusing more on what they can extract out of the materials they collect through their daily operations, and the collection side of the business is secondary.

Precious metals such as gold, platinum, silver, palladium, copper, brass and nickel are all recovered from all kinds of products from a range of industries, mainly in electrical and electronics. Gold is recovered from old computer components and silver is a common material found in the photography industry all having a high re-sale value.



One of the big five waste companies has also managed to find a process that extracts precious metals from the street cleansing litter collected. So although the streets are not quite paved with gold, various reports have suggested that they are dusted with platinum. So as part of the recycling process of street cleansing litter, valuable materials are also extracted.

Fact: the larger waste companies employ actual Scientists who are specifically tasked with understanding the waste and recyclable materials collected and come up with new ideas and solutions to:

- a) Extract better value from them; and
- b) Easier ways of treating them.

Therefore it goes to show that recycling really is beneficial and not only for the environment but for your pocket as well!



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