

APPROVED MEDIA RELEASE

A comprehensive end-to-end waste management program is now an essential part of corporate sustainability

A comprehensive waste management program is an important part of any organisation's overall sustainability goals. Waste that companies produce that has the potential to do some of the greatest environmental harm.

As business and manufactures start to reopen many retain their objectives of "zero waste to landfill". This goal acknowledges that it is not possible to produce no waste at all, but instead requires companies to look intelligently at their waste streams and find ways to deal with their waste to minimise environmental and social harm. In some cases, this waste could create new products or create new income and/or job opportunities.

"Companies need to implement an end-to-end waste management solution that considers waste segregate and collection and all methods of treatment and disposal," says Averda CEO, Malek Sukkar.

One company that has committed to such an end-to-end waste management solution is beverage producer and marketer Distell. The business understands that its long-term sustainability is linked to the environment and the natural resources on which it depends.

"We've been working on and implementing our sustainability strategy for quite some time, and doing a lot of work around reducing resource usage on the one side, and reducing emissions such as waste water or carbon on the other," says Jacques Rossouw, Group Environmental Sustainability Manager at Distell.

An important aspect of this strategy is addressing how waste is handled across multiple facilities. "For a long time, we had one supplier collecting glass, another collecting plastic, and another collecting carton. The problem with that is it makes it difficult to manage waste handling and ensure compliance across all suppliers" added Rossouw.

Distell required the services of a single waste company to standardise processes, ensure compliance and deliver a single method of reporting waste recycling and disposal. The company would implement and on-site manage all the requirements of their system. It would also carry out staff training to ensure compliance, and ultimately, over a three-year period, support Distell in achieving its goal of zero waste to landfill.

"We were also specifically looking for a Level 1 or 2 B-BBEE partner as part of our supplier development program," Rossouw says. Waste management solutions provider Averda was appointed and has rolled-out their solutions at the first six sites, with another four that went live from 1 March, with three remaining after that.

A company like Distell has very complex waste operations with different requirements for disposal. "We will be managing waste from A to Z at 13 sites," says Xanthe Havenga, Manager: Specialised Waste Services at Averda. The process started with a committed partnership, understanding our customer's sustainability and corporate objectives, and developing alternative solutions by research and economic feasibility.

The process starts with assisting and ensuring staff segregate paper, glass, plastic, and metal streams. These are collected and sold to partners to reuse. Depending on the market value,

Distell receives a rebate for the recycled materials which goes towards a direct offset to their waste bill.

A barcoding system helps generate a detailed report on how much of each waste stream is generated, with the goal of reducing the stream over time. The strategic placement of waste bins also helps educating staff on the importance of waste segregation.

Havenga says another aspect of their solution is the disposal of hazardous waste, such as oily rags, filter powders and other chemicals. Averda owns a hazardous landfill site at Vlakfontein, and co-owns another landfill site at Vissershok. Hazardous materials can be treated at both these sites, in a safe manner. Safe disposal certificates are also generated.

Organic waste from the farms is managed separately and sent to a composting facility.

Averda's solution includes Distell's promotional items are removed through a supervised disposal process, with supporting footage and a certificate of safe disposal to protect the reputation of the beverage company, as well as to limit unnecessary waste.

The COVID-19 pandemic has again highlighted the importance of safely disposing of hazardous medical waste. To this end, Averda will assist Distell with medical waste bins that will be incinerated at the waste company's Healthcare Division.

"Over the next three years, we'll be working with them on their sustainability goals. The extent of the project is really fantastic, giving us the opportunity to showcase the breadth of our services, and our commitment to participating in the sustainable management of waste in corporate South Africa" added Averda CEO, Malek Sukkar.