

donate recycle don't throw away



media kit

SECONDARY MATERIALS AND RECYCLED TEXTILES

SMART

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about us

What does “SMART” stand for?

Secondary Materials And Recycled Textiles (SMART) – established in 1932, SMART is a recycling-based, international nonprofit trade association comprised of used clothing, wiping material and fiber industry companies. SMART companies are committed to the “Green” way of life. SMART’s slogan – “*SMART was Green before Green was SMART.*”

What Our Member Companies Do

A near \$1 billion industry, SMART companies acquire both unused & used (pre & post-consumer) textiles for recycling purposes. SMART companies are diverse; however, the two core business models in SMART’s pre and post markets include:

- 1. Pre-Consumer Market** – material acquired prior to consumer use (pre)
 - SMART member businesses purchase excess material (by-product) from textile and fiber companies who would otherwise discard the unused portions (scraps) of material lots after using it for their manufacturing purposes.
 - Once acquired, the material is inventoried and processed. SMART companies then repurpose the excess material for use in consumer products (e.g. wiping cloths, automobile insulation, home furnishings and a variety of other products).
- 2. Post-Consumer Market** – material acquired after consumer use (post)
 - SMART member companies purchase excess textile donations collected from various charities and commercial sources (e.g. Salvation Army, Goodwill, hospitals, hotels, industrial laundries, etc.) The funds received by charitable organizations serve as a critical source of revenue to support their ongoing community-based programs.
 - Once acquired, SMART companies sort and grade the used clothing based on condition. Once sorted, the used clothing is recycled in one of the following manners:
 - 45% is used as apparel which is generally exported to least developed and developing countries where demand for secondhand clothing is particularly high.
 - 30% of the recovered textiles become wiping and polishing cloths used in commercial and industrial settings.
 - 20% is reprocessed into fibers for furniture stuffing, upholstery, insulation, sound proofing, carpet padding, building and other materials.
 - 5% is unusable and not fit for recycling.

SMART Membership

Now representing nearly 200 small and medium-sized companies, SMART companies recycle pre and post-consumer consumer textiles. Most of SMART membership companies are family-owned businesses with fewer than 500 employees. The majority employ between 35 and 50 workers, many of whom are semi-skilled workers. The worldwide industry provides meaningful jobs for more than 20,000 people who locally drive our economies and preserve our environment.

Where We're Located



[Mexico, South America, Central America, Europe and Pacific Rim]

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general fact sheet

SMART's Vision - to reduce solid waste by reclaiming, converting and recycling textiles* and secondary materials**

SMART membership continually trumpet their message to the donating public by encouraging them to "Donate, Recycle, Don't Throw Away."

SMART companies are an economic stimulus through market creation, small business promotion, job creation, charitable funding, recycled product development and the stimulation of affordable clothing markets; the textile recycling industry in the U.S. provides a significant source of employment & revenue.

SMART has an established Code of Conduct whereby its members have agreed to abide by the ethical and moral standards outlined by the Association, thus distinguishing SMART members from other companies in the industry.

The textile recycling industry is comprised of many small businesses, no one company has more than 4% of the market.

Charities like the Salvation Army and Goodwill economically benefit from their ongoing partnership with SMART; SMART provides a critical source of revenue by purchasing unsold charitable donations. According to Goodwill, second hand sales generate more than \$100 million each year to help them support their ongoing programs and operating needs. "Goodwill Industries benefits financially from our ongoing relationships with the textile recycling industry. This industry provides a critical source of revenue by purchasing our unsold charitable donations. The revenue made by selling second hand clothing helps support our ongoing programs and operational needs," a representative from Memorial Goodwill Industries, Boston, MA.

The second hand clothing industry is lauded by many, including Oxfam, an international aid organization. Oxfam points out, it "supports the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people in developing countries who work in trading, distribution, repairing, restyling, washing, etc."

It is estimated that only 15% of textile materials are being diverted from the waste stream for recycling purposes. More can and must be done to recapture these vital resources.

Combined with the charitable industry, SMART's membership companies prevent more than 2.5 billion lbs. of post consumer textile waste from hitting the solid waste stream each year.

International trade is a critical component of the textile industry's success. More than 60% of recovered textile waste is sent abroad to more than 250 countries, equating to more than 1.4 billion lbs. of used clothing – creating hundreds of thousands of jobs worldwide.

The recycling process of SMART companies rely largely on human labor and are far less energy/water/resource-intensive or polluting than other recycle industries.

**Textiles – defined as items that are made from woven and non-woven cloth (such as wool and cotton fibers), vinyl and other artificial fabrics, to include items made from fur or other animal skins.*

***Secondary Materials – a term used to define any material in the recycling process.*



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Can textiles be recycled?

Yes! Textile recycling is the world's oldest form of recycling and is often referred to as the "original" recycling industry. The EPA estimates the average person throws away 10 lbs. of clothing annually. In an effort to reduce the world's carbon footprint, SMART members, in concert with the charitable industry, divert approximately 2.5 billion lbs. of waste that would otherwise fill our landfills each year.

suitable for wiping purposes are processed back into fibers that are then remanufactured into paper, yarn, insulation, carpet padding, sound proofing, etc.

Recycling vs. manufacturing has many "green" benefits, including:

- Carbon Footprint Reduction
- Clean Air Preservation
- Reduced Energy Consumption
- Water Conservation
- Woodland Conservation

Help me understand — do SMART members actually recycle?

Yes! The recycling pyramid is defined as the three R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. SMART members do all three:

- Reduce solid waste through the life extension of textiles while also reducing energy & water consumption through the distribution of reclaimed* wipers (recycled rags) vs. manufactured. The use of reclaimed wipers support a cleaner, healthier environment ;
- Reuse gently worn clothing through wholesaling or exporting to less than developed or developing countries (secondhand clothing as well as household an industrial linens);
- Recycle old garments, towels and institutional linens as they are transformed to wiping cloths needed for industrial use. Additionally, SMART companies participate in fiber conversion – taking used fiber and recycling (converting) it to new textile products for consumer, industrial and consumer use.

Recycling textiles protects the environment from exposure to tons of harsh chemicals, waste products and waste water used in the manufacturing vs. recycling process of clothing. Visit www.smartasn.org for more information regarding how recycling textiles supports a cleaner, greener earth.

How do people get involved in the textile recycling process?

Some communities include clothing and household textiles in their recycling programs; if not, they should request these programs of their local governments. In addition to donation boxes, many charities sponsor neighborhood collection drives and/or have door-to-door pick-up services. Some areas even host community recycling events (e.g. winter coat collections). People are also encouraged to take clothing to consignment and thrift shops for resale. Citizens can locate the textile recycling center nearest them by logging onto www.earth911.com or the SMART Green Advocate page on the SMART website (www.smartasn.org) and searching by category and zip code. SMART has a formal strategic alliance with Earth911 to promote the importance of textile recycling – both organizations support a "call to action" for all citizens to "Donate, Recycle and Don't Throw Away" all used clothing, no matter how small the contribution may be.

Why should people recycle used clothing and household textiles?

Clothing and household textiles currently make-up 4.67% of the waste stream. The used clothing industry provides lower income people around the world with affordable clothing. Clothing that is damaged is recycled into wiping rags. Clothing and textiles not

** Reclaimed – to recover (substances) in a pure or usable form from refuse, discarded articles, etc.*



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Besides individual consumers, can businesses help recycle textiles?

Yes! Businesses are a very important recycling base and should be encouraged to do so. SMART member companies already work with the following industries and are sensitive to their special needs:

- Healthcare facilities
- Hotels and other hospitality facilities
- Textile & paper mills and manufacturers
- Cut and sew plants
- Textile dye facilities
- Retail stores (returned/obsolete merchandise) & commercial laundries
- Select government agencies

Doesn't the used clothing market undermine new clothing businesses in developing countries?

No! According to SMART members, used clothing sales create jobs and affordable apparel in many lesser developed countries. Many people in these countries cannot afford locally made new clothing. Many people in these countries earn their livelihood by selling used clothing. New clothing businesses in developing countries can make more money producing clothing for export to wealthier countries in Europe and North America than selling them locally.

Are reclaimed wipers (recycled rags) the better, "greener" choice?

Yes! Worldwide, there is a big push for companies to promote "green" products. Many people are surprised to learn that reclaimed wipers are actually better for the

environment than laundered shop towels because they decrease our global carbon footprint. A few facts:

- 17 gallons of water and 66 BTUs of energy are used to create one cotton shop towel where no water or energy is used when creating a reclaimed wiper (recycled rag);
- Contaminants found in laundry waste water for cotton shop towels contain lead, toluene, xylene, zinc and other heavy metals. The EPA estimates that five million pounds of untreated contaminants per year flow into our waterways from laundered shop towels;
- Most recycled wiper products are manufactured from recycled textiles that have been diverted from landfills;
- Cotton, used to make shop towels, is the most pesticide-dependent crop in the world. In fact, most cotton shop towels are manufactured outside of North America from virgin cotton fibers;
- When manufacturing cotton towels, dyeing requires a hefty amount of water and its fixatives often flow into rivers and sewers. Using recycled textiles promotes clean water & conservation.

Are reclaimed wipers safer for workers and companies?

Yes! Laundered cotton shop towels routinely contain dangerous levels of lead, cadmium, antimony, solvents and oil; reclaimed wipers require no washing like laundered rags, which expose workers while using excess water and energy to clean. Reclaimed wipers contain no residual solvents, foreign objects or embedded contaminants such as metal shavings which can injure workers and damage equipment.

** Reclaimed – to recover (substances) in a pure or usable form from refuse, discarded articles, etc.*

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SMART leadership

Larry Groipen,
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SMART President Larry Groipen has served on the SMART board for six years. His vision is to change people's perception of recycling by having textiles viewed as a normal part of every household's recycling program. Every week, millions of people recycle glass, paper and metal, but textiles are left out of the mix. As president of SMART, Larry would like to make sure that textiles become part of the overall recycling stream by educating consumers on the importance of textile recycling.

Larry Groipen is sole owner of ERC Wiping Products, Inc., a recycling company for over 90 years. ERC sorts, grades, and processes recycled textiles such as commercial linen, towels, and pre-consumer textiles, and then converts the materials into wiping cloths. ERC has been a member of SMART since 1956.

Lou Buty
SMART Vice President
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Louis Buty is the Vice-President of SMART. He has been an active member of SMART since 1995 and has served on the board of directors for three years.

Lou has been involved in the reclaimed textile industry for more than 30 years. He has been involved in almost every aspect of the industry and has instituted and promoted many programs, products and services. His experience, expertise and commitment to the industry will help promote the goal of making reducing, reclaiming and re-using textiles a mainstream of the recycling movement.

Lou is the president and CEO of American Textile & Supply, Inc. in Richmond, CA, a grader and wiper supplier since 1971. He is also president and CEO of Peerless Materials Company (formerly Peerless Wiping Cloth Co.) in Los Angeles, CA.

Jackie King
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Jackie King serves as SMART's Executive Director and acts as the chief staff liaison to the SMART board of directors. She is responsible for the administration and implementation of SMART board policies and initiatives. Ms. King has worked in association management for nine years, encompassing advancing roles in project and program management, strategic planning and implementation, administrative management, budgeting and financial management, meeting and event management, and communications on behalf of client organizations. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland and the University of Baltimore Law School and a member of the Maryland Bar. She is the primary spokesperson for the association.

Kaymie Thompson Owen, CMP
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Kaymie Thompson Owen, CMP, serves as SMART's Associate Director managing all aspects of SMART's meeting and event planning, promotion of events and on-site logistics. She is the main point of contact for members and implements initiatives set forth by the convention, membership, public relations and website committees. A well-versed association practitioner, Owen has experience in all aspects of event planning and membership management. She has 17 years of experience organizing educational seminars, charity events, trade shows, conferences and meetings within the US as well as internationally. She is a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) and a graduate of Ball State University.

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