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Media contact:
Elisabeth Denil
(305) 632-9364

SHOW DON'T TELL WHEN IT COMES TO REMINDING CONSUMERS TO RECYCLE

New research from the Carton Council reinforces that consumers don't speak the same language as those in the recycling and packaging industries

DENTON, Texas – As recycling stakeholders work to educate and encourage more consumers to recycle this Earth Day and every day, [new research](#) reveals that consumers don't necessarily understand some of the language commonly used. For example, while the term "circular economy" has become mainstream in recent years among those in sustainability and recycling circles, 62% of consumers say they are not familiar with it, according to the new research released by the Carton Council of North America.

While the majority of the respondents were not familiar with the term "circular economy," they did overwhelmingly agree (70%) that knowing what products are created from the materials they recycle inspires them to recycle more.

"The research has revealed that while we can't let up on educating the public to recycle, we also don't need to overthink it," said Carla Fantoni, vice president of communications for the Carton Council. "This tells us to show consumers the tangible benefits of recycling, highlighting why materials should be recycled and what they can be turned into."

The national survey, which polled more than 7,600 consumers, also reinforces the important role product packaging plays as well as community websites. According to the research, the two most influential places for consumers to determine recyclability are the packaging (55%) and their city or community website (46%). Community websites have become increasingly important in the eyes of consumers as only 28% cited them as a top place in previous research conducted in 2017.

Additionally, consumers said if they noticed a product's package did not have a recycling symbol or language indicating it was recyclable, 74% would assume it was not recyclable, reinforcing the need for better recycling information on packages.

"For companies and brands that package products in food and beverage cartons, I encourage them to ensure their packaging is up to date and shows the recycling logo," added Fantoni. "And for everyone involved in communicating about carton recycling, the Carton Council has resources available to help educate including, images and content."

For more information about carton recycling, the general public can visit: [RecycleCartons.com](https://www.RecycleCartons.com). For more information about the research and Carton Council efforts, recycling stakeholders should visit: [CartonOpportunities.org](https://www.CartonOpportunities.org).

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

[Findings from the research](#) are based on a survey of 7,627 interviews conducted by the Logit Group. The survey included a nationally representative sample of Americans who reported access to curbside recycling programs in their area. Recruitment was conducted for those in each state with 30% or greater access to curbside carton recycling. Responses were collected online in December 2020.

ABOUT THE CARTON COUNCIL

The Carton Council is composed of four leading carton manufacturers, Elopak, Evergreen Packaging, SIG Combibloc, and Tetra Pak. Formed in 2009, the Carton Council works to deliver long-term collaborative solutions in order to divert valuable cartons from the landfill. Through a united effort, the Carton Council is committed to building a sustainable infrastructure for carton recycling nationwide and works toward their continual goal of adding access to carton recycling throughout the U.S.