

International Day of Zero Waste



The concept of **zero waste** was first introduced in the 1970s by chemist **Paul Palmer**, a Yale graduate and founder of the **Zero Waste Institute**. He recognized that chemicals discarded by emerging Silicon Valley tech companies were reusable. On 14 December 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution at its seventy-seventh session to proclaim 30 March as International Day of Zero Waste.

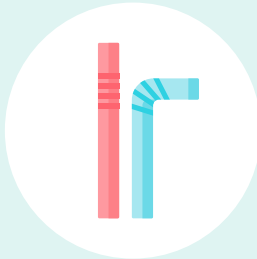
This day, observed annually, promotes sustainable practices and encourages waste reduction initiatives worldwide. Promoting zero-waste initiatives through this international day can help advance all the goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Why is curbing waste essential?

The world generates around 2.5 billion tons of waste annually, and only 16% is recycled. India alone contributes nearly a third of the global waste. Food is the largest component of landfilled waste, about 24%.



A cardboard takes up to 3 months to decompose.



A plastic straw takes up to 200 years to decompose

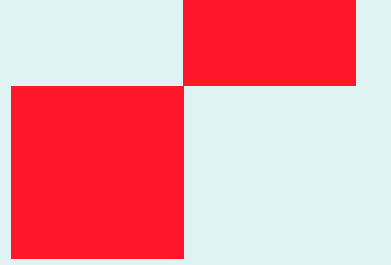


A disposable mask takes up to 450 years to decompose.



A plastic bottle takes up to 450 years to decompose.

Call to Action: How Can Your Organization Contribute?



Make sustainability an organizational priority

- **Promote Leadership-Led Commitment** – Promote leadership advocacy, with executives leading by example (e.g., eliminating single-use plastics in meetings). Employees should see their leaders living the values and actively working towards reducing waste in their daily lives.
- **Align with ESG and Business Impact** – Link zero-waste initiatives to ESG goals and share impact metrics on how zero-waste efforts contribute to cost savings, carbon reduction, and brand reputation. This reinforces that sustainability is a business priority, not just an HR or CSR initiative.
- **Build Sustainability as a Cultural Mindset** – Promote zero-waste work habits—reducing, reusing, and recycling in office spaces and remote setups. Encourage eco-conscious behaviors as part of company values, fostering a culture where employees see sustainability as a shared responsibility.

Involve employees in the journey. Educate → Ideate → Involve → Encourage

- **Educate Employees On Waste Reduction** – Not every person will know how to recycle and reduce waste correctly. Taking the time to properly educate on zero-waste initiatives and programs will make the overall effort more effective.
- **Ideate On Improving Organizational Sustainability** – Brainstorming together leads to lasting zero-waste solutions. Ask employees how they think sustainability practices can be integrated—you may be surprised by their creative ideas.
- **Involve Employees And Find Your Champions** – Some employees are passionate about recycling and hate seeing waste misplaced. Identify them and empower them! Organize a recycling party, offer free pizza or morning tea, and let them lead by educating colleagues and monitoring your recycling system.
- **Encourage Through Regular Communications** – Sometimes our efforts only last as long as our memory – solve this with a weekly ‘zero-waste tips’ email or a flier posted to your news bulletin.

A sustainability-focused mindset improved organization culture

Our research found that employees who feel good about the ways their organization contributes to society are:



2.9x

more likely to quickly adapt to changes needed for the organization's success



3.4x

more likely to want to work at their current organization for a long time



3.7x

more likely to believe their organization is a great place to work



3.8x

more likely to endorse their workplace to friends and family

Best practices from Great organizations championing Zero Waste

Standard Chartered GBS India Private Limited India Volunteering Opportunities

The organization prioritizes sustainability through its Stop Plastic Campaign, a significant initiative to reduce environmental impact. It has saved 19 million sheets of paper, equivalent to 2,500 trees, and achieved INR 20 million in cost savings through paper-saving initiatives. In collaboration with the Seva Sahayog Foundation, employees and their families have produced 10,000 recycled paper bags, reinforcing the organization's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Uflex Limited Project Plastic Fix

UFlex has introduced a biodegradable and recyclable packaging solution that converts uncollected plastic and laminate waste into biomass upon degradation. As the world moves toward sustainability, innovative bio-based and biodegradable materials are expected to play a crucial role in the future of flexible packaging. UFlex's global sustainability initiative, Project Plastic Fix, is designed to develop circular economy solutions that keep plastic within the economy and out of the environment.

