

FACSIMILE

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To:	Doug Bentall	Date:	09/10/2009
Company:	Iona Communications	From:	Precise
Subject:	RWM 09 Exhibition	Fax:	+448082800390
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We need to recycle on site

HAVING worked on putting into place effective waste management systems in the middle of the Sahara Desert, once again I am left in despair at some of the poor examples set by the UK.

I did the Great North Run this year, and was amazed at the amount of rubbish that was left for South Tyneside Council to collect.

I also attended this years Recycling and Waste Management Exhibition at Birmingham NEC to promote zero waste, and advise on how to achieve it.

I came back from the run tired and sore, and I came back from the RWM somewhat frustrated. I must have spoken to 50 groups of people about the possibilities of zero waste using processing at source, and while everyone thought the idea was great, when it came to suggesting a trial, I got the Gallic shrug.

Everyone agreed that the system of collecting recyclable materials and then transporting them around together with what is essentially a lot of air, is a flawed concept. Clearly it makes more sense to condense waste down before you transport it.

The mobile materials recycling facility (MRF) I have been using in the desert is a fully functional unit in a shipping container.

Put it down, open the doors, start the generator and process waste - simple.

Back to the Great North Run - had there been a mobile MRF at 5km intervals, or near water stations, bottles could be baled

up on site, with lots of cubs and scouts collecting the bottles to squash - at least 150,000 of them!

Use the same MRF system at a supermarket, university, factory or outdoor event, and suddenly you are making huge savings. Imagine not having big vehicles collecting waste and charging you or your company, but having a vehicle collecting ready-processed waste and paying you for it.

Coupled that with a food dehydration system attached to any kitchen waste outlet, and, bingo, you are approaching that desirable goal of zero waste to landfill.

What I like about the mobile MRF system is that no building is needed, and no foundations, and when it is needed elsewhere, you simply pick it up and move it.

A financial survey into the efficacy of the mobile MRF system showed it compared favourably to moving air around the country - with six noughts on the savings figure.

Why then are we still collecting huge volumes of waste and moving them miles away to condense them for recycling?

Probably because we are not a nation happy to take the obvious solution if it means making changes - and we love complaining about, among other things, plans to reduce the frequency of refuse collections.

*Andy Ivo,
 Burton-in-Lonsdale,
 Lancashire.*