

Carrier Bag Case Studies

1.0 ASDA Carrier Bag Case Study

2008

In June 2008, ASDA is believed to have led the way in the UK with the removal of all single-use carrier bags from view at their checkouts. This gave more control to their operators to encourage customers to choose a 'Bag for Life'.

Customer research and feedback led ASDA to revamp their range of reusable bags to give customers more choice, making sustainability affordable for everyone. They introduced a 5p 'Bag for Life' and added two new jute bags and two non-woven bags to the range. These initiatives have resulted in over 1200% increase in the sale of reusable bags.

New in-store promotional materials gave extra prominence to the new range and their slogan of 'Saving the Planet One Bag at a Time' was widely used throughout the store and on car park banners.

ASDA FM and the stores' magazine did regular features on bag re-use to reach their customers and staff were fully briefed and motivated through internal promotional channels (TV, magazines, bulletin briefings, table talkers and incentive schemes).

During the retailers' busiest time over Christmas, ASDA launched a colleague incentive scheme which rewarded the top stores for the highest and most improved bag reductions. This resulted in the biggest monthly reduction percentage in 2008, not to mention a significant rise in sales of reusable bags.

In addition to reducing bag usage, ASDA has limited the environmental impact of bags themselves by decreasing their size and increasing their recycled content. As well as reducing the thickness of bags, they have also removed the colour to make them stronger. In-store recycling schemes ensure that the plastic is re-used - in 2008 alone over 250 tonnes of carrier bags were collected.

In the second half of 2008, ASDA reduced its carrier bag usage by over half a billion bags.

Early 2009

ASDA is continuing to build on their campaign and has set challenging bag reduction targets with their store managers, along with further colleague incentives.

New in-store materials are in place with the slogans 'ASDA, Saving You Money Everyday' and 'Don't forget to reuse your bags!' The promotional package includes new highly visible trolley bay displays to remind customers to take their bags into store from the boot of their cars. Key elements are branded with 'Act on CO2' or 'Waste Aware Scotland' logos, showing that ASDA is partnering with government departments to encourage customers to become more sustainable.

A new in-store display unit is being launched on all of their main bank checkouts through January and February 2009 to encourage further sales of the reusable bag range.

All of this activity is again supported by ASDA FM and through regular features in their magazine.



“When it comes to carrier bags we are trying to change the habit of a lifetime, but not at our customers’ expense. Instead of penalising shoppers at a time when they are already feeling the pinch, we want to incentivise customers who choose a re-usable bag. We have also achieved our first carrier bag free store in London. Here we trialed the total removal of free issue carrier bags and colleagues have run a ‘bag for life’ giveaway, coupled with encouraging customers to remember their reusable bags on every visit. This has been so successful that it is being extended to other outlets now.”

Paul Hedley, Corporate Policy Manager for Sustainability & Ethics, ASDA Stores Ltd.

2.0 Somerfield Carrier Bag Case Study

Since 2006, Somerfield has promoted the use of 'Bags for Life' by exchanging five disposable bags, which are ready to be recycled, for a free 'Bag for Life'. The new bag can then be replaced free of charge throughout its life.

Somerfield has also introduced a smaller bag in all of its 800 stores that can be used for last minute and top-up shopping trips. This uses 40% less material than normal sized bags.

Finally, they have introduced a Charity Tote Shopper for Macmillan Cancer Support. This is an alternative to 'single-use' bags and has raised a staggering £200,000.

Helping the environment
is our bag

Buy a reusable
bag today

ONLY
£1

"Somerfield has cut carrier bag use by 44% since 2006; resulting in a total of 355 million less bags being used. Engaging all key business owners and our Customers has driven these fantastic results. This collective team has driven the reduction of single use carrier bags without any negative impact to our customers. Our stores have been instrumental in implementing change and increasing awareness and knowledge."

Richard Beale, CSR and Procurement Director, Somerfield.