

# INFOSHEET

Green Business is **Good Business**

# GREENERFUTURES

**For more information contact:**

Conservation Corps  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
267 Duckworth Street,  
St. John's, NL  
A1C 1G9

Phone: 709-729-7267

Fax: 709-729-7270

Email:

[contactus@conservationcorps.nf.ca](mailto:contactus@conservationcorps.nf.ca)

Website: [conservationcorps.nf.ca](http://conservationcorps.nf.ca)

## *Our Green Heritage*

Our heritage is one of conservation of resources. In their homes and their businesses, our ancestors achieved success only because they learned to make the most of scarce commodities.

### *Our Zero Waste Policy*

No piece of fabric was too small to be reused and every part of the fish caught was put to good use. Whenever trees were cut to clear land or to build a boat or house, no waste was allowed. Branches and bark were burned, small sticks became picket fences and longer tree trunks were used in wharves and rail fences.

### *Business as Our Parents Knew It*

Fifty years ago, businesses in Newfoundland were heavily into recycling. Children traded the week's collection of brown paper bags for candy. Packaging crates were turned into store displays and, in some cases, into furniture. Excess cardboard was used on the floors and when it was dirty, it joined broken packaging crates as part of the fuel to heat the business. Few items came prepackaged and were cut, weighed or measured and sold according to the customer's needs. Small boat fishermen wasted nothing. Anything that couldn't be used for food became bait or was used in the gardens for fertilizer. With the advent of small community based fish plants, some of this tradition continued as students and others would go and collect plant waste, such as cod's heads, and prepare them for door to door sales. This tradition also included bartering and informal partnerships as the storeowner traded canned foodstuffs and other items for local vegetables, fish or labour.

### *Continuing the Tradition*

Though business today has changed a great deal, continuation of these traditional behaviours can still be used to make our businesses more cost effective. If you are running a small business, recycling old corrugated cardboard into shipping materials is fairly easy to do. If you deliver goods locally, invest in reusable packages that can be picked up when you make the next delivery. Customers can be given a bonus item or a discount if they bring their own packaging. Think about cloth bags bearing your company logo as you benefit from both free advertising and reduced packaging costs. Develop a sense of community among your customers by meeting their needs for something other than the product you are selling. Today, the big chain stores are using this principle when they offer free classes and access to community rooms. Though their customer base is dispersed, they bring them together for a class or special event, the customers get to know each other and a trip back to the store becomes more than a trip for supplies. It's the unwritten advertising policy of the old community store -- come in, gather around the stove, have a yarn and on the way you'll buy something. Eventually, you will come back for the conversation and the opportunity to meet your friends.