

# "Did You Bring Your Bag Today?"



At J.Philip Group, we will bring forward new trends, products, or innovations that will be industry changing in their nature. I was introduced to Kristen Brown, and decided we would feature her innovative new concept in this quarter's edition of "Focus on Profit".

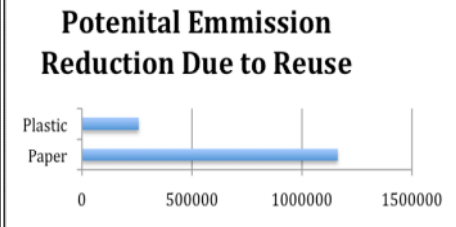
For decades, we've unloaded our groceries onto the check-out conveyor at the grocery store and listened to cashiers and baggers ask one of the most frequently asked questions in America: "Plastic or Paper?"

But, instead... what if they said – **'Hello, DID YOU BRING YOUR BAG TODAY?'**

Perhaps this simple shift in the question, might make us all wonder: Why didn't I just bring my own bag?

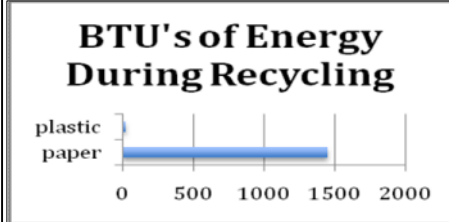
Changing consumer behavior is difficult but not new to Kristen Brown, daughter of Gordon Dancy, the man who introduced the plastic grocery bag to America 30 years ago. In 1978, Brown trained the first grocery store to ever use plastic bags in her hometown Middletown Ohio. Ms. Brown, managing partner for Green Waste Solutions, is currently an environmental consultant for the USEPA whose specialty is residential waste reduction for big cities.

"The only long term sustainable option is reuse. There are negatives to both plastic and paper bags.



Experts from the American Chemistry Council and the Paper industry can spin the environmental facts to make both options sound wonderful. The reality is Americans are wasteful and single use bags (plastic or paper) are the epitome of conspicuous consumerism," says Brown.

Recycling appears 3rd on the EPA hierarchy (Reduce Reuse Recycle) because recycling itself uses energy.



If reuse is the answer to the 'ultimate' bag question, than how do we increase participation?

According to Brown, "Reuse, like recycling, is a positive externality. Consumers want to get a reward for their actions. **The reward is functionality.** The bag has to work for the consumer. It has to make the reuse experience easier than the disposable options. The more functional the better."

**Green Waste Solutions** has developed *My Eco Bag System* and made functionality for the family shopper the top priority. *My Eco Bag System* (as pictured) is a convenient four shopping bags in one storage tote system.



And like a puzzle, they fit perfectly together into a shopping cart for loading groceries at checkout.

Reusing *My Eco Bag System* each week verses paper or plastic is the perfect balance between consumer convenience and protecting our environmental ecosystem.



Easy to load in the car as well!

There are traditionally three **S's** that define sustainability:

1. **S**aving money (billions for the supermarket industry);
2. **S**aving resources (for our children); and
3. **S**aving time (for consumers and front end employees).

Now it is up to the supermarkets themselves to take a proactive approach and promote behavior change. After all, they have the most to gain with the reduction of millions of dollars from front end supply costs.

Wouldn't this be worth asking the question 'Did You Bring Your Bag Today?'

Decades ago, a determined retail industry motivated by supply cost savings cleverly persuaded shoppers to try those flimsy plastic bags. And the front line leaders in the attack against paper bags were the cashiers and baggers themselves.

The invention of a convenient, user-friendly plastic sack along with the simple question, "Plastic or Paper", revolutionized the grocery bag industry and, most importantly, changed behavior. Like her father Brown invented *My Eco Bag System* as the next, best product evolution - Reuse. The strategy to change behavior is the same.... Asking the simple question,

**"Did you bring your bag today?"**

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