

# Winpak – Embracing the Circular Economy to Supply Sustainable Packaging Solutions

Winpak is a made-in-Manitoba packaging company, starting with a single manufacturing facility in 1977 and growing to twelve facilities and 1,000 employees in the Winnipeg plant and more across North America. The company’s vision and mission are to provide the best packaging solutions for people and planet, designing, manufacturing, and supplying the most sustainable packaging solutions that reduce food waste, extend freshness, and promote health.



In a 2023 virtual forum on climate action co-hosted by the Manitoba Environmental Industries Association and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Winpak’s Environment and Health & Safety Manager, Alex Rowntree, shared the company’s approach for taking climate action. He described their sustainable business approach as creating products, processes and services that deliver net positive economic, social and environmental benefits while growing profitably and responsibly.



“Sustainable practices are part of strategic planning and daily work processes at Winpak”, describes Rowntree. “We try to come up with different thought patterns for dealing with products right from the beginning phases and are constantly adapting to consumer demands and government regulation, such as the federal ban on single-use plastics”.

Winpak has embraced the principles of sustainable materials management and circular economy in its home game (facilities and operations) as well as its away game (products and services). Regarding its home game, Winpak has in place a corporate goal to achieve zero landfill waste by 2025 and currently, 40% of its electricity use comes from renewable sources.

The company has also increased the energy efficiency of its operational home game. For example, their production facility in Winnipeg is heated by its machinery, significantly reducing their energy consumption. When asked how they got to this point, Rowntree highlighted that they benefited from the

## Case Study

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Manitoba Hydro Assessment Program in the early stages to better understand where energy savings could be achieved. “Importantly, we have our own engineering department which has a corporate mandate to reduce energy consumption by 3-5% per year, driving progress toward energy efficiency”. In its away game, Winpak’s product approach is to design and supply innovative packaging that is recyclable, contains recycled content, or is compostable. For example, 40% of Winpak’s rigid packaging is recyclable/recycle-ready and 40% of its converter films are recycle-ready. Rowntree also emphasized that Winpak’s packaging is designed to extend shelf life and reduce food waste, a point he is particularly proud of given that food waste is such an acute social and environmental issue, both locally and globally.

“We’ve had a corporate commitment here on the circular economy specifically for about five years now and we also have facilities south of the border where we learn of various circularity approaches”, describes Rowntree of their climate action and ongoing corporate sustainability journey.

For more information about Winpak and its circular economy practices, visit <https://www.winpak.com/sustainability>.