

Pick n Pay trials recycling vending machines in V&A Waterfront

Pick n Pay has introduced two reverse vending machines into the vicinity of its V&A Waterfront store, into which visitors can throw their discarded waste for recycling. The trial project is set to run from 1 November 2018 to 28 February 2019.



Suzanne Ackerman-Berman and Andre Nel from Pick n Pay demonstrate how the reverse vending machine works.

The machines will accept all recyclable waste products that carry a barcode, such as plastic bottles, cans, coffee cup lids, tetra packs, fruit juice containers and glass bottles.

The machines have been positioned on the ground level of the Victoria and Alfred Wharf Shopping Centre at the Pick n Pay and Breakwater lobby areas. Each machine will have a smaller waste bin next to it for non-barcode waste.

How the machines work

To use the reverse recycling machines, consumers will simply need to follow the prompts displayed on the machine.

The machines have been programmed to accept commonly used products that can be recycled in South Africa, and recognise these products by their barcodes.

Should the machine not recognise a barcode, it will be returned. Consumers are asked to then discard the product in the waste bin positioned next to each machine. Every day, the barcodes of products in the waste bin will be sent to Imagined Earth where they will be researched. Should the packaging of that product be found to be recyclable, the machines will be programmed to accept the new barcode in the future. The consumer who tried to recycle the product will be notified of this fact via SMS.

Depending on the size of the packaging waste deposited, each machine has a capacity to carry between 650 and 750 units. That equates to roughly 1,000 200ml soft drinks cans or 350 to 400 2L bottles. The reverse vending machine monitors the holding capacity and notifies the collection team when it needs to be emptied, ensuring the operation runs smoothly and efficiently. The packaging waste is then sorted offsite for the different recycling processes.

At the end of the three month trial period, the barcoded data collected by the machines will be used to analyse the volume and type of waste that is being discarded.



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8 Jun 2018



Incentives for consumers

Shoppers who have recycled their trash more than three times in a month (with a maximum of one visit per day), will automatically be entered into a draw and stand the chance to win a Pick n Pay reusable RPET bag. Fifty bags will be given away each month.

Users identify themselves by entering their cell phone details at the time they deposit their waste product into the recycling machine. Their number will also be entered into lucky draws for other prizes. Users will need to be registered in order to claim these prizes.

Recyclers also stand a chance of winning a R200 voucher every week, redeemable at the Pick n Pay Waterfront store. Winners will receive an SMS notification and simply need to show this to the store manager. At the end of the trial project, all recyclers who have deposited waste six or more times will be entered into a final lucky draw for a R5,000 grand prize.

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