

Revealing research

Beverage Container Return Study 2010

Ipsos Reid

Heavy Discarders (HD)

BC population 10%
Containers Emptied 19%
Containers Discarded 87%

Those who typically discard at least
2 containers/week (any type, any location).

Where and How Much

First, these are the heaviest generators of empty containers (their households account for 19% of all containers generated; they create, on average, more than double the number of containers a non-discarder does).

Second, they discard the largest proportion of containers they empty (19% of all their containers are discarded compared to 4% for BC consumers in general). They account for an incredible 87% of all containers discarded in BC. On average, an HD household discards about 11 containers/week, which adds up to more than 46 per month and more than 550 per year.

HD discard containers more often in all locations; HD discarded containers are split almost equally between all three locations (30% at home, 31% at work and 39% at leisure). Because of heavy consumption there, they strongly over-index on discards at work (94% of all containers discarded at work in BC are by HD compared to 87% of those discarded at home and 83% of those discarded at leisure).

Who They Are

More male (65%). Urban (25% City of Vancouver vs. 14% general population) and therefore more in multi-family dwellings (48% vs. 37% general population). Younger (56% 18-34 compared to just 28% of the general population), they are naturally more likely to be employed outside of the home (70% vs. 54%) or students (8% vs. 4%) and very predominantly single (46% vs. 23%).

How to Target

Make it easy for them.
Appeal to their selfish side.

Moderate Discarders (MD)

BC population 14%
Containers Emptied 17%
Containers Discarded 11%

Definition: Those who typically discard between 0.4 and 2 containers/ week (any type, any location).

Where and How Much

Above-average generators of empty containers (their households account for 17% of all containers generated; they create, on average, about one and a half times the number of containers a non-discarder does). Still they produce far fewer (each household produces about 1/3 less empty containers) than HD do.

They are also above-average discarders, but again, on a far smaller scale than HD (they discard less than 3% of their containers and account for just 17% of all containers discarded in BC). On average, an MD household discards about 1 container/week, which adds up to about 4 per month and close to 50 per year.

Leisure is where MD do most of their damage, with work secondary (33% at home, just 15% at work but fully half, 52% at leisure). Still, because HD are responsible for so much of the discard, MD account for only 14% of total containers discarded at leisure, 12% at home and just 6% at work.

Who They Are

More balanced in gender than HD, more MD are still male (60%). These are largely suburbanites (45% Metro Vancouver outside of Vancouver vs. 36% general population) and therefore over-index on being in single-family dwellings (57%). They are more often young families; not as young as HD, they are nonetheless younger than low or non-discarders. Nearly all (79%) are under 54 years of age (vs. 65% of the general population). Most are married (60%) and are strongly families with children (36% vs. 24%).

How to Target

Make it fast for them.
Provide the means to recycle while at leisure.



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Low Discarders (LD)

BC population 11%
Containers Emptied 11%
Containers Discarded 2%

Definition: Those who typically discard between 0.1 and 0.3 containers/ week (any type, any location).

Where and How Much

More like an average British Columbian in the number of empty containers they produce, they over-index only slightly relative to those who discard nothing (their households account for 11% of all containers generated, they create on average, about 15% more containers than a non-discarder).

Discards are very, very occasional (they discard less than 1% of their containers and account for just 2% of all containers discarded in BC). On average, an LD household discards fewer than 1 container/month, which adds up to less than 10 per year.

At leisure is really the only place where LD need to mend their ways (68% of all containers discarded by LD are at leisure, just 20% at home and 12% at work).

Who They Are

They are roughly like the average British Columbian on all demographics: where they live (equally urban and rural), gender, age, life stage, employment, dwelling status and marital status. This means that many LD are middle aged or older empty nesters (71% are 35 or older, 34% 55 or older); many are post-family (44% households are composed of older adults only), married couples (65%), who are retired (22%), or still working (56%).

How to Target

Prove it matters.
Provide the means and motivation at leisure.

