



## Can-Do Approach to Recycling

### Overview

Alcoa is the world's leading producer of aluminum. In addition to inventing the modern-day aluminum industry, Alcoa innovation has been behind major milestones in the aerospace, automotive, packaging, building and construction, commercial transportation, consumer electronics, and industrial markets over the past 120 years. Sustainability is an integral part of Alcoa's operating practices and the product design and engineering it provides to customers.

### Social Responsibility Challenge

Recycling aluminum is a key to Alcoa's business success. "We must have a consistent supply of materials at a reasonable price in order to keep manufacturing our products," says Kevin Anton, Alcoa's chief sustainability officer. "In addition, we want to keep unnecessary waste out of landfills to help the environment."

In the United States, recycling once was as high as 66 percent, but by 2008 it had slipped to 52 percent. The rewards to more recycling are great: If every American recycled just one more can per week, some 17 billion cans would be saved from landfills each year. The challenge is to change consumer behavior.

### Solutions

Alcoa has an aggressive goal to raise the recycling rate of used beverage containers in North America to 75 percent by 2015. To do that, Alcoa and the Alcoa Foundation provide significant financial support to the activities of leading national groups such as the Pew Center and Keep America Beautiful. In addition, the company has invested \$24 million to expand its recycling capacity nearly 50 percent and increased recycling promotion using a variety of tactics, including social media and humor to educate the public on recycling's environmental advantages and economic benefits.

- A recycling website provides facts and tips for recycling at home, work, and play.
- An iPhone app called Aluminate gives users all the tools they need to keep track of the number of aluminum cans they've recycled and tells how much money the user may earn by taking them to the nearest recycling center.
- A humorous video, An InCANvenient Truth, went to the top of YouTube's "Most Popular Videos" list as Carl the Can Man spread the recycling message.
- Three festive Sustainable EverGREEN trees made from more than 1,800 cans caught the eyes of travelers during the holidays at Tennessee's McGhee-Tyson Airport.



### Measurement/Results

The results are encouraging. So far:

- Overall recycling rates for aluminum in 2009 increased to 57.4 percent.
- An InCANvenient Truth was viewed 100,000 times in the first 36 hours of release, reaching YouTube's home page as no. 1 in the nonprofit category and no. 48 overall.

### Other SR Involvement

Alcoa has been honored around the world for its sustainability and is listed on several socially responsible indexes.



**Organization:** Alcoa  
**Location:**  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
**Website:** [www.alcoa.com](http://www.alcoa.com)  
**Founded:** 1888  
**Employees:** 59,000

*Photos: Through smart resource investments, Alcoa hopes to increase the recycling rate of used beverage containers in North America by 75 percent by 2015. (Alcoa image — used with permission.)*