



MODA CENTER, PORTLAND

REUSE CASE STUDY

Overview

Rip City Reuse is the reusable cup program at the Moda Center, the first arena-wide program to launch in the US in 2023, thanks to the efforts of the Portland Trail Blazers NBA team, Levy Restaurants, and Bold Reuse. The 20,500 seat arena hosts an average of twenty events per month, including NBA games, concerts and other events.

In late 2023, the Moda Center worked with Bold Reuse to introduce reusable cups for all poured alcohol in the arena, and in the first 12 months, over half a million single-use cups were avoided.

Regular evaluation, including customer surveys and waste audits showed the cups are popular, and the return rate steadily improved. In late 2024, soft drink cups were added, so that now 95% of non-packaged beverages served in the arena are in reusables. Since the program began in late 2023, Rip City Reuse has avoided over 800,000 single-use cups.

About the cups

Rip City Reuse - Moda Center	
Venue	20,500 seat arena
Reuse Service	Bold Reuse
Return rate	80% as of January 2025 *90% for alcohol cups
Prevented single-use cups	534,882 single-use alcohol cups avoided in 2024 +300,000 single-use cups avoided Nov 2024 - Mar 2025
Avoided waste	12,250 kg waste in 2024
Savings	Reduced waste fees estimated at \$2800 CAD for 2024

Moda bought custom polypropylene cups in five sizes for poured alcohol drinks in fall 2023, and a year later, reusable cups for soft drinks were added. Sponsorships offset some of the cost of purchasing the cups. The arena's alcohol cups feature a 'Rip City Reuse' logo, and this may have contributed to higher initial losses, as the cups may have been confused as souvenirs by fans.

Moda chose not to use deposits to avoid any additional friction that could slow operations; when fans are done, cups are dropped in multi-compartment bins (pre-existing bins that were simply rebranded for reusables). Bold Reuse washes and inspects the cups at their nearby wash hub, and Bold's technology tracks inventory and return rates.



Key learnings

1. Return rates increased steadily with time as fans got accustomed to the program.

Initially, return rates were near 70%, but waste audits found less than 10% of cups in garbage and recycling: the rest of the lost cups were going home with fans as souvenirs. Return rates at regular events, such as home games of the Trail Blazers, have increased steadily, reaching 90% for some cup types, as the souvenir effect wore off and fans got used to the program. One-off events such as concerts, and new audiences see lower return rates. When reusable cups were added for soft drinks in fall 2024, the overall return rate decreased to an average of 80% as a new group of fans gets used to the cups, but this is also expected to increase with time.

2. Full buy-in and collaboration between partners has been a big factor for success.

Moda and Bold Reuse note that engaging everyone from management to catering partner, cleaning staff and others created the right conditions for rapid expansion and success.

3. Ongoing evaluation has lead to steady improvement.

Introducing the cups in stages allowed for learning before expansion. Moda and Bold evaluated and tracked the impact of the program, including waste audits, return rates, and customer surveys to gather feedback.

4. Promotion and communications using multiple channels helps.

Pre-event emails, notices on the Jumbotron, instructions printed on cups and clear signs around the arena give many opportunities to inform fans about the program. Reusable cup milestones are celebrated with fans to thank them for their participation and build a sense of ownership for the program.

5. Moda Center staff conduct a post-event hand-sorting of all waste and recycling bags.

This helps recover more recyclable materials and retrieves valuable reusable cups. The small increase in staff time for this sort is considered worthwhile as it reduces overall waste costs for garbage or contamination, and reduces cup replacement costs.

6. The Rip City Reuse program aligns with the sustainability values of Moda Center and fans.

The reusable cups align with the organizational values of the Moda Center, and the ability to track the environmental impact supports the longer term goals. Customer surveys show that 93% of fans are satisfied with the quality of the cup and 91% said the Rip City Reuse program is important to their experience at the arena.



Sources:

- Portland Trail Blazers - [Rip City Reuse website](#)
- [Green Sports Alliance - Reuse Playbook](#), 2024. p45-46.
- Interview with Brittany Saulsbury, Sustainability Operations Manager, Portland Trail Blazers
- Interview and email with Bold Reuse co-founders: Heather Watkins-Smith, CRO and Jocelyn Quarrell, CEO
- Photos courtesy of Bold Reuse