



# 3

## PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS AND STRATEGIES

Insights from our current research on BC residents' recycling attitudes and behaviours.

Unaccounted-for beverage container study.

Review of advertising and marketing activities conducted to increase recovery rates.

Overview of community-based programs and initiatives to encourage additional beverage container recycling.

Customer relations and brand registry update.



















# 3.1 RESEARCH AND SEGMENTATION

Since 1999, Encorp Pacific has undertaken market research on an annual basis to evaluate program knowledge, assess consumer behaviour and measure levels of brand awareness for Encorp and Return-It across the province.

Research results are used to track changes over time as well as to provide information that is required by the provincial government. One of the most critical pieces of understanding is to determine how to further reduce the level of throw-away behaviour (approximately 23% of beverage containers are known to not be recycled in BC).









An online survey was undertaken in September 2022 among adults 18+ in BC. This year’s survey specially sampled at least 200 individuals per group to allow for the analysis of results among some specific subsamples of interest, including those with a mobility disability, Indigenous British Columbians, and those who speak languages other than English.

When asked about whether the various types of beverage containers can be returned for the deposit refund in BC, results showed that awareness has either stayed the same or increased. There is an overall 99% level of awareness for all container types. When respondents were asked if they were aware of Encorp Pacific (Canada)/Return-It, levels remained consistent with those of past years.




	2022 (n=1,252)	2021 (n=1,221)	2020 (n=1,261)	2019 (n=1,186)
<b>Any Type (NET)</b>	 100% ↑	99%	99%	99%
<b>Non-Alcohol (NET)</b>	 99% ↑	97%	97%	97%
Aluminum cans 	 99% ↑	97%	97%	97%
Plastic bottles 	 93% ↑	88%	91%	91%
Glass bottles 	 90% ↑	86%	88%	87%
Drink boxes 	 78% ↑	64%	72%	73%
Cartons 	 74% ↑	54%	63%	68%
Bi-metal cans 	 71% ↑	68%	71%	74%
Bag-in-a-box 	 46% ↑	40%	40%	43%
Drink Pouches 	 44% ↑	33%	39%	N/A

## 3.1 RESEARCH AND SEGMENTATION



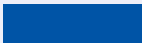


Every year, we ask those surveyed what is their preferred method to recycle their drink containers for deposit refund. This information allows us to study changes in recycling behaviour over time by comparing data across years.

		2022 (n=1,252)	2021 (n=1,221)	2020 (n=1,261)	2019 (n=1,186)
Return-It/ Bottle Depot		 81%	80%	72%	79%
Retailer (Net)		 20%	24%	27%	32%
Grocery Store		 15%	15%	19%	22%
Liquor Store		 13%	18%	19%	20%

As we continue with the expansion of the Return-It Express system across the province, it is important for us to measure awareness level of Return-It Express in regions where it is available, and understand how Return-It Express has impacted consumers' behaviour and whether consumers were satisfied with the service. When respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the Express service, 93% rated the service as excellent/good.

		2022 (n=868)	2021 (n=850)	2020 (n=875)	2019 (n=804)
Express awareness		 60%	72%	68%	44%
Express use		 23%	24%	14%	6%

Express customers state that since they began using Return-It Express, they are:

		2022 (n=868)	2021 (n=850)	2020 (n=875)	2019 (n=804)
Taking more containers to bottle depots		 43%	37%	32%	N/A
Visiting bottle depots more frequently		 38%	25%	19%	N/A
Putting fewer containers in the curbside blue box/ building recycling facility		 30%	21%	13%	N/A
Throwing fewer containers in garbage		 25%	21%	15%	N/A

## 3.1 RESEARCH AND SEGMENTATION

The segmentation analysis was updated in 2022 based on this year's research results, including behavioural variables as well as attitudinal ones.

Five segments were identified: Regular Returners, Depot Fans, Convenience Trashers, On-the-Go Discarders and Uninformed Urbans.

Each segment was analyzed through the following criteria:

**Segment sizing:** comparing percentage of people in the segment, containers produced and containers thrown away.

**Key demographics:** age, gender, lifestyle, occupation and income along with other demographics.

**Depot use:** motivations/barriers for visiting a depot, and visit frequency.

**Express:** awareness of the service, current use and future use potential.

**Why they discard:** reasons why this portion of the public does not recycle their beverage containers.

Based on this segmentation approach from 2020, the five population segments continued to change in 2022 compared to previous years. Some notable finds:

- Although the percentage of On-the-Go Discarders has shrunk (15% to 14% of people), this segment continues to be responsible for a large proportion of discarded beverage containers in the province
- Convenience Trashers continue to represent the largest portion of containers discarded as a group (65%), but this number has declined in comparison to 2021, when this group discarded 71% of their containers

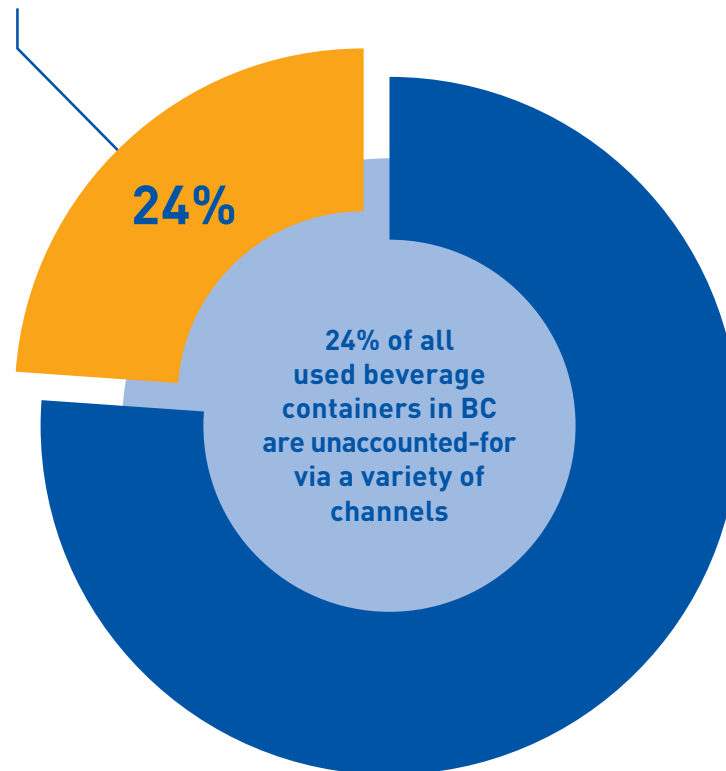


	Regular Returners	Depot Fans	Convenience Trashers	On-the-Go Discarders	Uninformed Urbans
<b>Segment sizing</b>	47% people 19% containers produced 2% containers discarded	20% people 43% containers produced 4% containers discarded	8% people 18% containers produced 65% containers discarded	14% people 17% containers produced 16% containers discarded	11% people 3% containers produced 12% containers discarded
<b>Key demographics</b>	Average age 53 57% female	Average age 50 56% male	40% are ages 18–34 (average age 43) 60% male	Ages 25–44 (average age 45) Almost equally male and female (52% female)	Both young and old Equally male and female
<b>Depot use</b>	Just below average use Curbside/building recycling seen as a good alternative to depots	Depots are preferred, frequently used	Above-average use of depots, but lack of consistency in returning containers	Average use Average motivations for using depots	Below-average use of depots, no real change to motivations for use – only use depots when convenient
<b>Express</b>	Below-average awareness, current use and future interest	Highest awareness among all segments (67%), average current use and future interest	Above-average awareness and interest in future use, stagnated current use	Average awareness and current use, above-average future interest	Below-average awareness and current use, but strong future interest
<b>Why they discard</b>	Rarely discard Confusion on what is returnable	Rarely discard Confusion on what is returnable	Hassle and inconvenience are key reasons	Can't find a place to return it while they are "on the go"	Lack of interest in the return system

## 3.2 UNACCOUNTED-FOR BEVERAGE CONTAINER STUDY

Encorp committed to conducting a one-time study on unaccounted-for beverage containers to gain a better understanding of where these containers are ending up. The analysis within the study provides valuable insight into the pathways taken by unaccounted-for beverage containers, which causes them to fall outside Encorp's extensive collection network infrastructure.

- Loss to the environment
- Loss to landfills
- Private institutional, commercial and industrial (IC&I) recycling streams
- Containers being exported beyond provincial boundaries



The information and key findings in this study were based on several reports, audits and data, including:

- An audit of shoreline cleanup activities
- Landfill audits
- IC&I waste stream study
- Streetscape collection system research

In addition to these analyses, Encorp conducted an audit on the rate of return of beverage container caps and lids, commissioned an extensive GIS mapping analysis of collection locations, and is currently working to provide retailers with additional collection support.

Encorp is taking proactive steps to increase British Columbia's used beverage container recovery rate. Through the study findings and ongoing dialogue with recycling sector associations and partners, Return-It is developing and implementing specific and targeted initiatives to capture and recycle more beverage containers.

The report provides a summary of Encorp's actions that the organization has developed to further increase the recovery rate of all the beverage containers included in the Return-It system.

## 3.3 PUBLIC EDUCATION

This year, we implemented a comprehensive plan to ensure that recycling remained top of mind. To achieve this objective, we utilized a range of media platforms, including TV, YouTube, social media, Google Ads, and other avenues. Furthermore, our Return-It Gang remained busy throughout the year, as we created numerous new ads to creatively highlight the significance of recycling beverage containers. By utilizing a variety of media channels and creative ad content, we effectively communicated the importance of recycling beverage containers in our province.

### TV



Television has been an integral part of our communication strategy, allowing us to reach a broad mass audience and convey our message in a quick and effective way. Through our television campaigns, we have been able to raise awareness and promote our brand, while also educating and engaging with our audience. In 2022, as part of our efforts, we worked on two new spots to run alongside some of our current assets. Our first new spot focused on the introduction of milk and plant-based beverages into the deposit system. The second new spot was created to raise awareness of the container types accepted through the system: gable top, juice boxes, pouches and bag-in-a-box.

### Return-It.ca and Return-It Blog



Our website and blog give consumers a quick and convenient place to find important information such as depot locations and the latest recycling tips, news and changes in the system. Visit [return-it.ca/blog](https://return-it.ca/blog) to read our posts and to learn more about recycling.

### Annual Report



This comprehensive and interactive Annual Report can also be found on our website [return-it.ca/ar2022](https://return-it.ca/ar2022). Visitors can choose to view the Annual Report on our website or by downloading a PDF of the report.

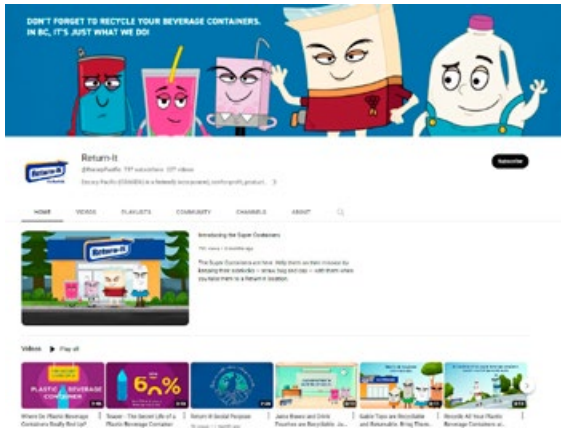
### Radio/Spotify



Radio and Spotify remained our go-to mediums for streaming ads and reaching our specific target audiences in 2022. As consumer media habits continue to change, we'll keep reviewing and evaluating the best way to reach our target consumers. Listen to our radio and Spotify spots at [youtube.com/user/EncorpPacific](https://youtube.com/user/EncorpPacific).

## 3.3 PUBLIC EDUCATION

### Corporate Videos



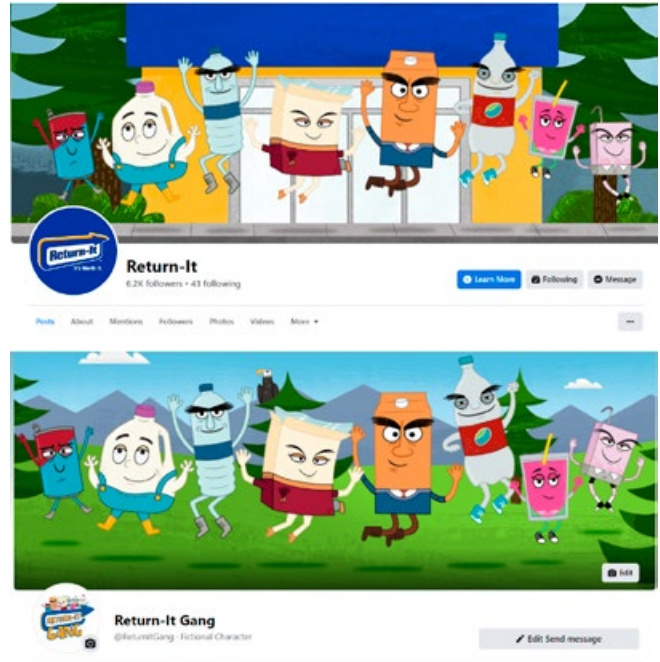
Our Return-It system videos offer an engaging and educational glimpse into the recycling process for various beverage container types. These videos are frequently promoted on our social media channels, where they have garnered significant attention, and can also be viewed on the Return-It YouTube channel. Our videos serve as an entertaining and informative tool to educate consumers about what happens to their drink containers after they are collected for recycling.

### Multi-Language Consumer Brochures



In 2022, we translated our beverage and Express brochures into Punjabi, Korean, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese. The brochures were also posted to our website to reduce the amount of paper used to print brochures. British Columbians can find these brochures on our website at [return-it.ca/beverage/recycling/brochures/](https://return-it.ca/beverage/recycling/brochures/).

### Social Media



Social media, which has become an integral part of our outreach programs, is a powerful tool for raising awareness about the importance of recycling beverage containers. Through our corporate and Return-It Gang social media channels, we have been able to engage our audience and amplify our message in a way that resonates with them. The use of Return-It Gang characters on our social media channels provides a unique and relatable voice that helps us connect with our audience on a more personal level. By adopting a lighthearted and slightly cheeky tone, we are able to communicate our message in a way that is both informative and engaging.

In addition, our corporate channels serve as platforms to share important updates and news, such as drop-off events and new partnerships or openings. By leveraging the power of social media, we are able to reach a wider audience.

### Google Ads

Google provides a grant to non-profit organizations for their text-based search advertising. We have utilized this offer to show our audience search ads while they are inquiring online. If someone is searching how to recycle their beverage containers in BC, we'll reach them.

## 3.3 PUBLIC EDUCATION

### Caps On and Straws In Campaign

The “Caps On Straws In” campaign this year was aimed at ensuring that British Columbians were pushing their straws into their drink boxes and pouches, as well as keeping their caps on bottles and gable tops, so they can be recycled. The goal was to remind our audiences that caps and straws are part of the Return-It system.

### Straws In – Social Media and Digital Display



Our social media campaign was split into several flights, spanning from late March until late October. It consisted of static visuals featuring Return-It Gang characters Joyce Box and Juicenda Pouch. As the objective was to reach as many British Columbians as possible, this campaign targeted BC residents of all ages, but specifically targeted parents aged 25–45 from late August to early September. This was done to reach parents with young children who would be taking drink boxes and pouches to school.

In addition to static social media posts, we ran a video featuring Joyce Box and Juicenda Pouch across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This campaign consisted of several flights, beginning on May 30. The final flight, in mid-September, focused on targeting young parents so as to take advantage of the back-to-school time frame. Across all flights, the video was well-received, garnering over 2 million impressions and over 200,000 video completions in total.

Digital display ads ran from May 30 until late October, which lined up with the back-to-school season. This campaign targeted parents aged 25–45 in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Capital Regional District. It focused on reaching those parents with young children who would be taking drink boxes and pouches to school. Overall, our display ads made over 800,000 impressions.

### Caps On – Social Media



Our social media campaign for “Caps On” had five flights, spanning from late March until early October. The campaign consisted of static visuals featuring Return-It Gang characters Pete Bottel and Walter Bottel. The audience for this campaign was British Columbians of all ages, and the objective was to reach as many people as possible.

Altogether, the five flights performed well. In total, the campaign generated a total of over 3 million impressions and reached over 1.9 million people. There was a generally high level of link clicks, comments and reactions across all flights. Facebook saw the most clicks during the campaign.

### In-Grocery Banners



In addition to digital and social media ads, in-grocery shelf talker ads were placed in 64 stores. These talker ads remained in stores from mid-September to early November and gathered over 2.2 million impressions.

### Drink Box and Pouch – Super Containers

A cutdown version of our super containers video featuring Joyce Box and Juicenda Pouch ran in-market from November 1 to 20. This video, which was shared on Facebook and Instagram, saw over 115,000 views.

### Activity Book

The activity books printed in 2022 as part of the Return-It School program also included a reminder for BC schools, students and their parents to keep caps on and straws in.



## 3.3 PUBLIC EDUCATION

### Milk Inclusion



On February 1, 2022, milk and plant-based beverages joined the deposit system and became available for recycling at Return-It sites across the province.

To communicate the change, we developed an additional detailed consumer awareness plan, which included a dedicated budget and an extensive media campaign, to educate consumers on the newly included milk containers into the deposit system. Along with the media campaign, communication materials, creative assets and messaging packages were sent to collection sites, retailers and applicable stakeholders, among others.

The media campaign covered a vast amount of mediums such as television, radio, social media, YouTube and newspapers. Since the launch and throughout 2022, Return-It has consistently educated all British Columbians to participate by visiting their local Return-It collection site to recycle and receive their deposit refund for empty milk and plant-based beverage containers.

The Return-It collection sites were also provided with new sorting signs that included information about the change, milk posters with a QR code to the landing page on our website, updated POR (Point of Return) screen ads and new beverage feature wall cards.

A new landing page on our website was created to outline the recent changes and the beverages included in the



system. We also updated our online brochures to include the latest information.

Additionally, our contactless Express & GO containers got a new instruction panel that included more information about the change along with new milk icons.

Finally, to capitalize on any users actively seeking information online on milk container recycling, a keyword group focusing on milk was added to our Google account.

As we move forward from 2022 to 2023, we will continue to focus on reminding consumers to recycle their milk and plant-based beverage containers.



# 3.3 PUBLIC EDUCATION

## Special Focus Containers



To increase awareness and recovery, there was an increased focus on plastic bottles, gable top containers, drink boxes, drink pouches and bags-in-a-box. These container types were split into two groups with slightly different goals.

The goal for plastic bottles and gable top containers was to increase awareness and recovery rates by changing throw-away behaviours. The goal for drink boxes, drink pouches and bags-in-a-box was to increase awareness and recovery rates of these containers overall.

The action plan to increase awareness included:

- Reducing confusion, i.e., sharing the message that gable top milk and plant-based beverage cartons are part of the deposit system, so there’s no more confusion about what is accepted in the deposit system
- Teaching British Columbians about pushing straws in and keeping caps/lids on, which encourages the message that drink boxes and pouches are recyclable and part of the deposit system
- Reminding British Columbians that bags-in-a-box are recyclable and part of the deposit system, and to always keep the bag in the box when recycling

The plan to increase the recovery rate of special focus containers involved:

- Changing the behaviour of people who throw containers into the garbage, which meant targeting the Convenience Trashers and the On-the-Go Discarders
- Targeting geographical areas with dense populations and high numbers of possibly unreturned containers via increased marketing campaigns, and ensuring nearby Return-It depots in those communities

## Plastic



Our plastics campaign this year utilized a multi-channel approach, reaching our audience through TV, pre-roll, radio tags, audio streaming and social media ads, with a focus on Convenience Trashers and On-the-Go Discarders.

The campaign’s messaging emphasized the importance recycling plastic beverage containers and highlighted what happens to plastic bottles after they are recycled. To drive this message home, we shared “The Secret Lives of a Plastic Beverage Container” video, which demonstrates the impact of recycling on the environment.

To keep the campaign fresh and engaging, we also developed a range of seasonal creative assets that were shared across platforms. By using a combination of different media channels and targeted messaging, we were able to maximize the reach and impact of our plastics awareness and marketing campaign.

## Gable Top Containers

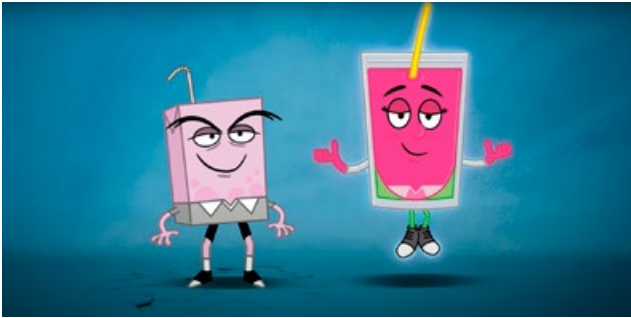


The gable top container marketing campaign was designed to educate consumers about the 10-cent deposit refund for beverage containers, specifically highlighting the inclusion of milk and plant-based ready-to-drink beverages.

The messaging clarified that, regardless of the type of beverage inside, consumers could bring the empty gable top container to a nearby depot to receive a refund. The campaign utilized pre-roll, radio and social media ads, targeting Convenience Trashers and On-the-Go Discarders during peak consumption periods like the summer and during holidays.

## 3.3 PUBLIC EDUCATION

### Drink Boxes



The drink box marketing campaign centred on our Super Container character, Joyce Box, and our video creative asset, which emphasized the recyclability of drink boxes and their inclusion in the deposit system. Key messaging focused on the idea that, even though drink boxes are small, they still matter and they can be recycled. We also highlighted the importance of pushing the straws in to ensure they also get recycled.

A range of media channels were used, including pre-roll, radio, audio streaming, social media and geofenced digital display ads. While we placed a heavier emphasis on the campaign during the summer and on holidays, we also increased our efforts during the back-to-school season to capitalize on the higher use of drink box containers.

### Pouches



To raise consumer awareness around drink pouches, we highlighted our Super Container character Juicenda Pouch in a series of creative assets such as the Super Container videos. These were shared as pre-roll and on social media. Furthermore, creative assets were aired in grocery stores, on radio and on social media.

The message was that pouches are recyclable and they are part of the deposit system. By targeting parents aged 25–45, who are likely to purchase juice pouches during the back-to-school season, we effectively educated our target audience and encouraged them to recycle these containers.

### Bag-in-a-box



The bag-in-a-box marketing campaign featured our Super Container character Sarah Cask, and emphasized the importance of keeping the bags inside the box and returning them to a Return-It depot for recycling and deposit refund. The campaign utilized a variety of media channels, including pre-roll, sponsored articles and social drivers on Daily Hive and Chatelaine, banners in liquor stores, and social media posts.

The messaging targeted consumers during peak consumption periods like the summer and on holidays, when bags-in-a-box are most commonly consumed.

The key findings of the benchmark study showed an increase in consumer knowledge that these container types are part of the deposit system, indicating the effectiveness of our marketing campaigns in educating consumers and raising awareness.



	2022 (n=1,252)	2021 (n=1,221)
Plastic	93%	88%
Drink Boxes	78%	64%
Cartons	74%	54%
Bag-in-a-box	46%	40%
Pouches	44%	33%

# 3.4 RECYCLING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Almost 1.3 billion containers were kept out of landfills in the past year. The majority of beverage containers sold in BC were recovered and recycled through the Return-It depot network, including Return-It Express and Return-It Express & GO locations across the province. Many initiatives and annual specialty programs were part of an ongoing effort to increase the recovery and recycling of beverage containers.

## Return-It Express



The Express campaign focused on increasing awareness of the ease and convenience of using Return-It Express. This meant sharing, via several mediums, that Express means no sorting, no lineups and no handling cash. In addition to media advertising, we also used targeted strategies such as our ambassador team activations at key community events, on social media and via mail drops. By the end of 2022, there were 244,922 active registered Express users. Social media was used to target specific communities and neighbourhoods. For each of our new Express locations, a 3-kilometre radius (on average) was used to target new Express customers through social media posts. Influencers such as Daily Hive and radio hosts from JR Country, CFOX, Move FM and Virgin FM played a key role in our campaign.

With the proven success of direct mail in previous years, households surrounding Express locations in the Lower Mainland also received an informative Express direct mail brochure.

### Express Direct Mail

As we continue to spread awareness of the Return-It Express program as it expands across the province, brochures were sent to all residences within a 3-kilometre radius of an Express location throughout the year. The first mail drop, which promoted Express locations, consisted of over 555,000 brochures; the second mail drop consisted of 150,000 brochures promoting our Express & GO locations. These campaigns helped contribute to increased registration and greater use of Express.

## Express Plush Promotion



The Return-It Gang promotion, which was originally launched in 2019, has proven to be an enormous success. The promotion encourages customers to return used beverage containers to be eligible for a reward, which can then be used to redeem a plush Return-It Gang character. Due to its popularity, the promotion has been reintroduced multiple times since its inception. In 2022, the promotion was renewed with new rules aimed at increasing recovery rates of lesser known container types and raising awareness of all container types accepted in the system. By the end of 2022, 855 plush Return-It Gang characters were redeemed by Express users.

## Express & GO



To promote the grand opening of each new Express & GO location, a marketing plan is implemented, which includes a brochure mail drop, press release, blog post and social media promotion. Additionally, an ambassador team activation assists customers with their first use of Express & GO. This personalized approach helps to create a positive customer experience and encourages repeated use of the service.

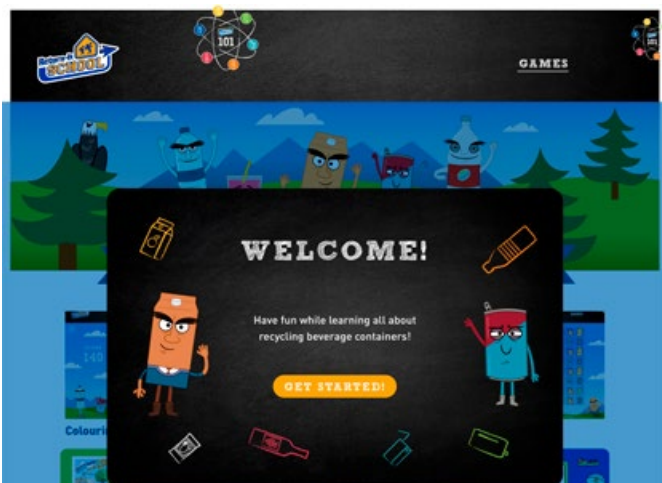
## 3.4 RECYCLING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

### Compactor Truck Expansion



In October, we announced the expansion of its hybrid CNG-electric compaction truck fleet. This move was part of our organization's continued commitment to sustainability and to reducing our carbon footprint. The press release announcing the expansion was picked up by over 25 printed and online publications, gathering over 60 million impressions. Fairchild TV covered the event, helping to spread the word even further. We look forward to continuing our efforts to promote sustainability and to make a positive impact on the environment. Read about it here: [www.return-it.ca/blog/compaction-truck-event/](http://www.return-it.ca/blog/compaction-truck-event/).

### Return-It School



The Return-It School program, which began in 2000, gives elementary and high schools across BC the opportunity to promote recycling and environmental stewardship. As part of the program, schools get free recycling bins and access

to online tools and recycling tips, and they get to share their recycling stories in a contest format in the hopes of winning the grand prize of \$5,000 or the second-place prize of \$2,500. In 2022, we also launched our Online Activity Book to help students learn about recycling in an engaging and interactive format. Through sorting games, colouring activities and comics, children learn how recycling in British Columbia works, and about the many positive outcomes of recycling. Learn more here: [returnitschool.ca/](http://returnitschool.ca/).

### Ambassador Team



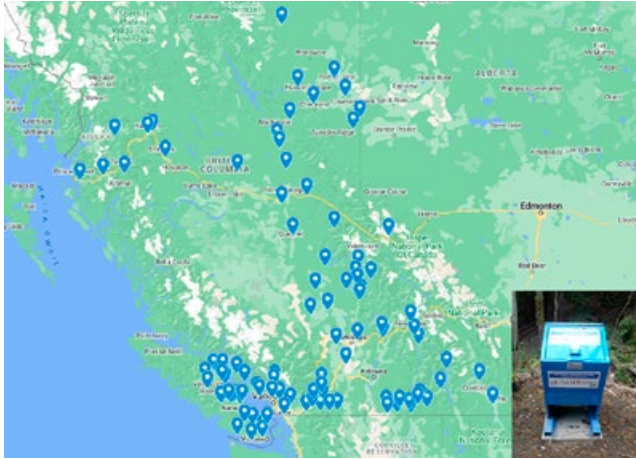
Our Recycling 101 Ambassadors are a team of super-smart "recycling scientists" who use their expert knowledge to teach kids and parents the basic of recycling. This year, our ambassadors and Return-It Mascot attended more than 30 events in Vancouver and throughout British Columbia, educating BC residents on the importance of recycling their drink containers. They also promoted Return-It, the Return-It Express system and Express & GO.

Our Return-It activation booths and our contactless Return-It Express game, which challenges visitors to sort containers by holding their hands above the sensors of each container type column as fast as they can, were both well-received and popular this year, enticing more visitors to participate and learn more about recycling.



# 3.4 RECYCLING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

## BC Parks and Municipal Outdoor Spaces



Provincial parks, protected areas and recreation sites that attract large numbers of visitors continued to be our focus this year. We worked closely with BC parks and municipalities to ensure that the dedicated beverage recycling outdoor spaces bins were placed in commonly frequented locations where beverage containers have been discarded in the past.

By the end of the year, we installed over 100 new bins in parks and municipalities, including 25 bear-proof bins for BC Parks, and 85 streetscape bins for municipalities both in and outside of Metro Vancouver, for a total of 26,949 bins. As a result, residents and visitors gained access to new beverage container recycling bins in more provincial parks, high-traffic urban areas, and rural areas where beverage container recycling is not as accessible.

## Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Sector



The industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) sector is a key area of interest for Encorp, as large-scale venues can account for a significant number of beverage containers that don't make it to the beverage recycling stream. We've partnered with Nat Bailey Stadium, Rogers Arena, BC Place, Oliver Parks and Recreation, and Island

Health to provide new beverage recycling programs or to improve upon existing programs. Partnerships within the institutional sector include provision of collection bins and services at four major hospitals: Vancouver General, Lions Gate Hospital, Richmond Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital.

## Stewardship Agencies of BC (SABC)

Encorp Pacific is one of the founding stewardship agencies that established the Stewardship Agencies of BC (SABC). As a member of this group, we have representation on many of the committees and actively contribute to the development of public education and awareness activity for any joint initiatives.

Stewardship agencies are non-profit organizations formed by BC's producers and brand owners as part of their compliance under the BC Recycling Regulation. These agencies collect, recycle and divert end-of-life consumer products and packaging from disposal.

Stewards in British Columbia are fortunate in having a flexible, performance-based regulatory framework within which to operate. BC stewards recognize that with the benefits of setting fees and having minimal provincial government involvement in operational details comes a responsibility to work together. Combining our efforts has been instrumental in formalizing and delivering the joint initiatives for this group.

The SABC model is comprised of several key players working together. The membership currently has 14 stewardship organizations that operate programs in British Columbia. Those who are looking to recycle additional materials outside of beverage containers are encouraged to visit [bcrecycles.ca](http://bcrecycles.ca).



## 3.4 RECYCLING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

### Sports Team Partnerships



Our partnerships with the Vancouver Canucks and the Vancouver Whitecaps were revamped to highlight their charitable programs. Together with the Canucks, we launched the Pass the Puck program to support the Canucks for Kids Fund. Through our partnership with the Vancouver Whitecaps, we launched Bottles for Boots to support KidSport BC.

Esports have also become an essential part of our partnerships with professional sports teams, allowing us to connect with a different demographic to deliver our message. In 2022, we partnered with the Vancouver Titans, a professional Overwatch esports team based in Vancouver, BC, and The Gaming Stadium, the first esports stadium in Canada.

All of these partnerships are beneficial on various fronts: ensuring the proper beverage recycling at each venue, expanding our outreach program to new audiences, and deepening the connection with our customers and community.

### Major Media Partnerships

Our organization partnered with Corus Entertainment to expand the reach of our messaging and increase awareness of our services. Corus is renowned for their strong news programming across British Columbia and has wide provincial reach.

#### Mornings with Simi – Corus



Television and radio broadcaster Simi Sara set out to talk to Express & GO users to find out what they thought about this system. During her interviews, Simi also tested customers' knowledge about acceptable beverage container types and best practices for returning containers such as pouches, drink boxes and milk containers.

Through her conversations, it became clear that the Express & GO system had made a significant impact on the recycling habits of British Columbians, who emphasized the importance of convenience and ease when returning beverage containers. Simi's segments aired on Global, BC1 and CKNW.

#### Collaboration with Kristi Gordon



Return-It had the opportunity to collaborate with Kristi Gordon from Global BC to provide answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about milk inclusion in the deposit system and about recycling beverage containers,

# 3.4 RECYCLING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

including drink boxes/pouches, gable top containers and bag-in-a-box containers.

During the segment, Kristi shared valuable tips on how to correctly recycle beverage containers and their accompanying straws and caps. She emphasized the importance of not crushing containers, and explained how convenient it is to recycle bag-in-a-box containers. Overall, the collaboration with Kristi educated viewers on the proper ways to recycle beverage containers.

### Waste Reduction Week



Waste Reduction Week continues to gain momentum and educate, year after year. In support of this year’s Waste Reduction Week, we aligned our media partnership with Corus. The overall advertising and collaboration with Kristi Gordon ran on different Corus news programming. In order to educate and remind consumers about the types of containers that are accepted through the Return-It system and the inclusion of milk containers in the system, we increased the number of ads that ran during Waste Reduction Week. In doing so, we reinforced the message that milk containers can be recycled through the Return-It system, and we reminded consumers about the other types of acceptable containers.

Social media was also leveraged during the week to engage directly with our customers and to promote behaviour that would divert containers from landfills.

### Cork Recycling Pilot



Encorp began a new project to recover and recycle wine corks in 2022. Wine corks were collected at the Return-It Boucherie Self Storage and Bottle Depot in Kelowna and turned into eco-friendly footwear.

This initiative was a strategic partnership with ReCORK, North America’s largest natural wine cork recycling program, and SOLE, a manufacturer of sustainable footwear that turns used wine corks into an ecologically friendly replacement for fossil fuel-derived foams. Sustainably harvested from trees, cork is a carbon-negative material that can be repurposed into new consumer items like footwear cushioning to help replace petroleum-based foams and plastics. Cork oak trees continue absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> after their bark is removed, which is an important environmental benefit.

### First Nations Recycling Initiative

Recognizing that traditional, depot-style coverage in hard-to-service remote and rural areas of the province is not always economically viable, we continue to work collaboratively with other stewardship programs to improve accessibility and convenience.



Encorp is one of the major financial contributors to the BC First Nations Recycling Initiative (FNRI). We work with nine other stewardship agencies that have come together to provide recycling systems for Indigenous communities that are interested in starting or expanding programs. In support of this initiative, Encorp provides financial contributions and helps develop collaborative solutions. When a First Nations community requires assistance with the collection, recycling and payment of deposit refunds for beverage containers, we work with the FNRI, the Indigenous Zero Waste Technical Advisory Group (IZWTAG) and the community to develop a solution. You can read the 2022 FNRI Summary Report at [return-it.ca/programs/fnri-summary-report-2022/](https://return-it.ca/programs/fnri-summary-report-2022/).



## 3.4 RECYCLING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

### Diving In: The Art of Cleaning Lakes and Oceans



Encorp sponsored the Diving In environmental campaign, which raises awareness on the waste in our waterways by conducting cleanups.

As part of the campaign, scuba divers recover waste material and then responsibly recycle or dispose of it. Some of the collected material is provided to local artists. This art serves as a creative way to upcycle materials that would have otherwise been left in waterways. It also sends a message of hope that British Columbians will ultimately change consumer behaviour to responsibly manage their waste.

One of these art pieces (shown above), titled *Thank You, But I Don't Need Goggles*, has been displayed in Encorp's head office. This artwork is by Michael Binkley, a professional artist from Squamish, BC.

Over the years, Return-It has been involved in nine waterway cleanups, where approximately 960 beverage containers were collected. Return-It and Diving In share the goal of educating communities and consumers on the importance of responsible recycling and of diverting material from our oceans, lakes and waterways.

### Return-It To Reuse-It and Recycle-It Pilot Project



In collaboration with several organizations, Encorp relaunched the Return-It to Reuse-It and Recycle-It pilot project, which was originally launched in 2020 and subsequently paused shortly thereafter due to COVID-19.

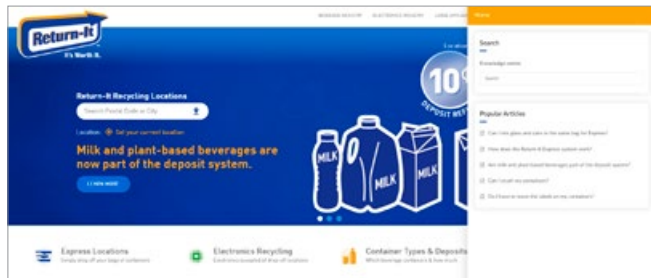
Encorp partnered with Tim Hortons, Starbucks, A&W Canada, McDonald's Canada, City of Vancouver, Metro Vancouver and Merlin Plastics to keep more single-use cups out of landfills by giving consumers a convenient place to recycle them in commercial and on-street locations. In addition to single-use cups for hot and cold beverages, the program also introduced a reusable cup program, where consumers sign up to use reusable cups that are washed and returned to retail locations. The original six-month pilot was renewed during the year to continue with all participating partners.

In past years, millions of coffee cups have been disposed of in the City of Vancouver at industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) locations and in public spaces. To help address this challenge, Return-It and Metro Vancouver worked alongside the project's partners to develop and push forth this pilot to help recycle coffee cups in commercial and public places.

Managed by Encorp, the pilot program seeks to evaluate and determine the viability of a scalable, permanent program in the City of Vancouver and other locations.

# 3.5 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

## Customer Relations



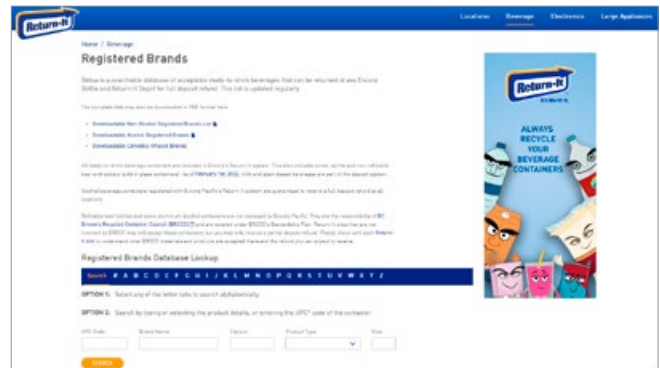
At Return-It, we are committed to providing exceptional customer service, which we believe is crucial for building strong, lasting relationships with our customers and driving growth for our organization.

Our Customer Relations team assisted over 21,000 customers in 2022. We focused on providing customers with the tools they need to get answers to their inquiries. Some key innovations and developments from 2022 include:

- Continued development of our knowledge centre, which now has 65 active articles, 966 likes and over 37,000 views; this resource helps customers quickly find answers to common questions and provides guidance on using our system effectively
- Expanded our Live Chat function in December 2022 by adding a Chat Bot with over 1,000 resources it can use to answer a customer’s inquiry; this feature is available at all times, and if the customer inquiry is not addressed by the Chat Bot, they will be connected to a live agent during office hours or prompted to send an email outside of office hours
- Launched a contact form on the Return-It website, enabling customers to fill out required information fields directly on our website; this process reduces the number of responses needed for resolution and improves our overall efficiency

Another key focus for the Customer Relations team was understanding the customer experience. We produced 12 monthly customer trend dashboards, four quarterly reports and 52 weekly reports, enabling us to track trends and identify areas for improvement continually. We also held 12 cross-departmental customer-focused team meetings and surveyed over 80,000 Express users for their feedback and to determine our Net Promoter Score.

## Brand Registry for Customers



Encorp’s Registered Brands Database is a comprehensive searchable database that lists all the beverage brands that are part of the Return-It system. Customers can use this database to easily find out whether their beverage container is accepted and can be returned for refund. The database provides information on the type of containers that can be returned. The registered brands database can be found at [return-it.ca/registeredbrands](https://return-it.ca/registeredbrands).

## Brand Registry for Depots

Depot operators play a crucial role in keeping the brand database for beverage containers up to date by submitting brand registry additions and reporting missing containers. Depot operators can submit a brand registry addition or report any containers that are not included in the database at [return-it.ca/brandregform/](https://return-it.ca/brandregform/).

