



At Los Amigos trash haulers came six days a week, sometimes even twice a day. One day, the hauler couldn't lift the dumpster.

Los Amigos goes 'green' and cuts monthly trash bills by 90% in three years.

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Los Amigos

From Too Much Trash to an Environmental Success Story

Los Amigos Tortilla Manufacturing had a problem with trash. The company's dumpster overflowed with discarded food, by-products, cardboard, containers, and packaging. Trash haulers came six days a week, sometimes even twice a day.

All too quickly, the trash situation for the Atlanta tortilla producer went from problematic to critical. The company's dumpster was so concentrated and heavily packed that the hauler's truck couldn't lift the container. General Manager Tom Gibb realized then that the time had come to seriously tackle Los Amigos' waste management.

Trash Pickup Reduced; Fees Cut 90%

"When we first started studying our trash situation," Tom explains, "we weren't thinking about going green." Los Amigos just wanted to cut back on trash and save money. And today, the company is doing both in a big way. Instead of producing 208 cubic yards of waste a month and using the largest dumpster available, Los Amigos now produces just 17 cubic yards of waste a month and uses one of the smallest dumpsters in the commercial marketplace. The trash hauler only comes once a week, and, more importantly, Los Amigos' trash bills are 10 percent of what they were three years ago.

How did Los Amigos do it? The company became an aggressive recycler – recycling everything from torn tortilla pieces to glass bottles to aluminum cans and cardboard.

M-PASS, Inc., Helps Los Amigos Go Green

Los Amigos began its green journey with a call to Lorraine White, CEO and general manager of M-PASS, Inc., an Atlanta waste service consulting firm. "Tom asked for our help in reducing Los Amigos' waste management costs and cutting their waste production," says Lorraine. "The first thing we did was a waste audit."

Based on the information M-PASS uncovered during the audit, the firm was able to:

- Identify clear-cut ways to cut their waste costs
- Negotiate and manage contracts with a new hauler
- Bring in companies to recycle Los Amigos' recyclable waste
- Set up a single-stream recycling program for employees



BEFORE – Trash cans overflowed with waste



AFTER – Trash reduced; Savings generated





The Process

One of the first cost-cutting steps M-PASS recommended, after analyzing several components, was a cardboard baler. “Instead of tossing used cardboard in the dumpster and it going into the landfill, we bale the cardboard and then sell it to a recycler,” says Tom.



Los Amigos continues its recycling even when purchasing product containers. Sixty percent of the containers they purchase are made of recycled cardboard.

Next, Los Amigos worked on recycling waste and organic solids generated from cooking and processing corn for the tortillas. These food byproducts, including discarded torn and misshaped tortillas, were dumped into the trash container. Now, thanks to M-PASS, this organic waste is redirected to an organic recycling program.

Throughout the switch to a more environmental-conscious waste disposal program, Los Amigos worked with their employees. We stressed repeatedly the importance of baling the cardboard and not throwing out goods that could be recycled,” Tom adds. M-PASS further helped make recycling easier by setting up a single stream recycling program so Los Amigos’ employees did not have to separate their recyclables.

Another benefit of working with M-PASS is that Los Amigos didn’t have to pay any up-front fees to the company. Instead, M-PASS is paid based on actual savings that their waste and recycling plans generate.

M-PASS at Work

Today M-PASS manages the waste services and recycling efforts for the tortilla manufacturer. “Tom calls if any issue comes up with haulers,” Lorraine says. “We know we’re doing our job when we don’t hear from him because things are running smoothly,” Lorraine says.

“Los Amigos is typical of so many of our clients,” she says. “They contact us when they want to cut their waste management expenses, when they want to enhance their green initiative, or if they have serious issues with their haulers.” Once M-PASS is called in, the firm’s first step is a waste audit. M-PASS takes a history of the client’s waste program, visits their sites, prepares an analysis, and then develops a cost savings plan. On average, M-PASS is able to reduce their clients waste management costs by 45 percent a year.

Environmental Success Story

While Los Amigos is not quite at zero environmental impact, the company is a true environmental success story. For Tom, recycling and not filling up the landfill have become a personal mission. He even has his family recycling, too. “Recycling isn’t about saving money. It is just the right thing to do,” he emphasizes.

“Now our mission is to expand Los Amigos’ success story across the country to other companies that need the services that M-PASS offers,” Lorraine adds.

Los Amigos

Los Amigos, an Atlanta-based company, is a major producer of corn chips and flour tortilla products. The company, founded in 1969 by Ruben, Sr., and Zoila Rodriguez, takes pride in ensuring Mexican authenticity in all their products.

M-PASS

M-PASS, Inc. is an independent waste management and recycling consulting company headquartered in Atlanta. Founded in 2006, Our consulting firm provides quality turn-key services that focus on cost savings and revenues associated with waste disposal and recyclable materials.

We work with clients to:

- **Identify where money is being lost**
- **Enhance your company's green initiatives**
- **Access technology not made available by vendors**
- **Identify cost recovery and recycling alternatives**
- **Receive timely customer response and dedicated service**