

# The State of Plastic Recycling



**ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

Commissioned by:



# The State of Plastic Recycling

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- ▶ Letter from our Vice President and General Manager ..... 3
- ▶ Executive summary ..... 4
- ▶ Plastics have built the modern world - but do they belong to our future? ..... 8
- ▶ We need to do more ..... 9
- ▶ Consumer beliefs & attitudes ..... 10
- ▶ Governments are acting ..... 11
- ▶ Less is less: plastic and its alternatives ..... 12
- ▶ Reduce, recycle, reuse: a beverage packaging case study ..... 14
- ▶ Moving towards a circular economy ..... 16
- ▶ A next step: fixing recycling systems ..... 17
- ▶ The way ahead: plastic is not waste ..... 19
- ▶ About Hi-Cone ..... 20
- ▶ Hi-Cone's 2025 vision and goals ..... 21
- ▶ People and our planet ..... 22
- ▶ Sources ..... 23

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*Please consider the environment before printing this report.*

# > Understanding the challenges. Working together on solutions.

Recycling is a core component of creating a more sustainable future for the global community and the planet. It is key to developing sustainable consumption and production patterns, which support a circular economy where the entire lifecycle of a product or service is considered.

Hi-Cone created this first State of Plastic Recycling Annual Report in order to shed light on the current state of recycling and to help advance the circular economy and sustainability as a whole. This report aims to identify the challenges, as well as the opportunities, for the industry to improve plastic recycling as sustainability plays a larger role and drives change.

There is a great need to create a more transparent process and clear guidance for consumers when it comes to the development of a circular economy and better recycling practices. Only by understanding consumer beliefs, national programs and global goals, can we make real progress towards innovative improvement of our products and business practices. This cannot be done alone – collaboration is key.

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***Hi-Cone is committed  
to helping develop the  
circular economy.***

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In 2019, Hi-Cone launched a new ring carrier, RingCycles™, made from 50% recycled (PCR) content. By the end of 2020, all of our customers will have transitioned to this new product. Beyond RingCycles™, we are continuously innovating to find new plastic and non-plastic solutions for a completely biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable alternative for beverage multi-pack packaging. We will be working closely with partners across the industry and supply chain to amplify our efforts in 2020 and beyond.

*Shawn Welch*

**Shawn Welch**

*Vice President and General Manager  
of Hi-Cone Worldwide*



# > Insights, observations and the way forward.

***Sustainability is one of the most pressing challenges in 2020 and beyond – and it can only be solved by working together as a global community.*** Consumers, producers and organizations along the supply chain need to understand the impact they can have, which requires a good understanding of the attitudes toward plastics recycling and the circular economy.

In this first *State of Plastic Recycling Report*, new findings are presented from a global consumer survey conducted by YouGov, an international research data and analytics group headquartered in London. The research was commissioned by Hi-Cone to better understand the opportunities and challenges to advance the circular economy in the food and drinks packaging industry.

YouGov surveyed 5,509 adults in four markets – Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States – on their behaviors, knowledge and attitudes towards plastic packaging recycling. Key findings are presented on the following pages.

All food and drink packaging has an environmental impact. Carbon emissions and the amount of energy used to manufacture it must all be factored in if we are to account for any packaging's true environmental cost. Now more than ever, the packaging industry is committed to reducing its environmental impact, to act responsibly and to work together.

In a perfect world, no products would get disposed of improperly and end up in the natural environment. None of them would even go to landfill or be incinerated; instead, all products would be reused or recycled. Many organizations, including the UN,<sup>i</sup> the EU, the UK government and WRAP<sup>ii</sup> are now calling for such a shift, towards a 'circular' plastics economy, which would require a thorough improvement of recycling on a global scale. Fixing the recycling system and building trust that it is effective is just one of the many tasks that face us. By working together and putting sustainability front and center, organizations along the supply chain can support consumers to

make a big positive difference to the future of our planet. Making sure consumers have all the information they need is the first step on this journey, as knee-jerk reactions to false information – such as banning all plastics, as some call for – can lead to harmful long-term effects.<sup>1</sup> Access to the facts is required so consumers and producers alike can make informed choices, as developing the most sustainable solution for any type of packaging will require a close look at the facts of the product's lifecycle as well as the existing recycling infrastructure in the markets in which it will be used. Accepting the status quo, however, is not enough: we have to strive to minimize waste through a truly circular economy to reduce the world population's impact on our planet and allow future generations to thrive.

ONLY  
34%

*of adults across all territories reported recycling all the plastic waste they possibly could.*

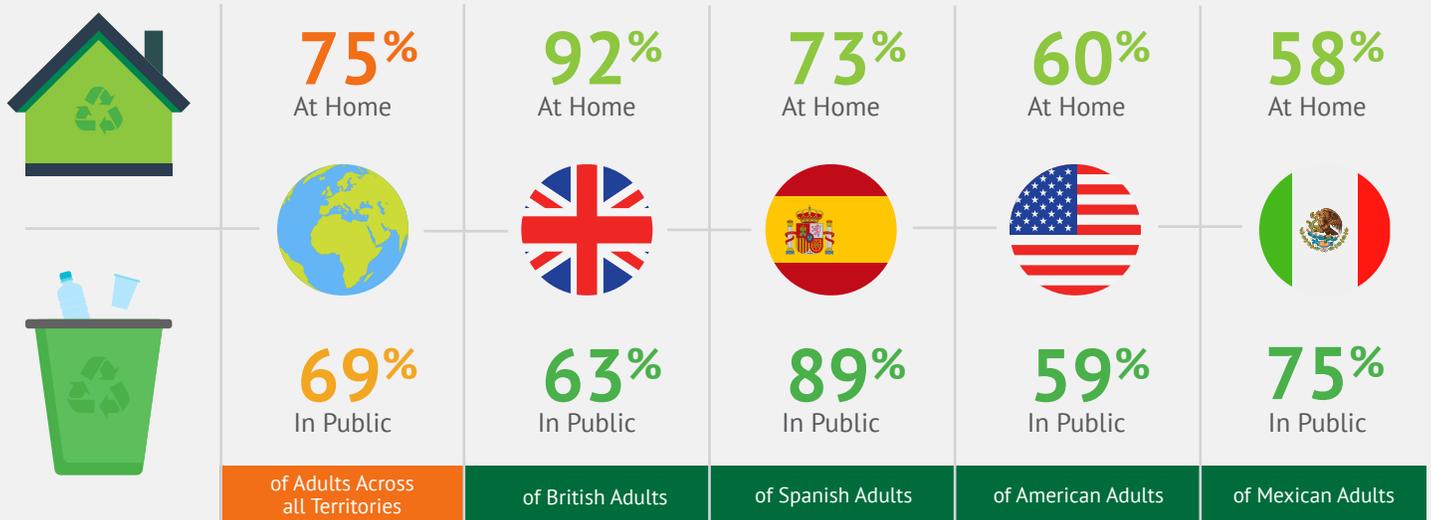


<sup>i</sup> 'Single-use plastics: a roadmap for sustainability', United Nations Environment Programme, 2018

<sup>ii</sup> WRAP, Waste and Resources Action Programme, is a UK initiative which provides research and recommendations on more sustainable resource use to stakeholders worldwide (learn more at <https://www.wrap.org.uk/>)

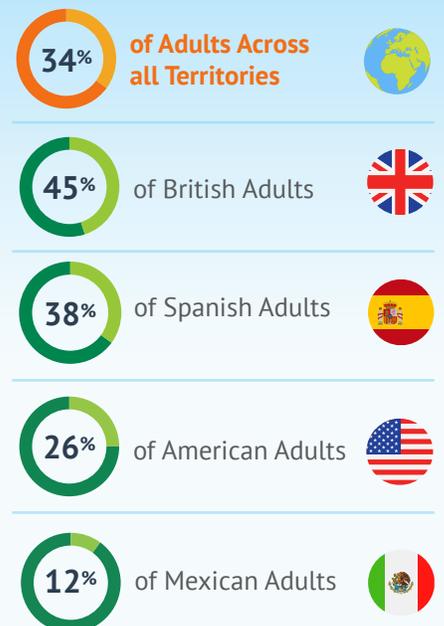
## > RATES OF RECYCLING IN THE HOME AND IN PUBLIC

**75%** of adults across all territories (Mexico, Spain, the UK and the USA) reported that they regularly recycle anything (e.g. plastic, paper, cans, or glass, etc.) in their homes, and **69%** reported regularly recycling anything in public recycling bins.



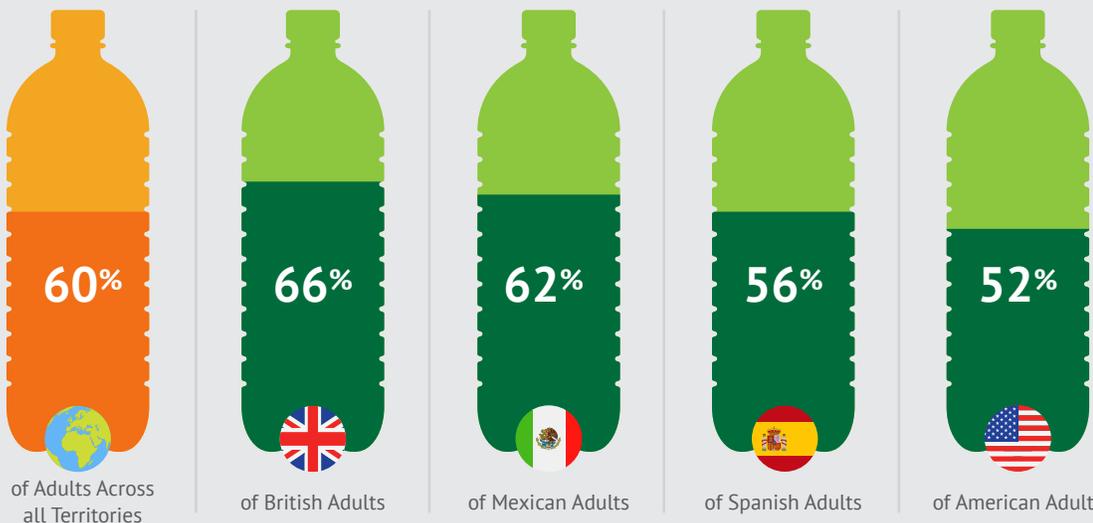
## > RATES OF PLASTIC RECYCLING

**34%** of adults across all territories reported they recycled all of their plastic waste inside or outside their home.



## > LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AROUND RECYCLING PLASTIC

Over half of adults across all territories (**60%**) reported they did not know how to recycle some types of plastic packaging.



**56%**

of adults across all territories reported that they found recycling different plastics difficult to understand.

## > LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HOW THINGS ARE RECYCLED

One third of adults across all territories reported that they believe only **25% or less** of what they put into recycling bins in their area is actually recycled.



## > CONSUMERS KNOW THEY SHOULD BE RECYCLING MORE, AND THEY WANT TO, BUT THEY NEED MORE INFORMATION

The majority of adults across all territories (**91%**) reported believing that recycling plastic is beneficial to the environment, and more than two-thirds (**69%**) of those who do not currently recycle all of their plastic waste, reported they were not recycling as much plastic as they think they should.



The majority of adults (**80%**) who do not currently recycle all of their plastic waste reported that they would recycle plastic more frequently if they had more facilities and/or guidance.

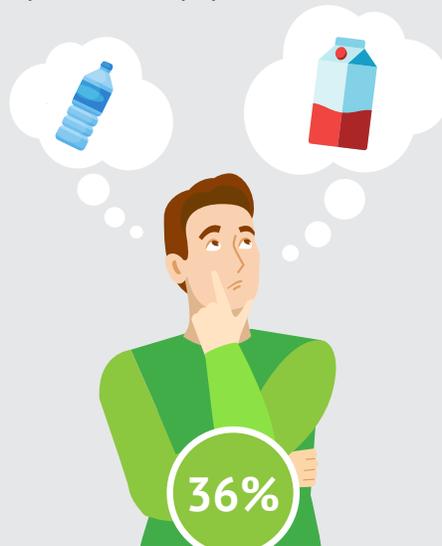


## > UNCERTAINTY OVER WHICH PACKAGING MATERIAL IS BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

**18%** of adults across all territories reported being unsure if non-plastic packaging (e.g. cardboard, glass, cans, etc.) is better for the environment than plastic packaging.



**36%** reported they were unsure if it takes more energy and natural resources to recycle plastic than paper.



**30%** reported being unsure if using a small amount of plastic packaging can be better for the environment than a larger amount of a different packaging material, such as cardboard.



# > Plastics have built the modern world - but do they belong to our future?

Since around 1950 the mass production of plastics has revolutionized the food industry and was a direct response to the issues around deforestation resulting from the overuse of cardboard and paper. Plastic packaging keeps food hygienic, fresh and safe, and offers a convenience that distribution networks and supermarkets

rely on. Without it, we would not have been able to deliver food as cost-effectively, or as far, or to as many people. Plastics have also been delivering clean drinking water and have improved the diets of millions.

In addition, plastic has housed us, clothed us and enabled medical innovation. It has also

saved energy through providing high-performance insulation, and it has saved fuel and cut emissions by lightening cars, trucks and planes. It has made an incalculable contribution to human life.

And yet we know we have a problem.



FOOD & BEVERAGE



CONSTRUCTION



MEDICAL



TRANSPORTATION



WEARABLES



ELECTRONICS

## > We need to do more.

How we dispose of plastics is a problem – we need to do more to educate and ensure there is the infrastructure nationally and globally to do this.

The UK government estimated in 2018 that 8.3 billion tons of plastic have been produced worldwide since the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> For too long humans have not thought about what to do with plastic once it has been used, and the very qualities that have made it ubiquitous – convenience, durability, versatility – are now causing a problem.

We know that very large quantities of used plastic find their way into the environment, both on land and at sea. The European Commission has estimated that 5 to 13 million tons of plastics – 1.5 to 4% of plastics production globally – ends up in the oceans every year. On the EU's part, that totals 150,000 to 500,000 tons of plastic waste.<sup>3</sup> In the EU, up to 39% is incinerated and up to 31% goes to landfill. Only around 29% is recycled.<sup>4</sup>

In the USA, meanwhile, in 2015 more than three-quarters of plastics went to landfill and only around 9% were recycled.<sup>5</sup>

In Mexico, national newspaper Milenio has reported that, similarly, less than 10% of residual solid waste is recycled.<sup>6</sup>

The United Nations has written:

*"According to UN Environment, 1 million plastic drinking bottles are purchased every minute, while up to 5 trillion single-use plastic bags are used worldwide every year. In total, half of all plastic produced is designed to be used only once – and then thrown away. Today, about 300 million tonnes of plastic waste every year are produced, nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population. If current trends continue, the oceans could contain more plastic than fish by 2050."*<sup>7</sup>

This single-use phenomenon depletes natural resources, adds greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, harms wildlife and litters our landscapes and oceans. There is also growing concern that these plastics, when they break down, form microplastic particles, which can be ingested by sea creatures and have harmful effects elsewhere in the food chain.

It is clear that we need to stop plastic escaping into

and polluting the natural environment. We also know that societies across the world will have to reduce their reliance on single-use plastics and learn to recycle more effectively.

“Today, about **300 million** tonnes of plastic waste every year are produced, nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population.”



# > Consumer beliefs and attitudes.

To address this situation, we need to understand the facts as they are today – and the results are mixed. The 2019 YouGov survey found that in the UK people are the most proactive about recycling at home: 92% of UK adults said that they regularly recycled (e.g. plastic, paper, cans, glass, etc.) at home, compared with 75% across all the territories.

Spanish adults were most likely to recycle in public – 89% regularly used public recycling bins compared with 69% across all the territories. In Mexico, only 58% of adults said they regularly recycled at home.

The vast majority of people in the UK – 87% – said they recycled at least half their recyclable plastic waste inside or outside of their home.

In Spain this figure was 80%, in the USA it was 58% and in Mexico it was 56%. Taking the responses in all territories together, only 34% of adults thought they recycled all the plastic waste they possibly could.



One third of adults (**34%**) across all territories reported recycling all of their plastic waste.



More than half of adults (**60%**) agreed that they do not know how to recycle some types of plastic packaging.

### PUBLIC TRUST METER



Only **3%** of adults across all territories believe that everything they put into the recycling bin is actually recycled.



The majority of adults who do not currently recycle all of their plastic waste (**80%**) would recycle plastic more if they had more guidance and facilities.

# > Governments are acting.

For a long time, consumers and activists have been leading the calls for change. And now governments and leaders are setting goals to meet these demands.

In June 2019, Canada, for example, pledged to ban single-use plastics by 2021,<sup>8</sup> while the UK government has set

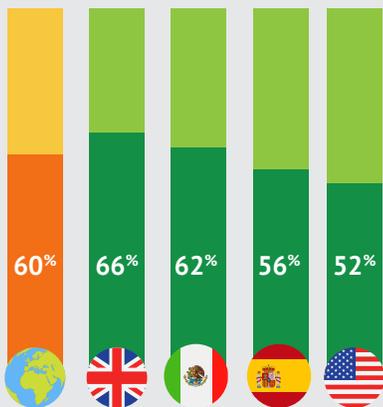
out its ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042.<sup>9</sup> On its part, the EU has stated it will work towards making sure all plastic packaging is recyclable by 2030.<sup>10</sup> And in Mexico, in October 2019, senators signed a bill into law promoting a public-private partnership in waste recycling, an industry

that is worth more than \$3 billion USD, according to ANIPAC, Mexico's national association of plastic industries.<sup>11</sup>

The YouGov survey found, however, that people still find significant barriers to recycling plastics, and are uncertain how to do it best:

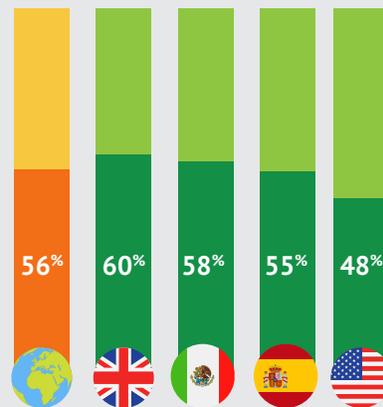
## CONSUMERS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO RECYCLE PLASTIC PACKAGING

**60%** of adults across all territories said they agreed with the statement "I don't know how to recycle some types of plastic packaging."



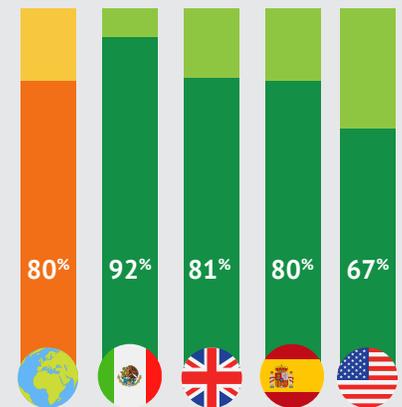
## CONSUMERS FIND RECYCLING PLASTIC DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND

**56%** across all territories agreed that they "found recycling different plastics difficult to understand."



## CONSUMERS WANT MORE FACILITIES AND GUIDANCE TO RECYCLE PLASTIC

**80%** across all territories who do not currently recycle all of their plastic waste agreed that if they "had more facilities and/or guidance they would recycle plastic more frequently."



This presents governments and the packaging and food industries with a double challenge: both helping consumers do the right thing and transitioning away from a single-use paradigm without jeopardizing the world's food security, health, and economic growth.

## > Less is less: plastic and its alternatives.

All food and drink packaging has an environmental impact. Carbon emissions and the amount of energy used to manufacture it must all be factored in if we are to account for any packaging's true environmental cost.

The UK government's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee wrote:

*"In the backlash against plastic, other materials are being increasingly used as substitutes in food and drink packaging. We are concerned that such actions are being taken without proper consideration of wider environmental consequences, such as higher carbon emissions."<sup>12</sup>*

The UK's Waste, Resources and Action Programme (WRAP) added:

*"If we focus too heavily on a single type of impact (e.g. marine pollution), while neglecting others (e.g. carbon impact, impact on food waste), we risk making poor decisions which have unintended consequences."<sup>13</sup>*

Sarah Greenwood, University of Sheffield Grantham Centre for

Sustainable Futures, explained that, with food packaging, on average:

*"If you replaced plastic packaging with alternatives, you would increase the weight of the packaging by 3.6 times. You would increase the energy use by 2.2 times. You would increase your carbon dioxide emissions by 2.7 times."<sup>14</sup>*

These examples reflect that the industry needs to do more – and move in ways that align with optimizing for the long-term. Take plastic ring carriers, for example: this type of beverage multi-packaging is as minimal as possible – light, low in volume and using minimal raw materials. Paper, cardboard, film and other alternatives all use significant natural resources and need substantial amounts of energy to manufacture.

Independent research by Franklin Associates found that, if you take in the full life cycle of each piece of packaging into account, Hi-Cone ring carriers presented:

- 68% less waste to the environment than shrink film and 89% less waste than paperboard

- 68% less CO2 to the environment than shrink film and 77% less CO2 than paperboard<sup>15</sup>

They were, said Franklin Associates, twice as sustainable as shrink and rigid packaging multipacks and three times as sustainable as paperboard.

As for biodegradable (compostable) plastics, though they promise much for the future, the UK government's 'Plastic food and drink packaging' report commented:

*"Compostable plastics have been introduced without the right infrastructure or consumer understanding to manage compostable waste."<sup>16</sup>*

It continued:

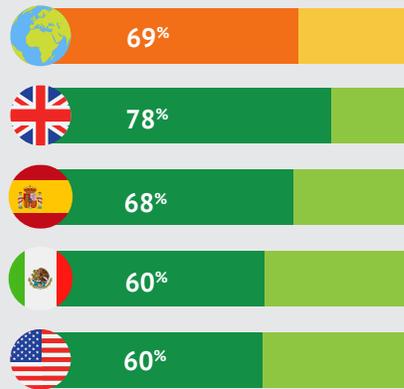
*"Producers aside, we heard little support for compostable packaging. Sarah Greenwood, University of Sheffield, explained that 'there is a perception with compostable packaging that it turns into compost' but 'it does not'. It turns into 'carbon dioxide, water or methane' with 'a tiny amount of biomass left behind'. She likened the process to 'a very, very slow version of burning it.'"<sup>17</sup>*

In addition, the EC has said:

*"Most currently available plastics labelled as biodegradable generally degrade under specific conditions which may not always be easy to find in the natural environment, and can thus still cause harm to ecosystems. Biodegradation in the marine environment is particularly challenging. In addition, plastics that are labelled 'compostable' are not necessarily suitable for home composting."*<sup>18</sup>

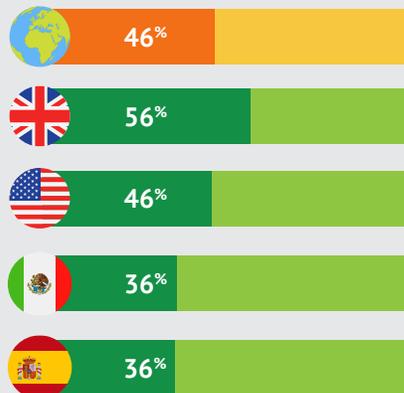
However, according to the YouGov survey, these issues are not very well understood by the general public. Surprisingly, in the UK, where people are among the most enthusiastic recyclers, there seemed to be the least awareness, although there were significant education challenges across all the territories.

### NON-PLASTIC VS. PLASTIC PACKAGING



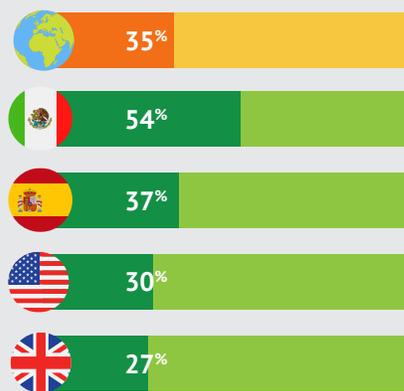
**69%** of adults across all territories believed that non-plastic packaging (e.g. cardboard, glass, cans, etc.) is better for the environment than plastic packaging.

### ENERGY USAGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



**46%** of adults across all territories believed that it takes more energy and natural resources to recycle plastic than paper.

### IMPACT OF SMALL VS. LARGE PACKAGING



**Only 35%** of adults across all territories believed that using a small amount of plastic packaging can be better for the environment than a larger amount of a different packaging material, such as cardboard.

# > Reduce, recycle, reuse: a beverage packaging case study.

Now more than ever, the packaging industry is committed to reducing the environmental impact and acting responsibly. Take, for example, Hi-Cone ring carriers, which are 100% recyclable where #4 LDPE plastics are collected. Of course, this means having the right recycling infrastructure, so Hi-Cone is investing in programs to increase global recovery rates of ring carriers, where the infrastructure might not currently exist.

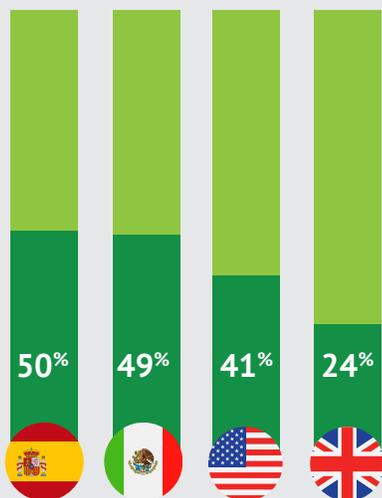
In Spain, the company is educating consumers that Hi-Cone ring carriers can be put in the yellow recycling bin. Meanwhile, in Mexico, the UK, the USA and Canada, the company is working with TerraCycle®, a specialist recycling company, and other recycling partners to keep ring carriers from becoming waste materials. UK consumers can simply visit [RingRecycleMe.co.uk](http://RingRecycleMe.co.uk), download a freepost label and send the ring carriers to TerraCycle®

through the post. This is the first manufacturer-led program of its kind. Consumers in regions not covered by Hi-Cone's TerraCycle® activities can visit [RingRecycleMe.com](http://RingRecycleMe.com) to learn more about programs in their area.

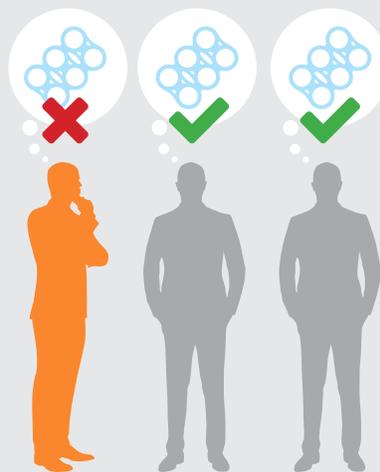
However, much remains to be done.

*To learn more about Hi-Cone's ring carrier recycling programs, visit [RingRecycleMe.com](http://RingRecycleMe.com)*

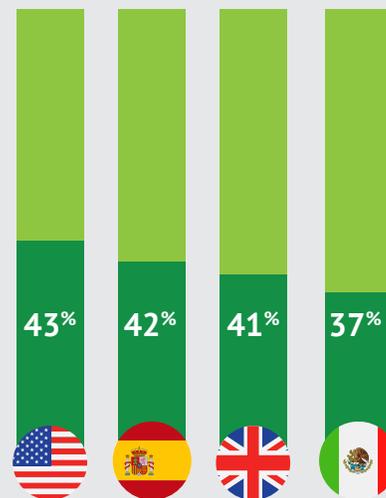
**Only 24%** of UK adults knew that beverage ring carriers can be recycled where they live.



**35%** of UK adults did not think it was possible to recycle beverage ring carriers where they live – far worse than in the other territories.



**41%** of UK adults did not know either way.



## REDUCE, RECYCLE, REUSE - CONTINUED

Hi-Cone as a company has collected over 300,000,000 ring carriers over the last 25 years. The ring carriers have been repurposed into new useful products.

Hi-Cone has acknowledged the recycling issue and are working with TerraCycle® and other retail and supply chain partners to raise awareness that ring carriers can be recycled. As the next step on their journey, Hi-Cone launched their new RingCycles™ multipacking carrier in 2019 using post-consumer recycled (PCR) resin.

PCR is made of recycled plastics: by using PCR, Hi-Cone is diverting millions of pounds of plastic from landfills and reusing it. Hi-Cone commissioned a third-party report to compare the impacts of suppliers producing recycled material relative to virgin material. Considering all the processes needed in both scenarios, creating a kilogram of PCR material has significant savings

over creating a kilogram of virgin material. PCR material:



Uses **90% less non-renewable energy**



Uses **83% less water**



Emits **75% less GHG (greenhouse gasses)**



Creates **43% less solid waste**<sup>iii</sup>

RingCycles™ consist of 50% post-consumer recycled (PCR) resin, so these new carriers have environmental benefits over the previous product. Further studies compare impacts on a carrier level. This is one example of how Hi-Cone continues to set and work towards ambitious sustainability goals, and this in turn helps their customers make strides towards their sustainability goals. By the end of 2020, all of Hi-Cone's customers will have transitioned to the 50% PCR ring carriers.



For full life cycle information, visit [hi-cone.com/sustainability](https://hi-cone.com/sustainability)

“Hi-Cone as a company has collected over **300 million** ring carriers over the last 25 years.”



<sup>iii</sup> Cradle-to-resin comparison conducted by Franklin Associates with results based on analysis with 1kg LDPE and recycled LDPE. Savings shown for resin material only, results finished carrier product from 50% PCR resin will vary.

# › Moving towards a circular economy.

In a perfect world, no products would get disposed of improperly and end up in the natural environment. None of them would even go to landfill or be incinerated; instead, all products would be reused or recycled. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation is one of the most prominent proponents of the concept of a truly circular economy:

*"The vision is that 100% of plastic products should eventually be recycled and used as PCR to make new products."*<sup>19</sup>

The call for a circular economy has been supported by many organizations, including the UN,<sup>20</sup> the EU and the UK government and WRAP.

Scientific American defines this as:

*"A better alternative... where waste is minimized by planning in advance how materials can be reused and recycled at a product's end of life rather than trying to figure that out after the fact."*<sup>21</sup>

Ted Siegler, a Vermont resource economist who has spent more than 25 years working with developing nations on garbage, has said:

*"This isn't a problem where we don't know what the solution is. [...] We know how to pick up garbage. Anyone can do it. We know how to dispose of it. We know how to recycle."*<sup>22</sup>

However, to ensure that our efforts have the necessary impact, change has to happen on a large scale. We have to build the institutions, systems and processes. In its report, The New Plastics Economy, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation wrote:

*"There are many innovation and improvement efforts that show potential, but to date these have proved to be too fragmented and uncoordinated to have impact at scale."*<sup>23</sup>

Companies like Hi-Cone are working with partners including the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, to push for change on a systemic level and really make a difference.

“The vision is that  
**100%**  
of plastic products  
should eventually be  
recycled and used  
as PCR to make new  
products.”



## > A next step: fixing recycling systems.

A key stumbling block on the way to a circular plastics economy is inconsistent recycling provision. In 2018, the BBC reported that there were over 39 different sets of rules for what local authorities collect across the UK.<sup>24</sup> It is this lack of consistency that led the European Commission to call for

*“Better and more harmonized separate collection and sorting.”*

It continued:

*“Reducing fragmentation and disparities in collection and sorting systems could significantly improve the economics of plastics recycling, saving around a hundred euros per ton collected.”<sup>25</sup>*

Fragmented, inconsistent provision confuses consumers and frustrates their recycling efforts. The UK government’s

‘Plastic Food and Drink Packaging’ report received written responses from UK consumers that included:

*“The symbols used to denote whether plastics are recyclable is very confusing and misleading. [...] A clear and consistent system of labelling plastics is required.”*

And:

*“Despite the fact I am a compulsive recycler I find it such a drag trying to find the tiny triangle [...] indicating whether the item is something that my local authority are currently recycling. It feels as if this vital information is hidden away on purpose it is so difficult to find.”<sup>26</sup>*

The YouGov survey data bears out the following mixed picture of plastics recycling: 72% of UK

adults were confident that they knew how to recycle plastic packaging effectively (e.g. how & where to do this), compared with 55% in Mexico.

UK adults were also the most likely (58%) to report there were enough facilities currently available to recycle plastics effectively at home, compared with a low of 26% in Mexico;

77% of Mexican adults wanted more recycling bins in public spaces than are currently available, compared with only 50% of American adults calling for the same thing.

And people, on the whole, were not confident in the efficacy and transparency of the recycling system.

**“People, on the whole, were not confident in the efficacy and transparency of the recycling system.”**



## A NEXT STEP, FIXING RECYCLING SYSTEMS - CONTINUED

Across all the territories, 34% of adults believed that only half the recycling they put in recycling bins in their area was recycled. While 31% of adults believed only a quarter was recycled, and only 3% believed that everything was recycled.

It is not only consumers who are questioning the global recycling system's transparency and effectiveness. In 2019 the *New York Times* reported that recycling is falling in many USA cities, because of increased costs and lack of processing facilities abroad.<sup>27</sup> The Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, meanwhile, has reported on recycling centers closing in Mexico since China began refusing to accept foreign waste at its treatment plants<sup>28</sup> and the *Guardian* in the UK reported in 2018 that much of the plastic waste we ship for recycling overseas might actually end up in landfill.<sup>29</sup> This situation was also commented on by *The Drinks Business* magazine, which added:

*"The paradox here is that recyclers are actually struggling to source sufficient upstream PCR (post consumer recycled plastic) to meet an increased demand for recycled plastic."<sup>30</sup>*

### TRUST IN RECYCLING SYSTEM



**31%** of adults believed only a quarter was recycled.



**34%** of adults believed that only half the recycling they put in recycling bins in their area was recycled.



Only **3%** of adults believed that everything was recycled.

# > The way ahead: plastic is not waste.



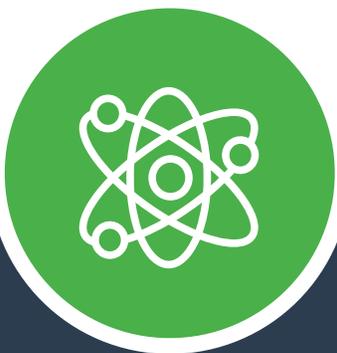
Fixing the recycling system and building trust that it is effective is just one of the many tasks that face us. As Helen Jordan from the British Plastics Federation said:

"We need to stop thinking of plastic as 'waste,' but as a renewable resource that needs to be disposed of correctly."<sup>31</sup>

*We all have a role to play if we are to change behaviors at every level of society. We all must:*



Push for governments and local authorities and packaging providers to improve recycling systems



Work with retailers, packaging providers, and brands to use innovative, science-based, thoughtful insights to change packaging procedures for the better



Improve consumer awareness about how to recycle all types of plastics, including ring carriers, and drive a circular economy

The situation will not improve overnight, but as a collective, governments, packaging producers, retailers, brands, and consumers can make significant inroads and change the way the world approaches recycling in the future.

# > About Hi-Cone.

Hi-Cone is a leading supplier of multi-packaging systems for global beer, soft drink and general products industries. One of our most recognizable products is the ring carrier (often known as a 'six-pack ring') that holds together your multipacks of beer or soft drinks.

Since our inception, we have been committed to developing the best, most environmentally responsible packaging possible, and to actively working to reduce its environmental impact. For example, ring carriers were developed to minimize the amount of packaging used in beverage multi-packs.

Moving forward, we believe that plastic will continue to play a role in ensuring the growing global population can safely access the food and drink it needs. But the sustainable way forward is as yet unclear. In addition, there are significant worries about the current recycling system, as well as misconceptions about different kinds of packaging and their effect on the environment.<sup>iv</sup>

We want to help provide information to all stakeholders on the current possibilities of plastics, packaging, and

recycling. Additionally, we are setting ourselves ambitious goals for increasing the sustainability of our products further. In 2019, Hi-Cone started transitioning its portfolio, moving towards exclusively offering packaging containing post-consumer recycled content. We remain committed to researching and further improving our products, as well as to building a circular economy, moving forward.

We want to contribute to making responsible recycling easier for consumers, both by ensuring recyclability through public system (such as the yellow bins in Spain) as well as supporting alternative programs where this is not possible (e.g. by partnering with TerraCycle® in the UK as well as other partners worldwide). We want our partners – food brands and retailers – as well consumers to trust that we are doing our part, reducing the amount of packaging which is sent to landfill, increasing recycling and minimizing our impact on the environment.

We are committed to the fundamental shift towards the circular plastics economy and are working to...

 **Reduce** the amount of virgin plastic used in ring carriers.

 **Recycle** – increase infrastructure through partnerships where wider systems do not exist today.

 **Reuse** – process plastic (ring carriers and other flexible plastic) into recycled plastic instead of going to landfills.

By the end of 2020, we are transitioning all customers worldwide to products with at least 50% post-consumer recycled content and will stop producing ring carriers made from all virgin plastic. Additionally, we are supporting the recycling of plastics where needed and within our scope. Last, but not least, we are committed to developing a 100% recyclable, biodegradable or compostable solution by 2025 and will be working closely with partners across the industry and supply chain to amplify our efforts.

**To follow our progress:**  
[hi-cone.com/sustainability](https://hi-cone.com/sustainability)



<sup>iv</sup> See the 'Sources' section at the end of this document for more information on the YouGov survey

# > Our Vision: *Create a path to a more sustainable future for packaging.*

## > OUR PACKAGING GOALS



### REDUCE VIRGIN PLASTIC USE

Last year, we introduced RingCycles™, made from 50% post-consumer (PCR) recycled content, and announced that we would transition all customers worldwide, eliminating our use of virgin plastic by half.

#### GOAL: 100%

100% of Hi-Cone products made from post-consumer recycled content by 2021.

#### PROGRESS:

All Hi-Cone ring carriers will be made from 50% post-consumer (PCR) recycled content by 2021, reducing our use of virgin plastic by half.



### CONTRIBUTE TO A CIRCULAR FUTURE FOR PACKAGING

As a leader in providing environmentally responsible multi-packaging solutions, we are investing to improve education and increase recycling rates by ensuring recyclability through public systems as well as supporting alternative programs. We are committed to the fundamental shift towards the circular economy.

#### GOAL: 2020

In 2020, we will continue to keep plastics out of the environment and contribute to a circular economy for packaging.

#### PROGRESS:

We launched ringrecycleme.co.uk in 2019 in partnership with TerraCycle® in the UK, the first manufacturer-led recycling program. In 2020, we will launch ringrecycle.me.com to ensure ring carriers are recyclable globally where #4 LDPE is not widely recycled today.



### DEVELOP NEXT GENERATION SOLUTIONS

In 2019 Hi-Cone added clarity to our Sustainability Vision to ensure our product portfolio has positive end-of-life outcomes, committing to solutions that are 100% recyclable, compostable or biodegradable by 2025.

#### GOAL: 100%

100% of Hi-Cone Products Recyclable.

#### PROGRESS:

We are currently developing next generation solutions. We will report our progress on this goal in 2021.

*Shaping a path to a more sustainable tomorrow.*

HI-CONE

# > People and our planet.



Investing in and making a difference in the communities in which we live and work.

For updates on our goals and our work around the world visit:

 [hi-cone.com](https://hi-cone.com)

CONNECT WITH HI-CONE:



# > Sources

## Survey methodology

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 5,509 adults of which 2,228 were in the UK, 1,268 in the US, 1,011 in Spain, and 1,002 in Mexico. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th – 21st November 2019. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all country adults (aged 18+).

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