

# Member Profile: United Plastics, Inc. Part 2

*“We don’t treat your scrap like garbage”*

By Allan Harari

So many potential customers we meet have the desire but are unwilling to make the commitment in resources and time to establish a recycling program fearing negative returns or, worse, the discovery that their good intentions have added to the problem instead of solving it,” said IAPD member Sahil Aggarwal of United Plastics, Inc. (UPI).

In the last issue, we introduced Sahil and spoke about the value that a solid Environmental Stewardship program can bring to your bottom line.

“Our ideal customer is a company that is run by a great group of people that cares about the environment, understands the values and simply put, does not treat their scrap like garbage,” said Sahil. “It’s especially annoying, from both an environmental and commercial point of view, when a US\$100 million company doesn’t train their employees to invest the extra five minutes it takes to segregate their scrap for recyclers.”

Many companies still maintain a dumpster out back that gets picked up by a waste management company which sends the contents to landfills. Why not spend a little extra time to segregate? “UPI provides bins to our customers,” Sahil explained. “The company fills them up with any type of polymer waste that cannot be reused for any of their internal needs. UPI picks up and weighs the bins since payment is based on a price per pound augmented by the quality of the scrap.”

Segregation adds value. Some companies only have space for one or two bins that get picked up and segregated by a recycler. Other larger companies have space and volume for four or five bins for greater separation. For example, bins for clear polycarbonate (PC), color PC, acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene (ABS), styrene, etc. The more segregation, the higher price paid per pound.

Whatever the level of segregation at the customer level, all scrap must be 100 percent segregated before it goes into the hopper; and that requires a skilled recycler to create the greatest value. At the simplest level, if there is any contamination of color PC with clear PC, the entire batch goes to garbage. Properly segregated scrap is put into a blender that heats the scrap until it becomes a thick slurry that can then be pelletized, further shredded or reground based on demand.

What goes in impacts the value of what comes out. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC), low density polyethylene (LDPE) film is low end, undesirable material that gets shipped overseas for the production of single-use products. Likewise, some Lexan (found in a lot of electronic waste, circuit boards, etc.) comes with harder, scratch-resistant material that is hard to recycle in the United States, also gets sent overseas, mostly to India and China, and is typically repurposed into, guess what — more single-use products. “It’s the best solution for that type of product today. If we didn’t have that overseas

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## Get Into the GreenScene™



The IAPD Environmental Committee developed the GreenScene™ program to recognize those IAPD member companies that incorporate environmentally friendly, sustainable business practices into their operations. Qualified IAPD members are eligible to display the GreenScene logo on their website, in their marketing collateral, in email signatures and on press releases to announce to their contacts that they are an environmentally

responsible company. If you aren’t already a GreenScene company, you can become one by filling out the GreenScene application and submitting it to Courtney Karr at [ckarr@iapd.org](mailto:ckarr@iapd.org) by August 15. Chances are you are already implementing a number of green practices. Here’s your chance to be recognized for being an environmentally responsible business!



For more information and resources, visit the new Sustainability section of [www.iapd.org/sustainability](http://www.iapd.org/sustainability).

outlet, the scrap would end up in a landfill,” said Sahil. The same applies to masked material, as the cost of removing the masking is cost prohibitive. There is always a bottom line.

From a commercial point of view, it does not pay to recycle foam PVC heavily used in the printing industry, as the price of raw material is generally low. “For the cost of recycling 500 pounds of foam PVC, I can buy the equivalent volume brand new,” said Sahil.

At the other end of the spectrum, performance engineered high-grade scrap is mostly used in the United States by domestic companies remaking sheets or reused in injection molding and extruder applications. Some high-grade scrap is reground into pellets and sold in the secondary market where it becomes other products. While there are multiple outlets, the one place this scrap is not going is to the landfill!

Performance plastics distributors can be doing a lot more. At the very least, pallets, edge banding, veneer, etc. gets collected locally, baled and then sold to a recycler. Distributors can play an important role to help accumulate the volume necessary to keep freight costs down. “Distributors can provide bins to their customers for pickup by the distributor or by the recyclers,” suggested Sahil. “Some of our customers are delivering product on the way in and collecting bins on the way back. UPI can help set up the program.”

Incorporating a robust recycling program also offers long-term benefits for companies looking to attract future members of the distribution community. Many industries have recognized the importance of speaking to and acknowledging the growing interest millennials have in the environment. Even mighty Wall Street financial services firms that have launched “green funds” to profit from their clients’ sustainability wishes are now seeing those funds as a vehicle to attract young talent that looks west to Silicon Valley for opportunities at seemingly environmentally friendly companies.

IAPD member UPI operates nationwide and there are others that are just a phone call away. If you have a question about finding a recycler

or other questions about environmental stewardship in your market area, the IAPD Environmental Committee is here to help. We are very proud to announce the relaunch of the Sustainability pages on the IAPD website which provide multiple resources and stories from fellow IAPD members who have chosen to make environmental stewardship a part of their business operations.

You can also find information about, and a link to, the 2017 Environmental Award application.

The Award acknowledges the efforts, time and energy IAPD members dedicate to bolstering their corporate contributions to proactive stewardship. Distributors of performance plastics can always do more and the application process provides a great check list to help “get it right the first time.”

“IAPD has been a great source and resource of raw material for our business,” said Sahil. “UPI has learned much from the membership. We are very proud to be able to share my father’s commercial and environmental vision for this industry with our IAPD clients and look forward to getting to meet and work with more IAPD members and their customers.”

Follow this link to the new IAPD Sustainability pages at [www.iapd.org/sustainability](http://www.iapd.org/sustainability) and click on the link for the 2017 GreenScene™ application.

*Allan Harari chairs IAPD's Environmental Committee and is an executive of cell cast manufacturer PT. Margacipta Wirasantosa. For more information, contact Margacipta Wirasantosa, PT., c/o American Trade Sales, Inc., 45 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 2000, New York, NY 10111 USA; (201) 871-3610, fax (212) 899-5403, [acrylics@atsglobal.net](mailto:acrylics@atsglobal.net), or [www.margacipta.com](http://www.margacipta.com).*

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