

Zero Waste

Salem, IN

A Kimball International Case Study



Zero Waste

At the heart of Kimball International’s manufacturing facility’s advanced strategy lies the elimination of pollution and emissions at their source. Alongside this initiative, the company embraces the TRUE (Total Resource Use and Efficiency) process, which entails utilizing renewable materials and optimizing reclamation and recycling efforts. This steadfast dedication has led to Kimball International earning a Zero Waste certification for its Salem, Indiana, facility. This certification, awarded by GBCI (Green Business Certification, Inc.), signifies the company’s ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in safeguarding both people and the planet.



“Kimball International is dedicated to environmental leadership, as evidenced by our Zero Waste certification. This underscores our commitment to excellence, sustainability, and the well-being of our members and communities. By prioritizing sustainable practices, we ensure a positive impact on the planet for current and future generations.”

Greg Meunier
EVP Global Operations
Kimball International

CHALLENGES

- 1 Streamlining systems for waste collection, transport, and storage to optimize efficiency and minimize waste generation throughout the facility’s operations.
- 2 Cultivating buy-in and engagement from all team members, fostering a culture of sustainability and accountability across the organization.
- 3 Establishing strategic partnerships with responsible service providers committed to sustainable practices, ensuring that waste disposal and recycling processes adhere to the highest environmental standards.

ZERO WASTE INITIATIVES

- 1 Formalized policies outlining clear waste handling practices and applications, ensuring consistency and efficiency throughout our operations.
- 2 Introduced pallet-reuse programs in collaboration with our supply partners, minimizing waste generation and promoting circular economy principles.
- 3 Introduced a structured approach to waste management through the implementation of quarterly recycling and waste audits. These audits are designed to systematically evaluate our waste streams, identify areas for improvement, and optimize our recycling efforts.
- 4 Refined our powdercoat management process by meticulous sifting and reusing black powdercoat material. By carefully separating and repurposing this valuable resource, we minimize waste and maximize efficiency in our coating operations, embodying our dedication to sustainability and resource conservation.
- 5 Implemented a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) laundering program as a key step in our commitment to achieving zero waste. Within this framework, we’ve strategically positioned collection containers for used welding sleeves throughout our facility. These items are sent off-site for thorough cleaning, inspection, and subsequent reuse, aligning with our commitment to sustainability and resource efficiency.
- 6 Piloted durable reusable industrial absorbent mats. This initiative was driven by the need for a more eco-friendly approach to managing leaks, spills, and overspray. Our chosen mats are not only versatile but also engineered to efficiently handle spills of various substances such as hydraulic fluid, oil, coolant, and water.
- 7 Integrated zero waste training into regular safety and operation meetings, as well as new member orientation sessions, fostering a culture of sustainability and accountability among our workforce.
- 8 Investigated a community outreach program in collaboration with local elementary schools, aimed at fostering environmental awareness and educating students about the principles and practices of zero waste.
- 9 Expanded the use of Kimball International’s Corporate Recycling Center to encompass commercial, industrial, and government organizations, extending the reach of our zero waste impact beyond our corporation.
- 10 Hosted paper recycle events at the Corporate Recycling Center to promote and extend zero waste to surrounding communities.

BENEFITS

- 1 Enhanced diversion of waste away from landfills, incinerators, and the natural environment, thereby minimizing environmental degradation and conserving valuable resources.
- 2 Mitigated pollution risks, safeguarding public health and preserving delicate ecosystems by preventing the release of harmful substances into the air, water, and soil.
- 3 Achieved substantial cost savings through reduced expenditures on purchasing raw materials and disposal services, as well as lowered waste management expenses associated with landfill fees.
- 4 Contributed to the reduction of Scope 3 emissions, playing a crucial role in mitigating the facility’s carbon footprint and advancing the organization’s sustainability goals in alignment with global climate objectives.
- 5 Strengthened community engagement and collaboration through proactive efforts to promote environmental responsibility and foster partnerships with local stakeholders, thereby cultivating a shared commitment to sustainable practices and collective well-being.

