

Finding New Markets for Old Plastics.

Think Green.®

As one of the world's largest manufacturers of optical and eye care products, Bausch & Lomb counts high-grade plastic as a major component of its solid waste stream. This is particularly true in its manufacturing of precision contact lenses, a process that involves using plastic molds and frames that, for sanitary reasons, must be disposed of after a single use.



In early 1999, Bausch & Lomb's manufacturing plant in Rochester, N.Y., found itself shipping a full truckload of used plastic frames to its local landfill every day. This activity was not only expensive, but it was clearly wasteful and incompatible with the company's Earth-friendly environmental policies.

Bausch & Lomb's management went to their solid waste hauler, Waste Management, and presented them with the following challenge: How do we turn this waste product into an asset? Waste Management in turn, consulted with its wholly owned subsidiary, Waste Management Recycle America (WMRA) in nearby Mellville, N.Y., which analyzed the problem and returned with a win-win solution for everyone involved.

WMRA's plan was to ship the plastic – principally polypropylene and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) – to a grinding plant in nearby Buffalo, where it would be ground and placed in "Gaylord boxes" – 4-foot by 4-foot shipping cubes – for resale to used

plastics buyers. Part of the income gained from the sale of these plastics would be rebated to Bausch & Lomb, thus reducing the manufacturer's waste disposal costs.

The idea was simple – except for one snag: The Bausch & Lomb plastic was contaminated with HEMA, a clear residual film left over from the contact lens manufacturing process. This required WMRA to dig deeply into its database to find prospective buyers who would accept such impure material.

Fortunately, numerous buyers were found both in the United States and overseas, and the recycling program was given the green light to commence.

Now, Bausch & Lomb's truckload-per-day of used plastic results in one to two truckloads of ground plastic per month being offered to users around the country. In addition, WMRA found a new grinding company right in Rochester, which further minimizes transportation costs.

The end result: Plastic is being diverted from local landfills, WMRA has an additional revenue stream, and Bausch & Lomb enjoys not only reduced hauling costs, but the peace of mind that comes from being a good corporate citizen.

Industrial recycling challenges require a company with superior vision.

From everyday collection to environmental protection, Think Green. Think Waste Management.

