

Eco-friendly TerraCycle keeps costs down with HP technology

TerraCycle turns to HP to keep its business lean yet productive



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–Tom Szaky, CEO, TerraCycle Inc.

HP customer case study: Fast-growing TerraCycle chooses HP for reliability and durability

Industry: Consumer packaged goods

HP recommends Windows Vista® Business.

Objective:

Integrate secure, reliable, worry-free technology for needs of small business

Approach:

Use HP Compaq business notebooks, desktop PCs and HP printers

IT improvements:

- HP reliability reduces costly and disruptive downtime for repairs
- Product compatibility permits plug-and-play operation and expansion

Business benefits:

- Efficient, low-cost way to customize promotions in-house
- Quick redesign of promotions as products are changed or added
- Easy integration of additional HP products as the company grows and changes
- Service from a provider that understands the needs of small businesses

Talk about growing a business from the ground up. In 2001, in response to a business-plan contest, two Princeton University students created a unique eco-friendly company whose main product is fertilizer made from worm excrement. Their product packaging: recycled soda bottles.

Smile, if you like. Tom Szaky and Jon Beyer now wear wide grins. TerraCycle Inc. today is a rapidly growing, multi-million dollar company.

HP products help TerraCycle grow

“We’ve been using HP products from the very beginning and have been using them more and more as the company grows,” says Szaky, TerraCycle’s CEO.



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Tom Szaky, CEO, TerraCycle Inc.



The main reasons they chose HP: affordability, durability and ease of integration. “We can buy an HP product and be using it in minutes.”

“HP gives us simple, worry-free technology that gets the job done. Our employees don’t have to be computer experts to use HP products, so they can concentrate on doing their jobs. That’s an important reason why we’ve been able to grow from 1 to 100 employees and avoid technology glitches,” says Szaky.

“We’re happy with what we have. HP gives us worry-free technology that gets the job done without requiring a lot of computer experts on staff. It’s helping us build the business.”

Tom Szaky, CEO, TerraCycle Inc.

TerraCycle’s unusual rise in the highly competitive plant-garden field coincides with growing concern for the environment in its market area, the United States and Canada. “We make and package consumer products out of waste,” Szaky explains. “As far as I know, we are the only company in the world to do that, and as a bonus, our products retail for a very affordable price.”

To make its primary product, TerraCycle Plant Fertilizer, the company buys organic waste in large quantities.

The garbage is fed to worms, and the resulting Worm Poop—that’s actually TerraCycle’s product name—is collected, liquefied and cooked for two days to produce liquid fertilizer. Worm Poop is sold in recycled soda bottles that TerraCycle buys from organizations that collect them as a fund-raiser.

Employees use a number of HP desktop and notebook PCs. Szaky and other TerraCycle executives rely on HP Compaq nc6400 Business Notebooks to conduct their business both in the company’s home office in Trenton and when they travel for versatile mobility¹. The notebook security features help protect private information. The company has also standardized on HP Business Desktop PCs. Employees stick with widely used and supported applications including Microsoft® Office, Adobe® Creative Suite 3, Macromedia applications and others.

Szaky carries an HP iPAQ Mobile Messenger with a built-in camera, as well as calendar and e-mail capabilities².

“One of the great things about HP technology is that it’s plug and play. It’s easy to connect one device to another, and things integrate well across our entire company, from our headquarters in Trenton to offices in Toronto and Atlanta. Everything works with our existing infrastructure and is reliable.”

HP recommends
Windows Vista®
Business.

Customer at a glance

TerraCycle Inc., based in Trenton, N.J., is a rapidly growing company that uses worm droppings to produce its main product, plant fertilizers.

The company maintains that it is the most eco-friendly company in the world because its products are derived from organic waste and then sold in recycled bottles.

To learn more, visit www.terracycle.net

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As a small company with a single IT employee, TerraCycle benefits from the simplicity made possible by standardizing on a few technology platforms that are consistent, reliable, and easy to service.

Home-grown marketing

TerraCycle decided it would be more cost-effective to print its own product promotions, each of which mentions the specific retail store that carries its products.

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The company chose HP Designjet large format printers capable of printing 42-inch-wide posters to produce in-store promotional materials. The first Designjet printer proved so successful that the company added a second one later. Design work is done on the HP Compaq Business Notebook PCs.

"We chose to produce our point-of-sale materials in-house because we wanted everything to be customized," Szaky explains. "For example, the bottles for our products are collected locally by students

across America. We wanted to give them credit in the markets where they collect the bottles. So customizing our marketing material was critical. HP products let us do it easily and efficiently."

Durability and quality

Szaky explains, "The durability and quality of the HP notebooks and printers is amazing. Literally, they're running all day, printing posters and displays for different stores."

How important is that to a company like TerraCycle? "It's absolutely critical," Szaky replies. "That allows us to stay competitive."

Printing all materials internally, including product labels, is inexpensive and allows the design team to respond swiftly to product changes. Changes can be made quickly when a product is altered or a new one is added.

In order to focus all of its energy on growing the business, TerraCycle relies on HP. HP can help small business with everything from advice on choosing and using technology to achieve business goals, online or hands-on help, do-it-yourself instructions, and guidance from HP on expanding technology to meet growth demands, all under the umbrella of HP Total Care.

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Szaky also appreciates that HP demonstrates a concern for the environment—as a role model for recycling computer products. “As a small company where the environment is central to what we do, we appreciate finding a large corporate partner like HP who shares our commitment,” says Szaky.

Szaky fully expects continued growth to require the company to add HP computing solutions. “We’re happy with what we have. HP gives us worry-free technology that gets the job done without requiring a lot of computer experts on staff. It’s helping us build the business.”

Contact the HP
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¹Wireless access point and Internet service sold separately. Availability of public wireless access points limited.

²A standard WLAN infrastructure, other Bluetooth-enabled devices, separately purchased equipment, and a service contract with a wireless airtime provider may be required for applicable wireless communication. Wireless Internet use requires a separately purchased service contract. Check with service provider for availability and coverage in your area. Not all web content available.

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This customer’s results depended upon its unique business and IT environment, the way it used HP products and services and other factors. These results may not be typical; your results may vary.

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