

## Sustainability Case Study: Recycle Technologies

### About the Company

Gary Gunderson founded [Recycle Technologies](#) (RTI) of Wood Dale, Illinois, in 1994, and has grown it to be Illinois' largest and most experienced antifreeze service. In 2007, RTI installed a distillation process in order to upgrade the quality of RTI's recycled antifreeze, recycle a larger variety of antifreeze waste streams, and provide a more environmentally friendly high quality alternative to virgin antifreeze. RTI is licensed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and has always done its best to comply with or exceed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. RTI products are sold to commercial, government and retail clients.

### The Business Challenge

As a recycler of antifreeze, RTI considers itself to be in a "green" industry. RTI recycles a product that takes a lot of energy to originally produce, and which is toxic if improperly disposed. Gary Gunderson, RTI's president, has always considered himself and his firm to be highly ethical and tries to do the right thing. He felt that "going green" might provide cost savings and marketing advantages. RTI hired [Skiba Consulting](#) (SCL) to help them assess their environmental impacts and opportunities, create a green/sustainability plan, and provide implementation support.

### How Skiba Consulting Helped

SCL decided that RTI would benefit from an approach that allowed the company to quickly focus on key areas that might be good for both the company's bottom line and the environment. RTI would primarily rely on its in-house technical expertise to implement projects with limited outside assistance.

SCL led a high level assessment of RTI's environmental impacts, and created a One Page Green Plan™ to create a roadmap for moving forward. The plan included a three year green vision for RTI, specific and measurable objectives, strategies for achieving the vision and objectives, and projects that would "bend the curve" (make a significant difference.) SCL continues to work with RTI by providing regular coaching to keep projects moving forward, and by introducing outside resources when necessary.

### Results

RTI now recycles cooling water, thereby decreasing water usage by 35-40%, which could fill an Olympic size pool every year. Gas usage is down by 4%, saving \$1,500 per year based on process changes alone and no financial investment. Fewer chemicals are used due to the installation of an electrolysis system. The distillation process is more consistent with the installation of a variable speed fan on the cooling tower; resulting in a more consistent processing temperature and lower electrical usage.

After we had calculated RTI's greenhouse gas (GHG) impact, we compared our results with a life cycle assessment (LCA) for virgin antifreeze. We discovered that RTI's recycled antifreeze has only 20% of the GHG impact of virgin antifreeze! RTI has now refocused its marketing strategy, with a new mission statement of *Green<sup>3</sup>: Green Company x Green Process x Green Products*. RTI has revised its marketing materials and website, and is attracting business from clients who value working with a company that incorporates sustainability into its business operations. RTI's green activities were featured in [Business Week Small Biz magazine](#), and at a presentation to the Association of Responsible Recyclers (NORA). Recycle Technologies strongly values sustainability due to the business value that it provides, and incorporates sustainability into its business strategy and decision making.