

4 Ways IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) Supports your Sustainability Plan



Think Reuse Before Recycling



Electronic waste is becoming the fastest growing¹ solid waste stream in the world, and this poses a serious challenge. The need to properly manage and recycle this waste offers us the opportunity to transform our throwaway culture. These challenges are receiving board-level attention in most organizations with 90% of S&P 500 Index companies publishing sustainability reports in 2019², an increase from 86% in 2018. Your IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) program is an excellent way to contribute to these sustainability goals and help solve this worldwide problem.

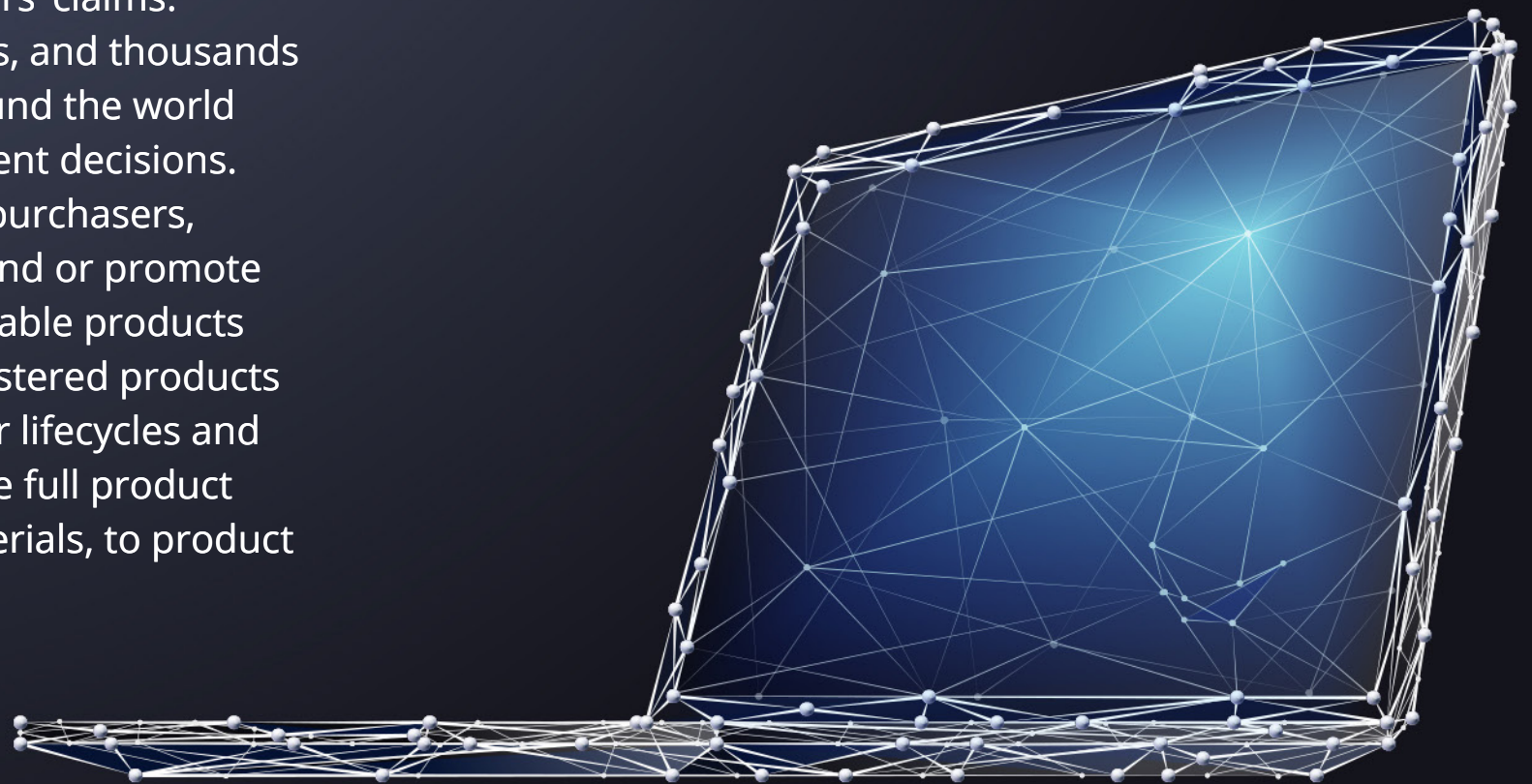
A best-in-class IT Asset Management and Disposition program should take a comprehensive approach, from what you buy to how you dispose. It goes well beyond environmental concerns, it makes good business sense! Make sure your program includes the following four characteristics.

1 Purchase of Sustainable Electronics

In a world where climate change, human rights issues, and environmental issues all play a role in consumers' buying choices, we can start the processes by examining our own procurement approaches to gain better visibility over the activities of our partners and suppliers. Simply put, it is important to understand what you are buying and how it was built.

It's important to understand what you buy and how it's built

As the leading global ecolabel for the IT sector, the EPEAT³ program provides independent verification of manufacturers' claims. National governments, including the United States, and thousands of private and public institutional purchasers around the world use EPEAT to support their sustainable procurement decisions. The EPEAT Registry⁴, an easy-to-use resource for purchasers, manufacturers, re-sellers and others wanting to find or promote environmentally preferable products, lists sustainable products from a broad range of manufacturers. EPEAT-registered products offer a reduced environmental impact across their lifecycles and meet strict environmental criteria that address the full product lifecycle, from energy conservation and toxic materials, to product longevity and end-of-life management.



Did you know?



Producing a computer along with its monitor takes **1.5 tons of water, 48 pounds of chemicals, and 530 pounds of fossil fuels**



Reusing or recycling computers create **296 more jobs per year for every 10,000 tons of computer waste processed**



Recycling 1 million cell phones recovers **35,000 pounds of copper, 33 pounds of palladium, 772 pounds of silver, and 75 pounds of gold**

2 Promotion of Reuse Initiatives

Why should reuse be your first option? Because making a new product requires materials and energy. Raw materials must be extracted from the earth, the product must be fabricated, then transported to where it will be sold. Most electronic equipment has a 10-year lifespan, but many corporate refreshes occur every 3 or 4 – leaving 6 to 7 years of useful life on the table.



The easiest way you can become more sustainable, protect the environment, and start saving money, is by reusing your own electronic equipment before it becomes waste. The best way to promote a reuse culture is to start from within by building buy-in and incentivizing positive behavior with key team members. This also makes financial sense. Simply extending a technology refresh by one year can save a mid-sized company (with revenue of \$50 million) over \$2 million⁵.



The best way to promote a reuse culture is to start from within

If internal reuse is not an option, then a certified ITAD partner should resell working machines or parts that have been properly tested. Donations to charitable organizations are another way to extend the life of equipment, but it is best to work with a partner that not only prepares machines for reuse, but helps with the final return of donated machines at the end of life. You don't want to worry about your donated equipment being disposed improperly.



3 Certified Recycling



IT equipment should be properly recycled only after all reuse options are exhausted. Americans throw away an estimated \$55 billion in e-waste material annually⁶ (more than the 2019 Gross Domestic Product of many countries!) and sadly, just 20% of e-waste is documented to have been collected and recycled, despite high-value recoverable materials such as copper and gold.

Recycling is an essential way to improve sustainability goals, but watch out, not all recyclers are the same. Recycling industry certifications are extremely important. Working with a recycler that is e-Stewards⁷ and R2 certified⁸ ensures your partner is not only being responsible with the treatment of the environment, but they are also processing your data-containing devices in a secure manner. And by earning these certifications, your partner will be able to demonstrate that they adhere to industry standards, procedures, and regulations.

If certification is one side of the data security coin, transparency is the other. According to a new study by MIT⁹, sustainability must include productive, environmentally friendly conditions for workers, and end-to-end visibility in all environments from raw materials through delivery. But in many cases, there are multiple layers of processing between recycling companies that create an information void. To ensure your equipment and data is being recycled properly, you need an ITAD partner that can deliver real-time access and complete visibility into the entire downstream process. This means providing audited information that includes weights, destinations, and credentials of your processing network.

⁶ 'E-Waste Recycling Facts and Figures', The Balance Small Business: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/e-waste-recycling-facts-and-figures-2878189#citation-4>

⁷ E-Stewards: <http://e-stewards.org>

⁸ R2 Standard Development: <https://sustainableelectronics.org/r2/r2-standard-development/>

⁹ 'Supply chain visibility boosts consumer trust, and even sales', MIT: <https://sustainableelectronics.org/r2/r2-standard-development/>

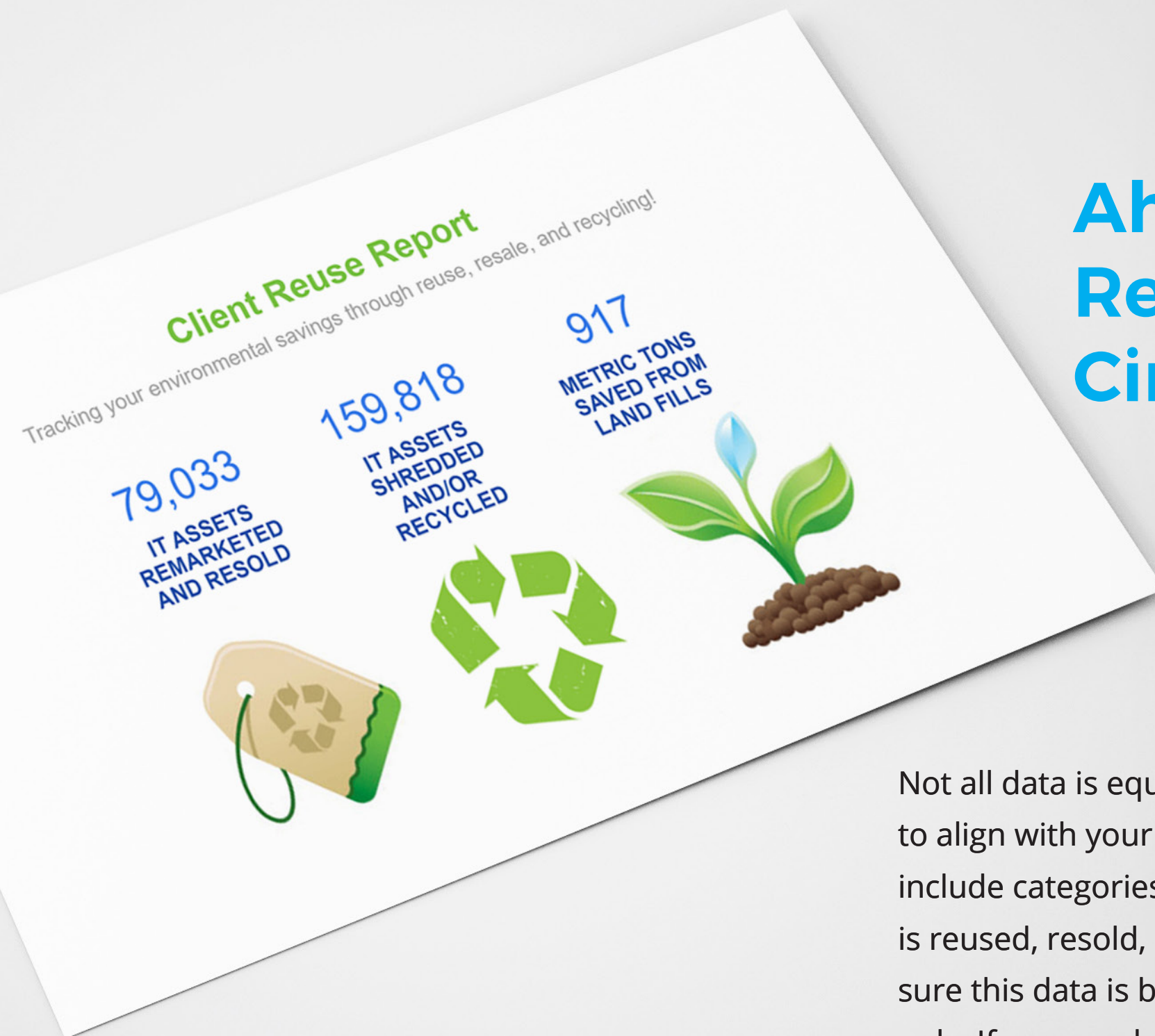
4 Sustainability Reporting

The importance of corporate reporting is rising amid efforts to assess, quantify and communicate ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance) metrics, and progress toward net-zero carbon emissions and other sustainability goals. It is often stated that what gets measured gets improved and measuring progress builds team awareness and buy-in.

ITAD activities are a pivotal way to provide data back to your organization to show progress towards sustainability goals, however this opportunity is often missed. Collecting information across internal divisions or from multiple ITAD and recycling partners can pose a challenge. A best practice in reporting is done by a lead partner or by consolidating activities with the right ITAD partner.



Ahead of the Curve Reporting for the Circular Economy



Not all data is equal, so there needs to be a proper conversion to align with your sustainability metrics and goals. Data should include categories, units, weights, and locations of equipment that is reused, resold, donated and recycled. For recycled material, make sure this data is based on actual shipment data of your material only. If your goals include progress towards circular economy initiatives, try to understand what your recycled material is being converted into.



**Contact us to learn how
IT Asset Disposition can
help your sustainability plan.**

Get in touch with our team today!