

Are Garbage Cans Your Company's Worst Enemy?

You may feel like your company's garbage can is a fairly neutral device. After all, it's not like your garbage can is a terminator robot, seeking to find and destroy its target at any cost. Despite its unassuming appearance, your garbage can could morph into an unexpected Trojan Horse – a structure that seems safe and harmless until suddenly it becomes a messy enemy swallowing up your reputation.

Between garbage cans, dumpsters, and recycling bins, businesses dispose of *a lot* of materials. For materials from day-to-day work memos to minutes from the latest board meeting, the recycling bin is the natural destination for loose pieces of paper. Other items, like old computers, dead hard drives, out-of-date files, contracts with typos in them, and junk mail can also end up in these receptacles at the end of any given workday.

So what's the problem? Isn't disposing of unnecessary junk the best way to keep the office from becoming messy and prevent desks from getting extremely cluttered? Isn't recycling a sustainable and environmentally-conscious activity?

The answer to both of those questions is yes. However, when it comes to disposing of business documents or media, the answer is also considerably more complicated. Old files can include sensitive personal information about past employees or customers that your business is obligated to protect. Meeting minutes, memos, forms, or other office paperwork can disclose trade secrets or other proprietary information about your business. Old hard drives can be treasure troves of confidential data.

Throwing this information into the garbage means that it can be snatched up by anyone who happens to have access to your dumpster. And while it may seem like no one is going to go digging around in the trash for information about your business, that assumption isn't one you can afford to make. Information about your company is valuable—whether it's intellectual property about a flagship product or social security numbers of past employees. Competing companies or identity thieves could be more than willing to dig around in a dumpster for that information.

Luckily, there is an easy solution: cut back on what you put in the trash or recycling by calling CI Information Management and letting our shredding team come in and destroy any potentially sensitive documents. Whether you are in Yakima, Wenatchee, Moses Lake, Walla Walla, the Tri Cities, or anywhere in between, we can shred old files, destroy outdated hard drives, and take vital steps to ensure that your confidential business information never falls into the wrong hands. And since our shredded material is always recycled, you can still feel good about protecting the environment as well.

