

FILLING UP FOR SUSTAINABILITY – BOTTLE FILLERS ARE CHANGING THE GAME



HYDRATION WHITE PAPER



Filling Up For Sustainability – Bottle Fillers Are Changing The Game

With numerous water bottle filler installations, universities, national parks, airports, hotels and cities across the country are getting smarter about addressing the problem of plastic water bottles. Every year Americans throw away some 35 million plastic water bottles, with most of them only being used once. The introduction of water bottle fillers, such as those by Haws®, are helping organizations, businesses and cities take simple, yet powerful, steps toward their sustainability goals.

DRINKING FOUNTAINS & BOTTLED WATER – THE FACTS

Over the last two decades, misconceptions about the quality of municipal tap water, coupled with aggressive marketing campaigns by the bottled water industry, helped facilitate a slow but steady decline for the omnipresent drinking fountain. It was posed that public drinking fountains were dirty and even dangerous, opening the doorway for bottled water consumption in staggering proportions.

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This brings up two issues – the water itself, and the environmental toll from the plastic bottles. According to the Food and Water Watch, a national environmental organization, more than half of all bottled water is actually municipal water repackaged and then sold, making it hundreds and even thousands of times more expensive. Twenty-four percent of bottled water sold in the U.S. is either Pepsi's Aquafina brand or Coke's Dasani brand (Fishman, 2007). Both brands package purified municipal water in their disposable bottles.

There is also a misconception about tap water itself, which is more strictly regulated than bottled water. While the Food and Drug Administration requires testing for bacteria weekly for bottled water, the findings are not made public. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates tap water and requires multiple daily tests – up to hundreds per month – and makes the results public. Plus, the bottled water industry has another loophole, bottled water is subject to regulation only when it's sold from one state to another. It's estimated that between sixty and seventy percent of bottled water is sourced and sold in-state, effectively eliminating any regulation.

Meanwhile the Earth Policy Institute states that 1.5 million barrels of oil are used to create the millions of plastic water bottles we use in the United States every year. Not even one quarter of those bottles are recycled. National landfills are filled with two-million tons of discarded water bottles, each of which will take 500 to 1,000 years to degrade.

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THE ROLE OF WATER BOTTLE FILLERS

As more and more facilities introduce sustainability initiatives, they're turning to bottle fillers as a cost-effective and energy-efficient way to tackle these issues. The convenient design and optional filtration systems in bottle fillers challenge misconceptions about tap water. Their increasing presence in public places encourage water consumption and the use of refillable bottles, all while reducing plastic water bottle waste. Bottle filling stations are designed to be simple and speedy – no more awkward angles to fill up your reusable container – and that convenience is a selling point in itself.

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In 2014, the students, faculty and staff at Duke University saved roughly 400,000 single-use plastic water bottles simply by filling up reusable containers at the 50 bottle filling stations that were installed around campus in January of that year.

The hospitality industry is on board too. Hilton's canopy brand made the switch to bottle filling stations in both the front and back of the house. At its Union Square property in San Francisco, eight bottle filling stations were installed in the lobby, health club, housekeeping, pool areas, sales and events office, and team member cafeteria saving some 200,000 plastic water bottles over a ten-month period between 2015 and 2016. Various Marriott Hotels feature custom-logo bottle filling stations in fitness centers and on guest floors.

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HAWS® BOTTLE FILLERS

As the originator of the modern drinking fountain, *Haws* has been designing and manufacturing innovative products in the hydration industry for the last 110 years. The company has been a leader in the bottle filler segment as well.

Haws bottle fillers come with several installation and attachment options that offer users the benefits of hydrating and refreshing water on the go, with none of the waste and cost of bottled water. Advanced filtration in some *Haws* bottle fillers reduce the taste and odor of chlorine while removing lead and cysts. Key features offered in the product line include antimicrobial additives to prevent the growth of mold and mildew, sensor-operated or manual push-button operation, ADA compliance, and retrofit options for existing drinking fountains. Several models also offer logo customization options.

No matter which *Haws* bottle filler suits your application, its pleasing aesthetics and thoughtful design promote quality and safety to encourage both hydration and sustainability.