

Circularity at Airbus: How SecondLife Cuts Waste and Costs

Key Learnings

Find a Reuse Pathway Before Accepting Waste

Most companies treat unused equipment as a binary choice: use it or scrap it. This ignores the spectrum of value that assets retain at different stages of their life. **A structured cascade** first offering assets internally through a digital marketplace, then selling to external buyers, then donating to institutions **ensures value extraction at each level before moving to the next**. This systematic approach captures financial return where possible while reducing both disposal costs and waste when commercial options are exhausted.

Support Digital Platforms With Local Moderators

Digital marketplaces connect supply and demand, but transactions across different legal entities require navigating local financial and logistics processes that vary by site. Without human support, this complexity becomes a barrier to adoption. **On-site moderators who guide employees through activation, validate listings, and check compliance** bridge the gap between a centralized tool and **decentralized operational realities**. The platform connects people; the moderators make exchanges actually happen.

Structure Compliance Processes to Enable External Sales

Selling assets externally requires involvement from Legal, Commercial, and Ethics & Compliance teams, creating what can become an efficiency challenge. **Pre-structuring dedicated buyback channels for specific material categories with trusted partners already vetted through 'Know Your Customer' agreements** means **not starting every transaction from scratch**. Combined with firm rules that exclude safety-critical items and a robust second hand contract for everything else, this delivers both financial return on materials and avoided disposal costs.

Use KPIs to Make Sustainability Impact Visible at Each Transaction

SecondLife integrates key performance indicators for sustainable development directly into the application, making the waste reduction and CO2 impact of each successful exchange visible to users. **This visibility contributes to changing mindsets** across the organization. Employees see their individual contribution to circular operations, which **generates high levels of satisfaction** and fosters collaboration across teams.

Anchor Strategic Tools at the Central Level

Internal circular initiatives often start as local experiments and stay that way, limited by site-specific ownership and inconsistent IT integration. Scaling requires moving from grassroots projects to strategic infrastructure. **Placing the business owner within the central sustainability team** responsible for company-wide waste strategy, and **integrating the tool into official IT infrastructure**, creates the positioning and durability needed for long-term impact.

Listen to the full episode here:

<https://circularity.fm/episode/circularity-at-airbus-how-secondlife-cuts-waste-and-costs/>

