



Spencer T. Brown

President and Founder Earth Friendly Moving™

A self-proclaimed “trash-digging tree-hugger,” Spencer T. Brown is more formally introduced at parties and social gatherings as an eco-entrepreneur and product designer – labels that only begin to capture his continually evolving role as president and founder of EarthFriendlyMoving.

EarthFriendlyMoving (EFM) is the country’s first comprehensive, environmentally friendly, zero-waste, do-it-yourself packing and moving system developed entirely from recyclable trash mined from local landfills. Brown founded the company in June 2006 in Huntington Beach, Calif., after his own moving experience convinced him of the startling negative impact that relocating Americans were having on local landfills and the environment – and the complete lack of eco-friendly alternatives on the market.

“I was moving a home office from Ladera Ranch to Huntington Beach and was shocked at how much I had to spend on cardboard boxes, tape and other supplies – only to use them once before throwing them out,” he explained. “You could call it invention born from necessity – there wasn’t an affordable, environmentally responsible alternative to cardboard boxes, so I set out to create one.”

Brown started by doing his homework – and lots of it. He researched America’s \$10-billion moving and packing industry 18 hours a day for the next three months, compiling more than 8,000 pages of notes and ideas, and reading several hundred moving- and business-related books and industry reports. Convinced that America’s moving problem was really a trash problem, he visited landfills throughout the western United States to see firsthand the growing impact that moving was having on the country’s landscape.

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“A huge turning point for me was when I visited a south Orange County landfill and saw the sheer volume of trash being generated from moving,” he explained. “People who normally try to conserve at other times of their life would think nothing of tossing out 100 or 200 cardboard boxes after a move. The result was piles of used cardboard 40 feet high – right next to mountains of other recyclable waste products like plastic bleach, detergent and oil bottles, and thousands upon thousands of dirty diapers.”

It was at this point that Brown says he had his “ah-hah” moment: He could recycle the plastic waste into reusable plastic moving containers that could replace landfill-clogging disposable cardboard boxes forever. He could change the way America packs and moves.

Fast-forward six months and Brown’s RecoPack™ was born. Short for Recycled Ecological Packing Solution, the RecoPack is a series of lightweight, stackable moving containers made from recycled plastic waste and rented to relocating customers for a weekly fee of \$1 each. EarthFriendlyMoving mines these hard-to-recycle waste products from Southern California landfills before sorting, scrubbing, grinding and remolding them into five sizes of RecoPack containers, plus a delivery pallet (known as the “Poopy Pallet”) made from 500 recycled baby diapers.

Brown estimates that each time a household substitutes 100 reusable RecoPacks for the 100 disposable cardboard boxes it would normally use during a move, approximately 256 pounds of trash is saved from the landfills – an amount equal to 7,400 plastic bottles, 600 used diapers, 83 pounds of paper, 64 pounds of carbon dioxide and 13 pounds of hydrocarbons in the atmosphere. These 100 boxes also prevent three healthy green trees from being destroyed.

“The more I dug into the problem, and the landfills, the more I saw the opportunity for a cardboard alternative that would not only help people save the Earth, but provide real time and cost savings as well. We’re able to rent each RecoPack for just a buck a box a week, or less than 15 cents a day – which translates into a 50-percent cost savings over traditional packing methods. And, by eliminating the need for cardboard box shopping, vehicle loading and unloading, assembly, taping, breakdown and disposal, a household can save an average of 37 hours during their move based on a 1,500-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath residence.”

One thing led to another and soon Brown had developed an entire packing and moving system to help Americans save time, money and the Earth. In addition to the RecoPack and Poopy Pallet, the company rents or sells more than 100 other earth-saving packing and moving products, ranging from recycled post-consumer packing paper and corn-based packing tape to the RecoCube, a biodegradable packing cube useable as fertilizer after the move.

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A Seal Beach native and Tustin resident, Brown instinctively chose Orange County as his initial test market and has since helped more than 900 local families move more responsibly. He says he will balance planned expansion throughout California and the country against the needs of his two kids, who he cites as the primary reason he founded the company.

“Fatherhood played a big role in my decision to start EarthFriendlyMoving,” he explained. “I wanted to make sure my twins would inherit a cleaner, more eco-balanced Earth – and I remembered thinking that if didn’t do something to make that happen, who would? I truly believe that if we all pitch in, we can reverse the damage that has been caused and pass a better, healthier eco-system on to future generations.”

Beyond offering a way for Americans to move more responsibly, Brown is most excited about using EarthFriendlyMoving to prove that it is possible, even practical, to do business in an eco-friendly way and still make a decent profit. His commitment to environmental stewardship reaches every aspect of the company – from his vegetable oil-powered delivery trucks equipped to extract and store incremental engine power to his 12 lime-green diesel Mercedes-Benz 300SD converted to run on recycled cooking oil collected from Orange County restaurants.

Under his own personal million-tree initiative, he’s pledged to planting one million trees to fulfill his corporate commitment to the four r’s of environmentalism – replace, reuse, recycle and replenish. EarthFriendlyMoving plants a new tree for every customer household that moves with at least 100 RecoPacks. Working with the nonprofit Trees for Seal Beach organization, the company has already planted 900 trees in Seal Beach for its inaugural Orange County customers – with Santa Ana and Long Beach on the list of future tree-planting cities.

“My family lived next door to Jude and Bonnie Nuccio, the owners and famous hybridizers of Nuccio’s Nursery in Altadena, and they helped me develop a passion for trees, especially camellias, azaleas and flowering plants,” Brown explained. “My parents and folks like Jimmy Caviola and Eugene Calidonna of Trees for Seal Breach stressed the importance of being a steward of not only the Earth but your local neighborhood. Trees add shade, oxygen and beauty – and, without them, we’re really all just fish out of water.”

Brown is the first to admit that others find him a bit fanatical – but he takes it in stride knowing he’s making a difference. “If we don’t start doing something tangible to address the big environmental issues facing us – carbon emissions, deforestation, ozone depletion and global warming – we won’t have the need to move from home to home. And, if we make it possible for environmentally minded businesses to flourish, the result can be a win-win for everyone.”

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On the personal side, when not championing to save the Earth, Brown is busy with his son and daughter, photography, cooking, skiing, painting, traveling and playing Sudoku. Born in Portland, Ore., he has lived in Seal Beach his entire life, attending Long Beach State University and graduating from the University of California at Santa Barbara with bachelor's degrees in political science and Spanish literature. Multilingual, he attended a three-year international studies program in Seville, Spain, where he was able to add Castilian Spanish to his other fluent languages of Japanese, Thai, and Vietnamese .

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