Research shows that 95% of all soda cans made in the United States are composed of aluminum. Aluminum is derived from bauxite, which is imported from countries such as Jamaica and Guinea. This metal is then refined, smelted, and molted into ingots. Much of the aluminum used to create soda cans is actually made from recycled material; 25% of the aluminum supply of the United States comes from recycled materials. However, much of the aluminum is lost during the manufacturing process. Though this scrap is unusable in the making of that particular can, the scrap can be recycled and reused. The most significant expense of manufacturing the soda can is the energy required to produce aluminum; however, the use of recycled materials can save up to 95% of the total manufacturing cost. Creating one can from brand new aluminum requires enough fuel to make 3.5 kilowatts of electricity; this method is very costly for the manufacturer as well as for the environment. Using recycled aluminum cans to produce new cans reduces this cost by about 12%.

Soda cans are primarily transported to large retailers. Some companies, especially Coca Cola use the Manual Distribution Center Model to transport their goods. This system involves independent business with links to bottlers operating in densely populated areas. These businesses make weekly deliveries of products like soda cans to nearby areas where independent merchants can transport the cans to their final destination.

A 2012 Gallup poll revealed that 48% of Americans drinks soda on a daily basis. Also in 2012, The U.S. created 1.9 million tons of aluminum containers. Producers of Aluminum cans make about 100 billion cans per year, approximately enough for every American each day.

In 2012, 50% of aluminum cans were recycled by the public nationally. When aluminum is recycled, it is sent to treatment plants for cleaning as well as for sorting. The material is then molted to remove an inks or printing on the cans. Next, the molted aluminum is put into large blocks called ingots; these ingots are then sent to mills where they are rolled out into sheets to provide greater flexibility and strength. Beverage companies use these recycled sheets to manufacture aluminum cans; in roughly six weeks, these newly recycled cans are able to be sent back to shops, ready to be consumed again.

Recycling aluminum cans yields great environmental as well as financial benefits for companies. The EPA maintains that only about 5% of carbon dioxide is produced during the 60 day process of recycling when compared to the process of producing aluminum from bauxite ore.

Though a great percentage of aluminum cans comes from recycled materials, research suggests that the process of recycling a standard soda can is not as efficient as it may seem. A basic beverage can is composed of two kinds of aluminum – a long thin sheet of aluminum that
can be shaped into a strong circular shape for the base of the can, and a stiff, strong piece for the top of the can that can support the overall shape and withstand great pressure when the can is first opened. For the top piece, manufacturers mix aluminum with magnesium to provide the can with strength.
