

## IDEA # 11

# Sustainable Product Packaging

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Why is it, that we reuse the same clothing, reuse the same plates and utensils, keep the same cars, and for most of us the same relationships for years on end, yet when it comes to buying some shampoo at the store we have to get a new bottle every single time? It would seem to me that there should be a better way in the form of reusing the same product containers and packages rather than wasting container after container for products that don't really require brand new containers for each use.



### **You want to take away my precious plastic shampoo bottle?!?!**

Yes! Here's why: We don't need to have new containers each and every time we buy certain products.

Let's take a look at our example shampoo. Remember when they used to ask you if you wanted paper or plastic at the grocery store? You could never decide because one of them was killing a tree, and the other one was creating non-biodegradable waste that could possibly kill an endangered animal. Then, all of a sudden someone had the grand idea to market reusable shopping bags that were made of fabric. It was bold and new, except, it wasn't all that new. People have used reusable containers to take their goods to and from market places for eons; we just took a step backwards off the track when we created disposable carrying containers (paper and plastic bags). It's a good thing we were able to get back on track (or at least some of us are making an attempt to).

### **Let's take the idea of reusable grocery bags one step further**

What you talking about fool? Well, what I'm talking about is reusable containers for supermarket stores. Let's talk about my favorite cereal Cheerios. I don't know about you, but every time I purchase a box of Cheerios the first thing I do when I get home is empty that box into another box, a reusable plastic cereal container with a snap lid and attached pouring cup. That sounds to me like the box in the store is nothing more than a middle man. What if, instead of having boxes of Cheerios with wasted product packaging material, there is simply a dispenser from which you can hold up your container, push in the switch and out pops Cheerios into my container. I pay for it by the volume of my container.

Some people are saying the FDA won't approve that! Well, what if the container has a seal that unless it is fully locked it won't allow any Cheerios to dispense. Others are saying well what about people using dirty containers. Easy, we just invent a laser detection that scans the container before it allows anything to be dispensed and if it's dirty it gives a no go.

Some people are also saying well, why would they trust you to put in the correct amount? Supermarkets already trust us. Let's take a look at exhibits A and B.

Exhibit A: The self checkout. The self check out also known as U-Scan allows an individual to scan their own groceries and enter them into their own reusable bag. This type of check out, one would think would have a high level of theft, but guess what folks, it's wildly successful.

Exhibit B: Bag your own fruit. This has been in existence since the dawn of the fresh fruits and vegetables section of your local grocer. You pick up however many apples you want and place them in a bag. Then you can type in quantity of apples at the self checkout, which seems to go over fine.

The point is, there's a solution to any little problem. All you nay-sayers just don't want to expend the brain energy to come up with some simple solutions to little problems.

Obviously the containers that we can use must be approved and acceptable by the grocer. But those are just details to hammer out later on.

### **Sounds Grrrrrrreat! So what else?**

Que Mas? Well, let's talk more about the reusable packaging spreading like wildfire to other retail environments. Why not? I mean, why simply keep it at your local grocery store. Let's move over to other places that sell products in bags, or buckets.

One of the places I would like to see reusable product packaging would be eating out or fast food. Bring your own container would be a fantastic idea. It's very similar to the idea of bringing your own coffee travel mug to a coffee shop and receiving a refill at a discount. Wouldn't it be nifty if some day an individual could order at McDonalds using their own containers while receiving a discount on their food items? Well, maybe not McDonalds, perhaps some place a little healthier. Maybe KFC bring your own bucket? Ok, that's not healthy either. How about bring your own container to Chinese food. Hmm, not that either. Well, you get the point.

So let's give it a try. Let's demand to be able to bring our own packaging. I know the next time I am at Wawa and I order a sandwich I will bring my own container and ask that they simply drop it in there please.