

Towards a World without Plastic Waste

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Introduction

Our Ocean has become the very gutter of our throw-away society strange. Our ocean provides half the oxygen we breathe and is the biggest CO₂ sink in the world. It indeed is our very own life support system.

It's also the place that we dump 20 tonnes of plastic into every single minute. This spurred me into action, this is why the reason I founded "Searious Business" A company committed to preventing plastic pollution at the very source. Our mission is "Zero plastics into the ocean". With my business background and experience working in sustainability, Our Company set out to help brand owners accelerate towards the circular economy.

Know what you are getting into

If you want to change something, initially we have to understand where we are starting from. The media report that people are keen to get rid of the plastic waste problem, which is really good news. At the same time, I have discovered there is a dire lack of knowledge about preventing plastic waste, reusing and recycling plastic. So the will is there, but the knowledge is lacking.

Put your money where your mouth

When we look at behaviour, research shows that an average consumer opens 7 packaged items a day. So where the big do brands stand? Well 96% of CEOs in the same field believe that the circular economy is important for their company's future success, so that is a good start. However, when you delve a little deeper, it's clear that marketing managers are incentivised to sell volume and can be tempted to use green labels to ride the wave of the latest eco-trend; research and development departments often struggle to keep up with the marketing claims, and finance teams have short-term budgets to meet which often prohibits a sustainable strategy.

How to manage change

Our team at Searious Business recognizes that it's often not technology that is impeding the shift towards zero plastic waste. So how do we help our clients be leaders of change?

I chose my team carefully. My team members have diverse and complementary skills. We know how companies can reduce their plastic footprint and CO₂ emissions. We understand how innovative product design and alternative business models can help businesses achieve a circular use of plastic which also provides them with a competitive edge. We know how to manage material flow so that nothing becomes waste. We have a voice influencing legislation and we understand how regulations will impact different companies. We have experience setting strategy to reach targets. We have a vast network which enables us to engage the whole plastics value chain.

But the bottom line is – people do business with people. People get triggered when something comes close to their heart.

Close to our heart

Typically, money talks: Financial returns by doing the right thing will move people to take action. By simply not throwing plastics away after a one-time use, you can capture much more value and gain up to 95% more efficiency from used materials.

Even more, extensive research and dead animals washed ashore tell us a disturbing story: plastics act as a magnet for toxic chemicals in the sea that are eaten by fish and shellfish that end up on our plates. It will end up in our food chain and cause disruption in fertility cycles, delayed neurodevelopment in children, immune disorders, and a higher risk of hormone-related cancers.

Struggle

Luckily, the world is now increasingly aware of the need to reduce plastic production, mainly via circularity and recycling. The topic lives among people, politics and the media, but also more and more among large producers and buyers of plastic. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation launched the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, through which major producers like Coca Cola give transparency on the volumes of plastic they produce and how they intend to change the linear use of plastics.

So while companies want to reduce plastic use, they often struggle with the way it is done. This means producers need to think where they use plastics, what for and how to capture that value and retain those materials. This often means going back to the drawing board. And this is where the 'uneasiness' steps in. A lot of companies want to work with what they have, and are only willing to optimize and make things more efficient.

Guts

It takes guts to change your business model and move to selling products as a service, for instance. This way, producers can get their products and materials back. If they have redesigned for renewed use, they will be able to capture the value of the used plastics time and again. Using recycled plastics also holds another major advantage: an average of 67% lower CO₂ emissions. With the climate pressure on the rise, this only stresses we need to shift gear.

Drastic measures

Searious Business has been making a difference in the world of plastics, together with some major players from industry. Changing the way furniture is made, and how on-the-go drink packaging should be designed. It helps institutions like the European Commission that

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are helping those frontrunners in business, by proclaiming a European strategy on plastics. Which has a lot more 'teeth' than some of the Plastic Pacts or national ambitions out there?

There is no more time for lengthy lobby talks or small step approach; we need drastic measures to eradicate usage of plastic. Like True Pricing, starting with fossil fuels and scarce materials.

We encourage everyone, in different parts of the world, to play their role to minimise the usage or wastage of plastic. Speak up, buy consciously and stimulate companies to change their policies towards sustainable production. Put a living future ahead of short-term profits.

Together we can leave this world a better one for our children.