
LFS 350

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Put Waste in its Place

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INTRODUCTION

“Putting Waste in its Place” is a student-led research initiative that is focussing on decreasing the amount of waste produced within the City of Vancouver, with a specific concentration on reducing the amount of take-away containers from restaurants used by customers. We aim to do research on the motivators and barriers of bringing reusable containers to restaurants, as well as the effectiveness of different incentive strategies in order to create a prototype of a sticker design to be displayed at restaurants throughout the City of Vancouver. This sticker will have the objective of encouraging and reminding customers to take initiative in bringing their own reusable take-out containers and limit their use of single use ones provided by restaurants.

The production of the sticker, as well as its display around the City of Vancouver are some of the long-term visions of this project. Being constrained on time, our primary task is to conduct the research and sticker design that is necessary for this project to take flight in the future.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE PROBLEM

Throughout recent years, sustainable waste management has become visibly prominent in Vancouver with the establishment of waste sorting bins across the city. These bins seek to successfully address the waste *after* its creation. However, as discussed with our community partners and from day-to-day observation, it is clear that the *prevention* of waste (i.e. reducing the amount of waste created in the first place) is not as much of a cultural norm. Individuals may feel that recycling single-use items is ‘doing the right thing’ (Valley, 2018); when in fact this behaviour, while providing an ameliorating effect, does not truly achieve waste reduction.

OUR PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

As we discussed with our community partners, the City of Vancouver and CityStudio have a history of creating problem-area focused projects and testing their impacts and benefits towards the community. In previous years, CityStudio built bike repair stations across the City of Vancouver to promote public bike transportation and reduce carbon emissions. On the other hand, “Put Waste In Its Place” will focus on waste reduction where we address, and research barriers/motivators of waste production within Vancouver. In addition, we will highlight the use of single-use containers and how reduction can be approached.

It was discussed with our community partner that behavioural research such as the effectiveness of incentives and general consumer behaviour typically require extensive investigation and time. As a result, it is important for students like ourselves to lead the initial start-up of such a project in order to have room for error and also be efficient in terms of budget and time constraints.

We hope that as an added incentive to achieving waste-reduction, this project could be of future benefit to businesses in reducing the cost and storage of take-out containers, but also to the benefit of the consumers in the sense that they may be able to receive a discount off of their purchase.

OBJECTIVES

Goal: to establish a strategy that will promote waste reduction through the use of reusable take-out containers.

1. Establish potential reasons as to why individuals are and are not motivated to reduce waste (by March 5th)
2. Determine if prior research exists to support that the use of stickers in visible locations within restaurants would make consumers more open to accepting reusable containers brought in by customers (by March 5th)
3. Develop a sticker that may be used in the future to increase the use of reusable take-out containers and decrease the use of single-use take-out containers (March 12th)
4. Prepare a report from the data analysis, share with our community partner and help provide a foundation for future waste reducing projects in the city (by March 22nd)

METHODOLOGY

To begin, we will conduct an academic literature review on waste reduction with specific focus on barriers and motivators of reusable containers. This research will allow us to create motivators that promote individual waste reduction effectively and thus provide background information on how we can normalize the use of bringing reusable containers to dining outlets. This includes research on specific target populations, such as the working class and food secure individuals who are frequent diners. In addition, we will base our research on the western world, as these studies are most applicable to the City of Vancouver. Our literature review will be conducted from scholarly and peer reviewed articles located primarily in the UBC library.

Next, we will be designing sticker mockup(s) similar to Yelp and TripAdvisor stickers on the windows of participating restaurants that encourage the use of reusable containers. The specific demographic of diners will be acknowledged when creating the sticker(s). Sticker designs will be initially sketched out on paper, and the final design(s) will be completed on Adobe Photoshop. In conjunction with the sticker, a tagline will be established for potential social media campaigns to increase diner awareness in the future. Furthermore, additional research will be conducted on the effectiveness of visual reminders to support our sticker design process and literature review.

Lastly, time permitting, we will investigate potential restaurant associations and organizations that may be surveyed in the *future* for interest of using the stickers. The majority of our restaurant research will be conducted from search engines. In the process of doing so, we will also provide an analysis of potential benefits to businesses. The sticker design(s), tagline and restaurant association research will be compiled online onto a document so that it can be later presented as an infographic.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

By the end of our project, we will provide a thorough literature review providing the framework and analysis of the barriers and motivators to waste production. Research on visual reminders and their effectiveness will be included based around our sticker design(s). In addition to this, an infographic displaying the established sticker design(s) and tagline(s) will be created for future social media campaigns. We expect that our sticker(s) and tagline(s) will encourage frequent diners to remember to bring their own containers for either take-out or leftovers, and visibly reduce waste on par with Vancouver's Greenest City Strategy.

WORKS CITED

Valley, W. (2018). *City of Vancouver – Put Waste in its Place: Take-Out Containers*. Retrieved from lfs350.landfood.ubc.ca