

Reporter: Clément Vareille, EDHEC

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Functional Economy II: Case studies

Moderated by Jocelyn BLERIOT, editorial Director, Ellen MacArthur Foundation (UK)

Speakers:

- Ruben VAN DOORN, Manager Operations, TURNTOO (Netherlands)
- Benoit CHATELIER, Founder and Development Director, CARBOX (France)

How to preserve the future

The Ellen Mc Arthur foundation has, for the past two years, attempted to find new ways to define consumption and production. The idea came from Ellen McArthur when she realized the awesome amount of waste our economy produces. In today's lecture we had the chance to have two different practical cases that take this philosophy of reducing waste by having a free circulation of materials and hence having them being reused rather than thrown away.

I. Turntoo

Turntoo finds new ways and train producer to have a socially responsible way of doing business. The concept is simple : there will soon be a shortage of raw material, our economy is completely linear and hence create waste, by turning it into a cyclical economy everybody wins.

This concept relies on the idea that the consumer does not want ownership but merely performance. With this in mind, since the consumer will eventually get rid of the product, if it has been design for deassembly, it will be possible to have a new product with the same raw material and hence reduce waste drastically.

The Turntoo people believe that in this cyclical economy everybody is winning :

- the producer saves money on raw material
- the consumer has a reduced price, since the production price is lowered. Moreover, overall quality is better because producer will want to use stronger material since they will get them back a few years down the road.

This concept however has some limits. Especially in industries where brands or taste have a strong impact on consumer behavior. The fashion industry, and even the clothing industry as a whole will have a harder time deassembling its product to make new ones that will still be in fashion.

II. Carbox

Carbox's concept is based on the same idea : there is waste of material, and hence a waste of money for companies. The idea is to have a car sharing system within companies.

Company cars are used only 10% of the time, by making it easy to share them, they are optimized, and the company saves a lot of money. The concept of company car is completely changed and waste is avoided. There again we have a win win situation where society as a whole gets a chance to reduce its consumption waste.

While we are currently at the dusk of this new cyclical and open economy, the few years of experience of those two companies have proven that the possibility of such business is not science fiction. There is a way to both make money and deal with waste in a socially responsible way.