

OSS° // Standard Shapes = Sustainable.

Written by Tobias Kredel // First published on 2019-10-01

With the Sustainability Wheel®, the Pool® works on creating an easy-to-use and commonly accepted Tool that helps to evaluate and compare the ecological Impact of Packaging Solutions:

The Sustainability Wheel®
First Step: Wheel® Setup & Team Setup

When a Wheel® project is started, the first thing to do is the Wheel® setup, meaning the definition of a set of (usually 12) benefits for which evaluation criteria will be defined later through attributes of sample items.

The Inter- & multidisciplinary Office of Strategic Services (OSS°) has defined a draft Wheel® Setup as starting point for a Joint Industry Initiative.

Now it needs to be examined, refined & fixed by a multi-disciplinary team of experts. To keep things transparent, a list of the related discussion is planned to be published or done in public.

Athena is looking forward to getting your support & expert opinions!

PDF DOWNLOAD: Packaging Sustainability Wheel® Joint Industry Initiative

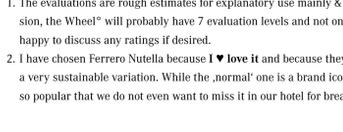
In this article, I am using the Sustainability Wheel® for the comparison of different packaging types.

At the same time, I want to show that Sustainability in Packaging can hardly be measured in absolute values, because Packaging is always part of & made for a specific supply chain. This is only one reason why it does not make sense to work with CO2-Footprint values in Packaging Development Strategy – and why we should not focus on them too much.

Sustainability is Megatrend and comprises of many different Factors:

Sustainability & Ethics

Consumer & Society Trends



Packaging & Technology Trends



The Wheel® is a flexible system for strategic evaluation, knowledge transfer & democratic decisionmaking. Using the Wheel®, a strategic Expert decision process – for example in Packaging Development Strategy – is conducted in an intuitive & democratic fashion:

The Wheel®
The Evaluation Wheel®

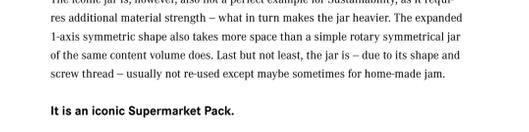
WHEEL-TARGET PROFILE

Lightness, Material Efficiency, Production Efficiency, Safe & Neutral Components, Easy & Quick Renewability, Clean Process, Material Value, Recyclability, Reusability, Environmental Neutrality, Durability & Protection, Low Volume.

PDF DOWNLOAD: OSS° Holistic Strategy Tools

Please note that:

- The evaluations are rough estimates for explanatory use mainly & in the final version, the Wheel® will probably have 7 evaluation levels and not only 5. Still I am happy to discuss any ratings if desired.
- I have chosen Ferrero Nutella because I ♥ love it and because they actually HAVE a very sustainable variation. While the „normal“ one is a brand icon – and Nutella is so popular that we do not even want to miss it in our hotel for breakfast!



The Classic Jar & Brand Icon

There are only a few iconic shapes in Packaging and the Nutella jar is one of them. In the end, it is a very simple shape, optimised for MAXIMUM FACING on the supermarket shelf. When Ferrero created & claimed that shape – in 1965 – the World of FMCG was still young and Supermarkets were an Innovation – to go for maximum facing was logical.



Now everybody who loves Nutella also knows that the iconic shape is very impractical for emptying... it is absolutely NOT optimised for this task. Ferrero has known this for a long time, but kept the shape for obvious reasons – they even offered a special knife that makes it easier to scratch the precious Nutella out of the many corners of this jar.

FERRERO NUTELLA 450g
1-Axis Symmetric Shape

The iconic jar is, however, also not a perfect example for Sustainability, as it requires additional material strength – what in turn makes the jar heavier. The expanded 1-axis symmetric shape also takes more space than a simple rotary symmetrical jar of the same content volume does. Last but not least, the jar is – due to its shape and screw thread – usually not re-used except maybe sometimes for home-made jam.

It is an iconic Supermarket Pack.



Now let us start thinking in new channels – when the consumer is shopping at home, then shelf-impact is not so important anymore. She or he probably even entered „Nutella“ into a search function and got a variety of results for it.

In this scenario, the consumer can choose from different packaging variations and choose the one that offers the highest added value, the most benefits. In the case of Nutella, this might well be the alternative easy-to-empty 200g jar that can be re-used as a drinking glass:

FERRERO NUTELLA 200g
Rotation Symmetric Shape

The Re-usable Drinking Glass

This variety is also superior concerning many other aspects of Sustainability, especially if it is shipped to a single customer and not on a pallet to a supermarket. Due to its rotation-symmetric shape, it uses less material – which also makes it considerably lighter – and it takes less space.

There is only one aspect where it is inferior: BRANDING...

Or is this even true? Is it not better to buy Nutella in drinking glasses and get many of those instead of always throwing not-really-empty iconic Nutella jars into glass recycling?

I believe this is worth thinking about.

If the drinking glasses are a standard shape, then they are even more sustainable! Higher production volumes save energy in almost all packaging processes. And especially in glass packaging.



Still a standard shape could become quite iconic for Nutella for its heavy users at least. Imagine the consumer has many, many of these at home for drinking – and never stops to be delighted how easy they can be emptied! Ferrero has obviously chosen this shape as a kind of apology for the iconic jar – the 200g glass has no hidden and only rounded corners. I am not sure that this is a standard shape, btw, but I see no reason why it should not be one.



Standard Shapes = Sustainable.

I believe we need more standard packaging shapes in E-Commerce. >> To create a bigger variety of packaging with added value – and to better adapt to this channel.

And because standards are more sustainable. Standard packaging with large volumes can be collected and re-used on an industrial scale. In Germany, this is for example done with glass water bottles and yoghurt jars like this one:

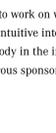


I am quite sure this is a concept for the Future & can also be done with thermosetting plastic materials. High-volume standard shapes justify collecting systems. E-Commerce is the channel of the Future while brand shelf-impact is losing its importance:

The Packaging of the Future

01 Use Packaging, not Advertising!
02 Future Scenarios in FMCG & Packaging...
03 The Pool® is the Future.

PDF DOWNLOAD: OSS° // The Packaging (& FMCG Marketing) of the Future



As already mentioned, Nutella is SO POPULAR that most good hotels will want to offer it as part of the breakfast menu. Now try to imagine other hygienic ways to offer single portions different to single-packed portions. A Nutella Dispenser would be possible, but it would need to be operated by Ferrero, to ensure quality.

So the most efficient & hygienic way is still single-packed portions.

FERRERO NUTELLA 15g
Thermoformed Traylets

The Single-Serve Foodservice Packaging

Many people will complain and say this is EVIL PLASTIC packaging. Well, of course it is more sustainable to have larger jars, but is it hygienic? The energy required & CO2 emitted to produce this packaging is still only a fragment of the energy required to produce the actual product. Any Nutella wasted is much worse.

The traylets, however, could be a standard shape made of thermosetting plastic material. The same shape for all Foodservice products may be, then collected and re-used.

Brand-shaped little glass jars might be more sustainable – but only if they are collected and re-used. Otherwise not. At least not until all the energy for the glass production is 100% from renewable sources.

It is never easy to say what is sustainable in Packaging, since this very much depends on the context...

But we should stop seeing Packaging as a problem. Packaging is an integral part of the brand and product experience – is now and will still be in the Future of E-Commerce & Individualised Production.

Looking for Return on Investment? Try Packaging instead of Advertising.

Packaging is silent salesman on shelf and brand ambassador in people's homes. In addition to being able to create value by itself, through added or improved functionalities, the quality impression that it delivers is also (subconsciously) transferred onto the product.

Today, Packaging is the superior Marketing tool compared to Advertising. It complements Internet Marketing and E-Commerce to achieve a beautiful purchase experience.

Learn more about the Sustainability Wheel® Joint Industry Initiative – and about the Wheel®, a flexible tool for strategic evaluation, democratic team decisions and knowledge transfer on the website: www.sustainability-wheel.com

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS°) has defined a draft Wheel® Setup as starting point for a Joint Industry Initiative. Now it needs to be examined, refined & fixed by a multi-disciplinary team of experts, including about three public workshops. Tailor-made variations of the Wheel® Tool are already in use by several big players in the Packaging and FMCG Industry.

The time is right, since the public opinion is currently longing for such an initiative and wants to see Brand Owners and Retailers making a Change – this will give sponsors excellent opportunities to present themselves with their Sustainability message.

We expect the Sustainability Wheel® to work on website and / or mobile app with the support of multiple-choice and other intuitive interface elements. The tool is planned to be made freely available for everybody in the industry. To make this possible, however, we need to find at least one generous sponsoring Patron.

Contact the Office of Strategic Services // OSS°

As one of the very first graduates of the Packaging, Design & Marketing M.Sc. programme at the HDM Stuttgart followed by over a decade of experience in Packaging Innovation, I can offer a multi-disciplinary background and broad understanding of the Packaging Industry to support or lead Your different projects.

- >> PACKAGING INNOVATION & CONSULTING
- >> WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING
- >> STORYTELLING & INFORMATION DESIGN

True Innovation is not easy in an area as restricted as Packaging – technically, ecologically, logistically, cost-wise, etc. ... Ideas that seem easy often are very hard to realise – because of the restrictions and many involved parties. To help You create true Innovation that is feasible & sustainable – now or in the near Future – the OSS° offers:

- o Strategic Packaging Consulting
- o Interdisciplinary Project Management
- o Knowledge Transfer Tools

Send an e-mail with your task, question or problem >> and a proposal for a TC timing (Hamburg, Germany / CET).