



INSTITUTO
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Department of Marketing, Operation and Management

**Pedagogical Case Study of Mind the Trash, The 1st Portuguese
Zero Waste Online Store**

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Master's in Business Administration

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Iscte – Iul

2021/2022



**BUSINESS
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Abstract

Every day through news, newspapers and social media, new information is released on how much damage society of today has done to planet earth, from the end of species to rising temperatures. Increasingly, pressure is being placed on organizations to become more sustainable and environmentally conscious, and new businesses are even being created based on these requirements.

This case study explores and uses as an example for future learning a Portuguese company called Mind the Trash, which is committed to being zero waste and selling only products with natural ingredients and was the first company in Portugal to operate in this way.

This pedagogical case study examines the integration of the Zero Waste practices in the operations of Mind the Trash; the company's relationship with key stakeholders and the benefits emerging therefrom, as well as the organization's integration of values and the challenges that arise and have arisen from that implementation.

It is hoped that students of business management can use this case study as an example of how to integrate environmental and social concerns into business strategy. In addition, the case can potentially be used by both present and future entrepreneurs, wanting to create and run more values based and environmentally conscious businesses. Achieving new business models that allow for the good and conscious use of resources is essential to ensure that we meet the needs of the current generation without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to do the same.

JEL Classification System:

M14 - Business Administration: Corporate Culture; Social Responsibility

Q01 – Sustainable Development

Keywords: Zero Waste, CSR, Values Based Organisation, Environment

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Resumo

Diariamente, através das notícias, jornais e redes sociais, novas informações são divulgadas sobre o dano que os hábitos da sociedade de hoje têm tido no planeta, desde a extinção de espécies ao aumento das temperaturas. Cada vez mais, pressão é feita nas organizações para que estas se tornem mais sustentáveis e conscientes a nível ambiental e, novos negócios estão a ser criados baseados nestes requisitos.

Este caso de estudo explora e usa como exemplo para estudo futuro a empresa portuguesa chamada Mind the Trash (MtT), que se comprometeu desde a sua fundação a ser desperdício zero e a vender produtos com ingredientes naturais, e foi pioneira em Portugal com estas características e compromisso.

O caso de estudo pedagógico reconhece a integração das práticas Desperdício Zero nas operações da MtT, visto que esse é o compromisso da empresa. Da mesma forma, ao considerar os stakeholders e seu relacionamento com a empresa, surgiram benefícios não apenas para ambos, mas também para o meio ambiente. E por fim, a integração dos valores na organização e os desafios que surgiram dessa implementação.

Espera-se que estudantes de gestão de empresas possam usar este estudo de caso como um exemplo de como integrar considerações ambientais e sociais na estratégia empresarial, bem como atuais e futuras empresas e empreendedores da área empresarial de estratégia que estejam orientados para negócios ambientalmente conscientes. Alcançar novos modelos de negócios que permitam o consciente uso dos recursos é essencial para garantir que as próximas gerações atendam às suas próprias necessidades.

Sistema de classificação JEL:

M14 – Cultura Empresarial, Diversidade, Responsabilidade Social

Q01 – Desenvolvimento Sustentável

Palavras-chave: Desperdício Zero, RSE, Organização Baseada em Valores, Meio Ambiente

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Glossary of acronyms

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

MtT – Mind the Trash

Introduction

From beaches in Southeast Asia to the remote Antarctic, plastic pollution is everywhere. It starts polluting the moment it is created, impacting our oceans, climate, and the health of our communities. Scientists have even found microplastics in the air we breathe and the food we eat (Greenpeace, 2022).

Recently, climate change seems to be attracting people's attention across the spectrum of political views. Extreme heatwaves, fires in the Arctic, the accelerated melting of glaciers and ice sheets, global youth activism, intergovernmental reports on climate change and biodiversity, and thousands of scientists calling attention to the discrepancy between agreed climate targets and ever-rising CO2 emissions (Hagedorn et al., 2019), have made it impossible to ignore that action is needed to counter these events. Climate change poses an urgent threat to future generations (Sanson et al., 2019) so habits that directly contribute to a negative impact need to be addressed. This implies adopting more sustainable ways of living, producing, consuming, and doing business to ensure resources for the future. Environmentally conscious consumption is one of the key concerns in modern society, and increasingly among the consumer population (Tsarenko et al., 2013). Creating new businesses, based on what the world is today is a way to ensure enterprises are contributing towards a sustainable world.

Sustainability entrepreneurs have a different approach to business, considering the ecosystem's health every step of the way, while also working to build the business and obtain competitive advantages. Often, businesses are portrayed as seeking profit by any means. Yet, although profit is fundamental to the survival of any business, it is not the primary concern of the sustainability entrepreneur. Instead, these business owners focus on environmental health and social concerns (Gibbs, 2009), and are more likely than the traditional entrepreneurs to focus on reducing their companies' carbon footprint and keeping their employees happy (Miller, 2010). Sustainability entrepreneurs are also more likely to adopt environmentally friendly approaches to business, such as zero waste.

Zero waste is a philosophy that encourages redesign so that all products are reused (*Global Waste Problem*, n.d.) and no waste comes from the business operations. The concept thus goes beyond recycling and composting at the end of a product's life cycle, to encompass the entire life cycle of a product, beginning with product design, and envisioning the use and management of materials in ways that preserve value, minimize environmental impacts, and conserve natural resources (US EPA, 2022).

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Mind The Trash is a Portuguese online store and blog which subscribes to the zero waste philosophy, selling alternative, non-plastic and all-natural products. Founded by Catarina Matos and Christian Andersen, the company actually started as an Instagram account in 2016, progressing to a company in July 2017, as an online store. On its website, one can find tutorial videos, recommendations, discussions on sustainability-related topics and much more; all aimed at creating awareness about alternative products and methods that can be used to reduce the waste we produce.

Understanding the dimensions of zero waste, how they are integrated in the company and the outcomes of this integration are the focus of this pedagogical case study. Mind the trash stands out, even among other sustainability oriented companies in the country, because it was the first to set the rule and aim to be zero waste as an online store in Portugal. MtT encourages responsible, eco-friendly, and sustainable consumption, which they believe the world needs to choose, providing consumers several solutions of goods that create less waste and have less impact on the environment.

MtT found a gap in the Portuguese market and was created to fill it. Businesses whose main concern is ensuring that sustainable and eco-friendly products are available to everyone, are made to last, with natural ingredients that consumers can trust, are arguably especially worthy of study. It is important to present alternative ways of looking at business, with different goals and values than the “win at all cost” mentality often promoted, where the main goal is to sell a responsible and sustainable lifestyle, with the understanding that profit will flow from that, but is not the end goal. According to Tsarenko et al (2013) retailers have the opportunity to shape environmentally conscious consumption if they adopt sustainable business practices, and this is what MtT was created for.

In the Instagram that started it all, Catarina would share her ideas, DIY and personal thoughts on how to live a more sustainable and zero waste life. When Catarina realised that there was a gap in the Portuguese market for eco-friendly products and alternatives to plastic, she decided to, after months of research, start an online store offering a solution. Mind the trash has developed and produces their own branded products, such as the famous solid shampoos and conditioners, and these were fruit of Catarina’s education in organic cosmetics. As a distribution business, Catarina guaranteed the products she had personally tried, at an affordable price, while building a bond of trust with her growing community of consumers of followers through the Instagram account that was now a bridge between the CEO and her team and the customers, suppliers and online community. When it comes to packaging, Catarina decided that MtT had to ensure everything was packed in reused cardboard boxes and sealed

by them, as it would be inconsistent if they used a distributor who then wrapped orders in plastic.

Mind the Trash has established a relationship with all its stakeholders through social media and constant communication. The stakeholders of MtT are the consumers, suppliers and employees, and the vision and mission of the company maintains the relationship between them in good terms, updated and constant. Consumers follow MtT mainly on social media, where Catarina and her team focus on sharing daily, approaching constantly the followers, and asking for their input and opinion. The suppliers have established a relationship of trust and mutual support with company, which is encouraged by MtT. Finally, the employees are inspired to participate, step in and participate in every operation of the company. Catarina, the CEO, describes the team as a family, that believes in the business and contributes to the same purpose – an friendly environment, where everyone has a valid opinion and seeks to improve MtT every day.

To explore the case study three questions are proposed, to be answered based on the relevant literature. It is expected that students use the information provided in the case study, but also seek additional information where necessary.

The case questions are thus:

1. How does MtT implement the principles of Zero Waste in its practices?
2. MtT has established a connection with its stakeholders. Please describe for each of the stakeholder groups below, how this relationship has been achieved and what benefits arise from it.
 - a. Suppliers
 - b. Consumers
 - c. Employees
3. What challenges has the company been faced with in the implementation of its vision and mission?

This pedagogical case study is intended for future environmentally focused entrepreneurs, and it is hoped that it will contribute to the consolidation of the Zero Waste and Relationship with stakeholders concepts addressed in this case, and its application in the real company, Mind the Trash. Additionally, it is hoped that this case study may also be of help to practitioners, in particular business managers wanting to create an environmentally friendly and climate change conscious business.

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The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. The second chapter refers to the pedagogical case study, where the company, its founder, and products, among others, are explored and presented. In chapter three, the methodology is described, and the choice of this type of dissertation justified. Chapter four covers the relevant literature, pertaining to concepts such as Zero Waste, reusable packaging and zero emission deliveries, the dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder relationships, namely with, suppliers, employees, and consumers. Chapter four also presents an animation plan for the case study, and a discussion of the case questions, based on the theoretical frameworks presented. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the most relevant points of the case and its implications and contributions.

Chapter 1– Case Study: Mind the Trash

1.1. Catarina’s Story

Mind the Trash (MtT) is the first zero waste online store in Portugal, that since it was founded had to overcome many challenges, such as the ones for being pioneers in the market and growing in a society comfortable to certain products and habits. MtT is committed to being zero all the way, selling only products that have no plastic and no synthetic components.

Catarina Matos graduated in architecture, specialized in rehabilitation, and worked in the field for about 10 years. She lived in Rio de Janeiro for a year and in London for two and half, and it was here that she the first heard about the “plastic apocalypse” and realized the exaggerated waste we produce, and where she started studying organic cosmetics. The National Geographic magazine describes this “plastic apocalypse” saying that “the developed nations off-load waste from our convenient lifestyle and foist the clean-up on some of the planet’s most vulnerable people” (Golberg, 2018).

Catarina is now a big name in the Portuguese Zero Waste movement. The ZWM reconceptualises waste as a resource, which must be conserved, used efficiently, and cycled back into the economic system (Hannon et al., 2019). According to the Zero Waste International Alliance (the internationally recognized online source for Zero Waste standards, policies and best practices for communities and businesses), “Zero Waste stands for the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of all products, packaging, and materials, without burning them, and without discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health” (ZWIA, 2022). Zero Waste provides guiding principles for continually working towards eliminating waste. It is a logistic approach that aims for a massive change in the way materials flow through society, giving purpose to materials we now consider as garbage or that have reached the end of their life.

The founder, Catarina, always had a concern about the environment. “I remember thinking about my environmental footprint when I was still studying architecture. I used to go to the supermarket with my mom and question all the disposable materials used”¹. In the world of processed food and packaging some, like Catarina, felt that things were not right as they were: “So much disposable plastic just didn’t make any sense to me. Why dispose of something that I didn’t even give any use to? Soon I started to avoid plastics and shop for fruits and vegetables at the local market. I also bought a trolley to avoid plastic bags”¹. This led to comments about her looking like an old lady, yet she persisted despite the judgments. It was also much more

practical as all the shopping would fit in the one trolley, so she did not have to resort to using many, unnecessary bags.

When she moved to London, in the end of 2015, she faced a plastic nightmare. “I will never forget my first visit to a supermarket in London. I was so shocked! It was the apocalypse of disposables. Everything was wrapped in plastic: bananas, grapes, oranges, pineapples, cucumbers”¹, Catarina recalls. The challenge of having a plastic free lifestyle was bigger, but after some research Catarina came up with the solutions she needed. “I struggled for a while to find solutions near my house, but then I found much more than I could have ever asked for! A lot of plastic-free solutions for my day-to-day life: a reusable and natural dish brush, solid shampoos, a menstrual cup, and so much more! London was definitely my wake-up call!”¹, she recalls with a smile on her face.

She began to gather so much information that she decided to create an Instagram account, which she named *Mind the Trash*, where she shared tips on how to avoid waste and published some of her cosmetic recipes. “I created *Mind the Trash* as an *Instagram* account to share what I was discovering and what was changing in my life”¹. Catarina Matos explains that the name and Instagram account appeared in London in 2016, inspired by the phrase “Mind the gap between the train and the platform”, which she heard every day on her commute to work.² The news from London were well received in Lisbon. However, she noticed that “every time I was coming to Portugal to visit my family and friends, I noticed that none of the products I was using were being sold here and no one seemed to know about their existence”¹.

After living in London for some years, inspired by the city and full of energy, Catarina learned, grew, and developed her entrepreneurial qualities. In London, Catarina was living with her then-boyfriend Christian Andersen, who also shared her love for sustainability. The MtT project MtT started with the two of them as the founders, “without any experience in entrepreneurship or e-commerce, with everything being self-learned in an autonomous and individual way by both”.¹ With Christian, now also her business partner, she bet everything in the opening of the online store, after moving to Lisbon, in July of 2017. Today MtT has several own brand products (cosmetics and personal hygiene) and serves as a distributor for several other online and physical brands.

The base idea was simple: to sell what Catarina was basically already incorporating in her daily life. Today this idea has grown and reached a community on Instagram of 61.8k and counting⁵. The team is currently composed by seven elements. Catarina Matos explains that the business has been growing since the beginning, standing out thanks to its position as an e-

commerce platform dedicated to sustainability. From day one, sales have been growing, excluding the last few months of 2021, during which people seemed to have been looking for more physical stores, due to the relief of the covid-19 restrictions (interview with the CEO, Catarina Matos, 2022).

Catarina Matos embraces the modern minimalist lifestyle wholeheartedly. She says it saves her money and time and enriches her life. “I believe that a lot has to change in our society. Starting with shifting the idea that consumerism is a key to achieving happiness. A bigger house, bigger car, better clothes, a lot of money. But none of that matters if we are not at peace with ourselves. Fortunately, this is slowly changing. Sometimes people ask me what I think about success. For me, it is not having a lot of money or selling a lot. For me, success can be summarised in one word: happiness”³. And finally, she added that “*Mind The Trash* stands for a relaxed working environment and fights for transparency, a fair-trade market, honesty, social and financial sustainability”³.

What is Catarina’s vision for the future? “A sustainable world, where we live closer to nature, with no human or animal suffering and exploitation”. And she also adds a personal motto. “Don’t criticize, appreciate. Don’t judge, educate”³.

1.2. History of Mind the Trash

Mind the Trash is an online platform which in addition to an online store, also has a strong section on educational information on sustainability habits. When talking about their website, Catarina described to Fair News blog as “not just an online store that sells sustainable products. We work really hard to be as zero waste as possible in our office and storage and want our store to feel almost like a physical store, where people know us and know how we work”³.

The store has been awarded the “Green” label by the *The Green Web Foundation*, for having its e-commerce hosted by a server that uses 100% renewable energy, with carbon neutralizations since 2007 and aiming to accomplish fossil-free internet by 2030 (Roussilhe, n.d.). In the early days of MtT, much of the day-to-day of the company was spent making sure the e-commerce legislation was being respected and the site did not crash. After years of improving the website and platform, MtT has grown and is now in the top 5% of the Portuguese small and medium companies in financial performance and stability, as ranked by SCORING in 2021.

MtT operates in three business lines², which aim to make the brand grow sustainably and at the same time help other Portuguese stores with the same mission and values (related to helping people to lead a more sustainable lifestyle⁷) to do the same. The first business line

concerns the development of sustainable products in Portugal, offering products that can help change habits and allow for a more conscious consumption. This is the reason the company decided "to bet on [third party] branded products, bearing in mind that their production must be made fairly and with quality"². A second business line concerns the import and distribution of products that fill the gaps in the Portuguese market for ecological products. Catarina Matos, the CEO, considers that Portugal is still "a little bit behind when it comes to ecological products"². Therefore, MtT tries to "find products that are produced in the European Union and the United Kingdom that help bring sustainable alternatives to the country"². Finally, the third business line, it also intends to promote the circular economy among stakeholders, be they partners (that sell MtT products in their stores), customers or suppliers. Some of these stakeholders voluntarily donate some materials and it "is properly reused by us (MtT) in our orders"², shares Catarina. Being zero waste, MtT is responsible for rethinking the way they use every material that enters the office, with recycling being the last recourse.

Mind the Trash works toward having zero waste products and a zero-waste company, but also toward having happy employees and fair conditions for every position in the company. Catarina believes that vacations are for restoring mental health and travel, not to schedule appointments to the doctor and the bank¹. As a result, MtT provides employees half a day off a month for personal activities. This improves and contributes to the happiness of every employee, and according to Catarina Matos, this can then be seen in their performance¹.

The company's blog and Instagram publications are planned monthly; however, when breaking news comes up, it is fitted in the schedule. It is mostly on Instagram that MtT communicates and interacts with its community. Through this social platform, Catarina Matos and her team share instructions on how to use the products sold on the online store, update articles on the evolution of the climate crisis, new discoveries of products, substitutes and solutions that can help adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, and organizations and businesses that they believe are worth getting to know and donate to. Alongside all these issues, there is also educational information on the impact of habits in our society that are contributing directly to the climate crisis, such as long baths, bad management of our domestic waste and the use of internet. MtT also hosts workshops on how to make handmade soaps and body creams, ecological detergents, and candles. To help customers and followers get to know its partner brand, MtT has been interviewing the CEOs of each company, to share their stories, teams, and products.

On the company website, there are also sustainability related articles that aim to bring awareness about subjects not commonly explored by the media and clarify certain myths.

Examples include: “The climate impact of nuclear energy”, “How can we recycle our small gadgets?”, and “Where does our trash go?”. The website also includes product recipes, such as curl modelling gel and disinfectants, and suggestions of changes one can make to one’s lifestyle to become more sustainable⁴.

A noteworthy aspect of MtT is that every employee appears to be passionate and eager to implement what they believe the world can be one day, rather than being overly preoccupied with the profit the company can have. The aim, according to the company, is not to have a lot of products, but to have the right products, tested by the founders, employees and their families and friends, that fulfil their role, along with being plastic free and made with natural ingredients and components.

During an interview with Catarina, she said that one of the features of her and Christian’s business is transparency, “which you can see very clearly on MtT’s social networks. Every time I have doubts, I share them with all our followers. They get to see everything inside our business in a very spontaneous way” (interview with the CEO, Catarina Matos, 2022). Two other key characteristics of the MtT business, according to Catarina, are quality and coherence: “with covid we had a boom in sales, because we were already a well-structured online store. When the restrictions started to ease, sales dropped, and many businesses started to panic and fall back to solutions we, at MtT, always said no to. We accepted that we needed to slow down. When it comes to expanding and growing our business, we never want to lose our integrity, since what really makes us grow is the trust of our loyal customers, and those are the ones we work hard to maintain. In terms of quality, we are very strict when it comes to product selection and the high standards of our customer service” (interview with the CEO, Catarina Matos, 2022). Christian, Catarina’s partner lives in Denmark, and although he is still a founder of Mind the Trash, he is not the face of the company (a role played by Catarina), he is the CFO and Lead designer.

1.3. Products

When MtT started, Catarina was already in a personal struggle to find the perfect solid shampoo for her type of hair, never achieving the perfect fit. Since she studied organic cosmetics, she decided to create one herself, and this was the beginning of the branded products MtT. Solid shampoo and conditioner, menstrual pads and bags, make-up remover cotton and towels, ear cleaner, and razor blades are some of the many products produced and branded by “Mind the Trash”, and also its most famous ones. Catarina explains that the MtT products “are produced in Lisbon and Mafra, it depends on the products we are talking about. In the case of cosmetic

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products, the relationship with the factory began as a friendship. The shampoos are formulated by me, I tell them what ingredients I want, and the factory tests them and makes samples, which are then perfected together with MtT. When I learned cosmetics, despite not having finished the course, the knowledge of knowing how to interpret labels and not being deceived in a purchase remained and is an asset in the production of these products. Products such as menstrual pads and make-up remover pads are made in Lisbon, and seamstresses are paid fairly. Happy workers produce better” (interview with the CEO, Catarina Matos, 2022). In April 2022 there were 27 brands on MtT’s website, including their own, Mind the trash products⁴ (Appendix A).

On the website customers find products that help to reduce the waste produced at home, through more durable products that give priority to natural raw materials. The vast majority of the products on the website are vegan and cruelty-free, compostable or 100% recyclable. With regard to produce, MtT only includes products from fair trade companies in its portfolio, with sustainably managed raw materials, and continuously tries to support the local or artisanal market (Green Purpose, 2021). Mind the Trash offers the possibility of recycling products/materials delivered by stakeholders to MtT when they are no longer in use or when no reuse solution is possible, this way, the correct recycling is ensured.

The products sold by MtT are all produced and packed with no plastic and no artificial components or ingredients. All the products, as well as the companies that produce them, are thoroughly studied in terms of the policies adopted, history and current practices, in order to ensure that there are no misalignments with the MtT motto. When it comes to choosing a new supplier, either by contacting one or being reached out to by one, Catarina shares that “the choice of products is usually made based on research we do. And many times, we are also contacted by companies and here there is a job that has to be done, which is getting to know the company. Who is behind the product, how is it made, where is it produced, what other products does that company have? Because they often say: we are company x, the perfect brand for your website, we have this product x; but then when we look at it, we realize that it is just another company that wants to make a profit in all markets, and it only has one or two sustainable products. We analyse all the certifications that are behind the products of our future partners; this is because we were deceived once and had to withdraw a product from our website. In this process of partnering up with a company, it is not enough for brands to produce in Portugal and/or be proudly Portuguese; being sustainable is also about paying workers fairly, controlling overtime work, and it is in the company’s values and history. We take this thorough research very seriously because we do not want to deceive our consumers/ followers, nor do

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we want to be deceived”¹. Products sold in the Mind the Trash online store carry the weight of a thorough analysis of origin, responsible business, and fair trade.

“There are many businesses that have started to work with influencers, shipping their products for them to share, for a fee, with their followers on Instagram. This provides a great burst in brand awareness and a way to reach more and more people in the Instagram community. This is something we do not do. There are many influencers that have our products, but this is because they actually buy them, and it is really rare for us to offer them any. For that to happen there would need to be a thorough evaluation because they too must be aligned with our values, of MtT. Why? Because otherwise, what would happen would be influencers sharing our products just because they used it once, the report would not be very reliable (interview with the CEO, Catarina Matos, 2022).

The relationship with the other brands that are sold in MtT is very important, and must be well cared for, as Catarina says, “if we do not have a good and strong relationship with a product supplier, we simply do not have this alliance.” For the contract to be made for the product to get to the online shelves, “many questions are asked, to understand if the purpose of that supplier is a good and genuine one or if s/he is only in it for the money. Because if that is the case, something will eventually fail in the product or in the delivery packaging, for example”, Catarina explains. When a strong relationship is formed, when a problem with the delivery of their products to MtT facilities happens, it is rectified as quick as possible. This happened, for example with the deodorant brand Bjork. Catarina shared that “they [Bjork] started growing and hired a company to deal with the product stock, and this company dealt with the packaging and shipping of all their products. When we received a package wrapped in plastic from Bjork, we immediately contacted them and reported the situation, and made them aware that we would not receive the products in these conditions. It would not make any sense to be selling a product without plastic, to be more sustainable, and then accept something that is exactly the opposite. We could have even decided to reuse that same plastic, from the mistake described above, from Bjork, in the packaging of our own orders, as a filling or as wrapping, but we always choose not to use plastic, because we can make sure we (MtT employees) will recycle that material properly, but we can’t be sure what the consumer will do. Besides, not everyone in Portugal has a recycling point right around the corner, making it harder to ensure proper disposal, and this is another reason we choose to do recycling. Another example of receiving plastic from the suppliers, this one not as a mistake, is the Infinity Book, that we sell on our website, which is delivered to us with a plastic film, which we remove and recycle, for the same reason” (interview with the CEO, Catarina Matos, 2022).

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On the website there is an article that encourages readers to change 10 habits in their lives to reduce their ecological footprint. Each of the recommendations then has a solution offered by MtT products⁴. These are 3 of those 10 transitions MtT suggests:

1. Paper Napkins to Cloth Ones: This first recommendation comes alongside with the note that no one would probably need to any napkins, since if they looked closely around their home, they would probably find good napkins. MtT also recommends pieces of fabric, that after sewn they can serve this purpose. As a last resource, napkins can be bought in the MtT online store, in linen or organic cotton.
2. Toothpaste in a Plastic tube with synthetic ingredients to a Natural and Organic Toothpaste in a glass bottle: when this recommendation starts, the customer is forwarded to an article, written by Catarina Matos, the CEO, called *Why use natural and organic toothpaste?* In this web article there is a guide to interpret the ingredients of a normal toothpaste and the proven possible side effects of each one, and respective bibliographic references.
3. Disposable Menstrual Pads and Tampons to Reusable Menstrual Pads and Menstrual Cups: It is estimated that during her fertile period a woman spends around 17 thousand disposable hygiene products. These products, being considered undifferentiated waste, are deposited in landfills, and take decades to decompose. Both solutions are available at the online store of Mind the Trash.

MtT's best selling products are two solid shampoos (for oily and normal hair), the Hydrophil Bamboo Toothbrush – Medium hardness and the Ocean Saver Soluble Capsule Detergents.

1.4. Logistics

The key word when it comes to logistics in MtT is organization. As Catarina describes it, "logistics have been part of us since the beginning, and no other way would make sense to us. We have always invested in programs for us and our employees, of stock organization and invoicing, to achieve our standards of organization in the business. When we decide to grow in the future, it will always be easier for us, because we will be ready for it, nothing from the present will affect that future." Catarina also recognizes that, "what happens in other businesses is that they want to grow faster than they are ready to, and they often need to rearrange and reorganize everything after to keep up with the evolution."

The company appeals to its Instagram and Facebook communities to donate cardboard boxes, papers, magazines, packages of Mind the Trash and little glass vials that are no longer in

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use, to avoid such useful materials being thrown away. This initiative allows MtT to spend less resources on new packaging, by giving the materials donated by its community the opportunity to serve their function again, as packaging for MtT orders. MtT receives these donated materials in their physical space during working hours. For those who live too far away from the MtT office, it is also possible to send them through a distributor, with all the costs covered by the company. During Christmas, MtT also opens the possibility of receiving wrapping paper, to use as protection and packaging.

Product deliveries can happen in three different ways; by bike, on the same day, the day after or two days later, in the Lisbon area. This form of delivery has been growing ever since it started, although this service is only available for some areas of the city. On the company website it is possible to keep track of how many CO₂ emissions this method has avoided. It all started with just one employee, Marcelo, who delivered all the orders. Now, together with a bike delivery company, Yoob, MtT can process a lot more deliveries, keeping emissions down and reducing the company's carbon footprint every day.

	2020	2021	Total
Number of orders	239	920	1159
Km Travelled	1649	6812	8461
CO2 Avoided in Kg	649,91	2600,27	3250,18

Figure 1 - Zero CO₂ Bike Deliveries - source <https://mindthetrash.pt/entregas-de-bicicleta-co2-neutral/>

According to the Consultant Ecca Plan, the 3250,18kg of CO₂ that MtT has avoided during the years of 2020 and 2021 combined (Figure 1) correspond to 1826L of gasoline that were not used in these 2 years, and its pollution avoided. Beside the benefit for the planet, delivering by bike saved the company the price of gasoline and the vehicle or the contract with a distributor.

When the alliance with Yoob started, in October 2021⁵, the possibility of returning the delivery box also came to life. This way, when the courier arrives at the customers' house, he/she can empty the box and give it back, to be used again in another order.

The second method of delivery is the pick-up in the distribution centre. The distribution centre is open during the week and closes during weekends and holidays. And the third is for those who do not live in Lisbon, who can receive their order via a distributor in any point of the country and a set list of countries in Europe.

All packaging is closed with paper kraft glue tape, which is vegan, chlorine free, natural rubber adhesive, and water resistant; and it has been this way since the first order. MtT chose this solution because plastic glue tape is recyclable.

1.5. Mind the Trash in numbers

Mind the trash is well known, mainly due to its social networks. On Instagram, as of 6th of October 2022 61.7 thousand followers and 909 posts⁵. On Facebook, on the same date, MtT has more than 15 thousand followers.⁶

In 2020, MtT won the Gold Medal award issued by the Portugal E-Commerce Awards in the category of Best Packaging of Products. In 2021, it won the TOP 5% Best PME (Small and Medium Enterprises) certification in Portugal, in terms of performance and financial strength, which reinforces MtT's sustainability as a store, "not only in terms of products, but also at the financial level".²

To purchase a product on the MtT's website, an account must be created. MtT currently has 19000 registered users on the website. According to Catarina, by December 2021, the company was receiving around 600 daily visits on the website, around 3000 weekly visits and around 17000 monthly visits. These visitors come mainly from Instagram, as well as from direct research on Google.

1.6. CSR

The commitment Christian Andersen and Catarina Matos made in June 2017 was to bring choice to those who want a more sustainable life and habits, and affordable and convenient products; but they did not stop there. Together, they are making good use of the media channels to communicate with a community that seeks a more sustainable life and habits. The main goal of both founders was, and still is, to make our homes and daily living less plastic dependent and containing less products that contribute in a negative way to environment and future generations. MtT always recommends customers buy new products only as a last resource, and instead try reuse the ones they already have as much as possible. This reinforces the goal of MtT of promoting a more sustainable life, rather than just selling products to make a profit.² Their social media platforms also leave room for interaction and for people, customers or not, to ask for advice and recommendations on how to replace something, be it a habit or a product, with a more sustainable alternative, or even how to properly recycle something; and any member of the company can answer or even find different solutions. The server MtT has used since day one, as an example of these solutions to be more sustainable, is a server that is the first using only 100% renewable energy.

Sustainability does not just mean protecting the environment, it also includes promoting a positive and inclusive work environment among team members and the offering of more vacation days and wellness benefits for the entire MtT family (as Catarina Matos, CEO refers to

the team). Everyone works towards the same goal at MtT, and everyone's opinion is important and considered especially in crisis or conflict situations. Catarina believes that ensuring that every member of the team knows how to do everyone else's job and encouraging shared knowledge in the office helps fight monotony at work and reduces process mistakes when an employee is on vacation. Catarina shared that "the company currently offers employees 23 days of vacation and another half-day per month for them to take off. They are all under contract, which normally does not happen in other companies. We only have, for the moment, one girl who is working part-time, who does not have a contract, as this is a temporary situation. We also offer our employees a spa trip once a year, to have a relaxing massage, that is, at a time of greater stress, or when they feel they are at their lowest, they can ask us for it and the company pays. We also offer, in agreement with some partners, discounts in some stores that they like, which Christian and I do not enjoy, so we ask those specific stores just for the team. The intention is to reach, one day, 28 vacation days, like in London and Denmark. Because mental well-being is extremely important, and effectively the 22 days that the State gives us, which is stipulated by law, is very little, which is why we want to reach the highest number of vacation days possible."

1.7. Projects and Initiatives

Helping other businesses and organizations has always been a priority for MtT. Ever since the beginning of the company, initiatives to help the community and make the world a better and cleaner place have always been there.

During the first five days of December of 2021, Mind the Trash donated 5% of its sales to the Plant a Tree Association, and since the beginning of MtT, many donations have been made to this organization, which have helped plant 136 trees and bought another 150⁵. Before Christmas of 2021, one of the busiest times of Mind the Trash, the company also decided to donate 5% of its sales to Ocean Alive, an organisation that defends a healthy ocean protected by local people.

During the month of October 2021, since it is known as the pink month, MtT decided to help the Association *Amigas do Peito*, which helps breast cancer detection and assists cancer patients with their hospital stays, after or before surgery⁵. On September 4th of the same year, MtT appealed to its followers to go to downtown Lisbon to catch cigarette butts from the ground near the riverside, in Cais do Sodré⁵, to support MtT ambassador The Trash Traveller cause (Appendix B). On the 21st of August the year before, on the International Homeless Animals Day,

part of the company's sales revenues were donated to animal welfare associations such as *União Zoofila* and *Amor e Empatia*⁵.

1.8. The problem

To explore the integration of environmental and social issues into processes, strategies, and organizational culture of Mind the Trash, three questions are presented:

- 1) How does the company implement the principles of the Zero Waste in its practices?
- 2) Mind The Trash has established a connection with its stakeholders. For each of the stakeholder groups below, please describe how this relationship has been achieved and what benefits arise from that connection.
 - b. Suppliers.
 - c. Consumers.
 - d. Employees.
4. What challenges has the company been faced with in the implementation of its vision/mission?

These questions are meant to be answered in a learning environment, using not only the case study to support the answers but also additional information that might be found online, on MtT's website or other sources.

Case References:

- 1) Episódio #30 Temporada 6: A Anita à Conversa Com a Catarina Matos Da Mind the Trash - Anita No Trabalho. Obtido em January 10, 2022, de Um podcast sobre empreendedorismo no feminino: <http://anitanotrabalho.com/episodio-95a/>
- 2) Mind The Trash põe a sustentabilidade online - E-Commerce. Obtido em janeiro 2022, de Jornal de Negócios: <https://www.jornaldenegocios.pt/negocios-em-rede/e-commerce/detalhe/mind-the-trash-poe-a-sustentabilidade-online>
- 3) Catarina Matos: "O sucesso resume-se numa palavra: felicidade" – Obtido em fevereiro 2022, de Fair news de: <https://thefair.news/catarina-matos-o-sucesso-resume-se-numa-palavra-felicidade/>
- 4) Website Mind the Trash – obtido em Abril 2022, de Mind the Trash de: <https://mindthetrash.pt/>
- 5) <https://www.instagram.com/mindthetrash/>
- 6) <https://www.facebook.com/MindTheTrash/>
- 7) Minding our trash with Catarina Matos - Fair Bazaar Ethical Living obtido em Janeiro 2022 de: <https://thefairbazaar.com/blogs/fairblog/minding-our-trash-with-catarina-matos>

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Chapter 2 - Methodology

Pedagogical case studies represent a valuable source of learning, slightly diverging from the traditional teaching environment, allowing in-depth knowledge of different organizations, and cross learning between working groups (Graham, 2010). Pedagogical case studies are geared toward facilitating student learning, based on the characterization of an organisation, the presentation of the relevant literature review for its analysis, and the respective pedagogical note to support the learning process.

Regarding the elaboration of the case study, it was necessary to resort to several sources for the collection of information for its development. The data collected and analysed can be classified as:

- Secondary data – This type of data was divided in:
 - External data: including two newspaper articles, one press release and two podcasts.
 - Internal sources: the company's website (<https://mindthetrash.pt>) and blog.
 - The company's social media – Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/mindthetrash/>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/MindTheTrash/>)
- Primary data – consisting of the interview with Catarina Matos (CEO - chief executive officer of Mind the Trash). The interview lasted for 45 minutes and took place on January 27, 2022. The interview questions are meant to fill some gaps of the information already obtain from the secondary data are presented below, and were previously sent to Catarina at her request, so she could prepare any important data she might want to share.
 - How many daily/weekly/monthly visits are there to the MtT website? How many of those visits lead to a purchase? Do you know where these visits are coming from (Instagram/Facebook/direct search)
 - How many registered users do you have?
 - Can you talk a little but about the employee benefits you provide? How would you describe the working environment in the office?
 - What is the biggest challenge when you think about making a new partnership/alliance with another brand? What are the main requirements that they must have, to be considered a partner?
 - Do you visit supplier spaces?
 - Where are MtT products manufactured and produced?
 - It seems that transparency may be one of the company's main assets. Do you think that as a company, this is your greatest quality?

Chapter 3 – Pedagogical Note

3.1 Target

This pedagogical case study is intended for Management students, in particular with regard to the study of the topics of Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility, Ethics and Sustainability, in any curricular units that address these issues. It is expected that it can also be a useful example for companies, regarding the implementation of sustainable principles and practices and Strategic Social Responsibility; and potentially even an incentive to current and future entrepreneurs, in the search for business models that are more responsible and circular.

3.2 Pedagogical Objectives

This case study, as a practical instrument of a pedagogical nature, has as its main focus to approach and study the themes of zero waste, stakeholders relationships and the importance of an organization's mission, through the analysis of relevant literature and its application to the real life case of the company Mind the Trash. Considering the focus of this thesis, the objectives of this case study are: understanding new concepts as zero waste, identify solutions for strategy focused on social responsibility, the how on developing businesses and minimizing impacts and, finally, the importance of such business models. Ideally, the final goal is to encourage students, professionals, and managers to think about sustainable practices and their integration within the companies; and to develop some competences such as: teamwork, time management and the analysis of data from different sources.

3.3 Literature Review

Every day more individuals join the zero waste movements and work towards a circular economy, to eliminate the traditional method of producing, using and wasting and ensuring a sustainable future for our planet. Business plays a key role in this transition and a growing number of companies are establishing waste reduction goals, such as "zero waste to landfill" as part of their sustainability commitments (Veleva et al., 2017). In this chapter, the relevant literature is reviewed, starting with basic concepts such as Values Based Organisations and CSR, moving Stakeholder relationships and Zero Waste, more specifically Reusable Packaging and Zero waste deliveries.

3.3.1. Values Based Organisations

According to Chippendale (2001) "values motivate, morals and ethics constrain." In other words, values describe what is important in a person's life, while ethics and morals prescribe what is or is not considered appropriate behaviour in living one's life. Principles inform our choice of

values, morals, and ethics (Chippendale, 2001). O'Toole (2008) defines values-based leaders as leaders who create followers by enabling them to see clearly, and to achieve effectively, that which they hold dear.

The value-based organization (and first and foremost its leader) is therefore the one iteratively testing the effectiveness of values in producing desirable behaviours and reassessing them under changing conditions (Adla et al., 2020). Leaders must somehow cope with changing and increasingly heterogeneous values, both in their organizations and society at large (Viinamäki, 2012). Organizational values that are congruent with employees' values have been shown to increase employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance outcomes (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). Embedding organizational values and values-based leadership has positive effects on organizations (Viinamäki, 2012). Work values shape psychological contracts by providing workers and managers with an image or conception of what they should each expect to give and receive as part of the employment relationship. (Winter & Brent, 2014)

Viinamäki (2012) presents four steps to create values-based organization – (1) integrating organizational values into organizational acts, strategies, and leadership practices; (2) turning and remoulding organizational culture to serve organizational goals and leadership; (3) making organizational values visible and using them in every conduct and increasing value-consciousness; and finally, (4) communicating through sets of selected values.

In a study by Buchko (2006), it was found that subordinates of leaders who strongly demonstrated values-based management behaviours were more likely to exhibit the same behaviours. Values-based management requires that leaders demonstrate the values to their subordinates since they take many cues from their superiors. If the members of an organization live by or demonstrate a set of core values, they will likely achieve limited outcomes on organization performance (Buchko, 2006). Any employment relationship can expand when human value is conceived in humanistic rather than instrumental terms, and work values make prosocial impact the focus of meaning for the conduct of individual and organizational life (Winter & Brent, 2014).

3.3.2 CSR and Stakeholder Relationships

CSR continues to gain attention atop the corporate agenda and is by now an important component of the dialogue between companies and their stakeholders (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). And while businesses have long been held accountable for their CSR and environmental policies, they are increasingly realising the potential financial benefits of these policies as well (Barnish, 2013).

Organizations that consider a strategy of CSR have to address the question ‘to whom are we responsible?’. ‘To stakeholders’ is now a common answer to this question, which means that, to manage a CSR strategy, the identification of stakeholders is crucial (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders form relationships with a company in order to obtain benefits and contribute to the wealth of the organization (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Thus, to a certain extent, management of CSR has to be side to side with stakeholder management (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

CSR can be defined “*as the obligations or duties of an organization to a specific system of stakeholders*” (J. Vos, 2003, p.142) and its activities have the potential to create stronger relationships between firms and stakeholders (Pelozo & Shang, 2011).

The stakeholder involvement strategy assumes a dialogue between a company and its stakeholders. Persuasion may occur, but it comes from stakeholders as well as from the organization itself, each trying to persuade the other to change. Ideally, the company as well as its stakeholders will change as a result of engaging in a symmetric communication model, i.e. progressive interactions of sense-making and sense giving processes (Mette & Majken, 2006). Because the stakeholder involvement strategy takes the notion of the stakeholder relationship to an extreme, companies should not only influence but also seek to be influenced by stakeholders, and therefore change when necessary (Mette & Majken, 2006).

3.3.2.1 Suppliers

External stakeholders are those who do not directly work with a company but are affected somehow by the actions and outcomes of the business (Fernando, 2022). A supplier is an external stakeholder.

A company’s suppliers provide jobs and create economic opportunities in the communities where they operate. The success of those suppliers correlates directly with the success of those cities and regions. Likewise, creating ways for vendors to thrive also benefits the organization, via a sustainable supply chain and improved trust (Thurston, 2019).

In today’s business world, growing attention is being paid to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), mostly because of environmental concerns, regulatory impacts, commercial benefits, and reputational impacts. Increasing number of companies initiates and implements practices considered as CSR activities (Tekin et al., 2015). It has, in the past few

years, become important to consider whether all suppliers and other companies in the chain have implemented CSR activities and practices in their operations, to ensure long-term affiliations. All companies including suppliers should take responsibility to do no harm to the environment, to reduce waste and pollution, to control gas emissions, and to comply with governmental regulations, whilst at the same time reducing their costs and increasing their profit (Tekin et al., 2015).

For any company, supplier selection has great impact on integration of the supply chain relationship. Effective and accurate supplier selection decisions are significant components for production and logistics management, and for many firms can enhance their organizational performance (Fisher et al., 2009). Many elements go into selecting the right supplier for a business, from the supplier's purchasing habits, lead times, product quality and cost, and consistency, to name a few (Kosk, 2015). Increasingly, there is a need for buyers and suppliers to strategically collaborate and build stronger and more long-term relationships (Sillanpää et al., 2015), which are aligned with the values and goals of both companies.

Choosing a supplier is thus one of the most significant decisions for a business (Roy et al., 2020) since a successful supplier selection will enhance organizational performance (Taherdoost & Brard, 2019). The first step in finding a supplier with complementary skills is to undertake a thorough search. Experience, capabilities, and potential for making a real contribution are important criteria. Suppliers also play a prominent role in assuring sustainability by maintaining green criteria in accordance with societal and economic expectations (Roy et al., 2020). Developing and maintaining strong relationships with suppliers is imperative to keeping a business running efficiently (Thurston, 2019).

The region or country a supplier is located in is also important. Issues of human rights violations and forced labor continue to exist and receive increasing global awareness. As such, businesses may want to reconsider areas with high reports of human trafficking because of the ramifications on their multi-tier suppliers and overall company (Kosk, 2015).

3.3.2.2 Relationship with consumer

The relationship between a company and its consumer is obviously very important, since this group of stakeholders is a source of loyalty and profit, and these CSR practices described below contribute directly for this relationship to grow and become more real.

Companies that are strongly committed to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities want to be identified in this manner and this positioning tends to enhance a corporation's

legitimacy in the eyes of society and its stakeholders (Stanaland et al., 2011). Trust is defined from a consumer perspective as the consumer's belief that a corporation will perform in a manner consistent with expectations regarding its expertise, integrity, and goodwill (Park et al., 2013). CSR influences corporate reputation, induces customer engagement, and gives rise to behavioural responses such as consumer trust and consumer loyalty (Stanaland et al., 2011), as well as also word-of-mouth and positive customer feedback (Abbas et al., 2018). The multi-faceted nature of CSR indicates that reputation and loyalty tend to be more pragmatic reasons for engaging in this practice, while consumer trust might be viewed as being morally based. The impact of corporate reputation and trust should not be underestimated: they positively influence consumer loyalty, which is an important hallmark of a successful company (Stanaland et al., 2011).

According to Forbes on article of May 2nd, 2022, CSR has an impact on three main types of buying decisions: seeking out eco-friendly products, boycotting irresponsible businesses, and amplifying CSR messaging (Bowling, 2022).

In a study that explored how consumers respond to CSR in China with a multiproduct, comparative survey, Tian et al., (2011) found that (1) Chinese consumers who show a high level of awareness and trust of CSR are more likely to transform a good CSR record into positive corporate evaluation, product association, and purchase intention; (2) Consumer responses to CSR vary across different product categories. Firms selling experience products (vs. search and credence products) are more likely to gain consumers' positive product associations and purchase support through CSR practices; and (3) The relationships between consumer demographics and their CSR responses are not linear, and those consumers with a middle level of age and income would respond to CSR more positively (Tian et al., 2011).

Today, social media represents a tremendous opportunity for CSR communication as the interactive and social characteristics of these platforms have helped push companies to new levels of openness and transparency (Sutton, 2016) since consumers can write and share their opinions about companies' CSR initiatives, offering opportunities for companies to engage in two-way dialogue with stakeholders (Chu et al., 2020) Companies that stand out for doing good and innovating, simultaneously, are rewarded with more positive customer attitudes and higher levels of customer retention (van Doorn et al., 2017).

In the eyes of the consumer, it is part of the responsibility of all companies to ensure that the impact of their operations is diminished to the minimum, and this perspective has been growing the same way environment concerns have been. The current model of natural resource

extraction, along with its processing, use, and disposal in the form of waste, is the definition of unsustainability (Jurisova, 2019). The future of economic growth resides within the re-use and restoration of resource efficiency, which can be achieved from the point of view of the business environment by implementing ecological innovations (Jurisova, 2019).

3.3.3. Zero Waste

Solid waste management is a local issue with global implications. As the world's population continues to grow, so does the amount of waste being produced. Every year, the world generates 2,12 billion metric tons of solid waste (*Global Waste Problem*, n.d.). This number is expected to grow to 3.4 billion metric tons by 2050 (Environmental Protection Agency & of Resource Conservation, 2020). Inadequate solid waste management can impact cities and their residents in myriad ways. Human health, the environment and socioeconomic stability are negatively impacted by poorly managed waste.

The simple definition of zero waste is to aim to not send anything to landfills. Reducing needs, reusing as much as possible, sending little to be recycled, and composting the rest. Ideally, waste should be seen as an intermediate phase of the resource consumption process which can easily be deconstructed for reuse, recycle, recovery and remanufacturing processes if the products are designed properly. Unfortunately, waste is still considered as an 'end-of-life' product, despite being a social and environmental problem (Zaman, 2014).

Waste prevention can be as simple as switching from disposable to reusable products, or as complex as redesigning a product to use fewer raw materials or last longer (Environmental Protection Agency & of Resource Conservation, 2020). Therefore, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) has defined a set of principles so serve as guidance to anyone who may want to choose a more sustainable way of living, which go from producer responsibility all the way to landfill waste and disposal .

In the traditional industrial model, throughout the years, waste had only two destinations, landfills, and the ocean. Today, zero waste represents a shift from the traditional industrial model in which waste is considered the norm, to integrated systems in which everything has its use. Zero waste advocates an industrial transformation, whereby businesses minimize the load they impose on the natural resource and learn to do more with what the Earth produces and has been considered as one of the most visionary concepts for solving waste problems (Song et al., 2015). A Zero Waste strategy can therefore be seen a sound business tool which, when integrated into business processes, provides an easy-to-understand stretch goal that can lead to innovative ways to identify, prevent and reduce waste of all kinds. It strongly supports

sustainability by protecting the environment, reducing costs and producing additional jobs in the management and handling of waste back into the industrial cycle. Zero Waste strategies can be applied to businesses, communities, industrial sectors, schools and homes (Song et al., 2015).

Two of the main practices for achieving zero waste are reducing and reusing. The next sections describe the business practices of reusing packaging and reducing carbon emissions.

3.3.3.1 Reusable Packaging

The Sustainable Packaging Coalition (2011) envisions a world where all packaging is sourced responsibly, designed to be effective and safe throughout its life cycle, meets market criteria for performance and cost, is made entirely using renewable energy, and once used, is recycled efficiently to provide a valuable resource for subsequent generations.

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019), reuse presents an innovation opportunity to change the way we think about packaging from something that is simply as inexpensive and light as possible, to viewing it as a high-value asset that can deliver significant benefits to users and businesses. As reuse entails the avoidance of two outcomes: placing new packaging on the market and increasing the volumes of packaging waste generated (EC, 2018), so before discarding the packages from materials and supplies or buying new ones, reutilization should be plan A for every company.

Packaging plays an important role in safely distributing products in today's society and supply chains. With a consumption of about 40% of plastics and 50% of paper in Europe, the packaging sector is a large user of materials. Packaging has a lot of environmental impacts, and it also represents a significant cost in the current supply system. Reusable packaging has been suggested as an option to significantly reduce environmental impacts (Coelho et al., 2020).

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019) argues that reusing can raise six benefits:

- **Compact Products** can lead to lower costs, since packaging and transportations costs can be reduced by supplying refills for reusable containers in compact form.
- **Deposit and Reward** which can build brand loyalty and customer retention through strategies for reusable packaging
- **Customisation** and adaptation to individual needs through reuse models that let users mix and match flavours, personalise packaging or choose desired quantities.
- **Superior Design** can improve user experience by enhancing the look, feel or functionality of reusable packaging (which can be more high-end as its initial production cost is divided over many uses)

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- **Shared Design** of reusable packaging across brands, sectors or wider networks can optimise operations of distribution and logistics.
- **Smart Systems** of information on user preferences and system performance can be gathered by incorporating digital technologies such as RFID tags, sensors, and GPS tracking into the reusable packaging system.

In addition, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019) has developed a business-to-consumer reuse model (Figure 1) that offers a solution for consumers after purchase to return their packages which can be from home or on the go. Return from home is suitable for e-commerce as the pickup of empty packaging can be combined with the delivery of new products. It is particularly well suited for urban areas with reduced travel distances between deliveries. This solution offers benefits such as brand loyalty by incentivising the return of the packaging through deposit and reward schemes, optimisation of operations and reducing costs, among others. However, there can be some potential challenges for a business choosing this solution, as pointed out by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019), namely:

- Establishing a local reverse logistics, cleaning, and refilling infrastructure to ensure economic and environmental feasibility.
- Developing the right deposit and reward scheme. The scheme needs to incentivise the return of packaging without scaring customers away with a very high initial deposit.
- Developing a system to keep track of deposits and handle repay.
- Reducing the risk of theft of high-value packaging when sitting on the doorstep upon delivery or return.
- Scaling quickly to maintain affordable prices for customers.

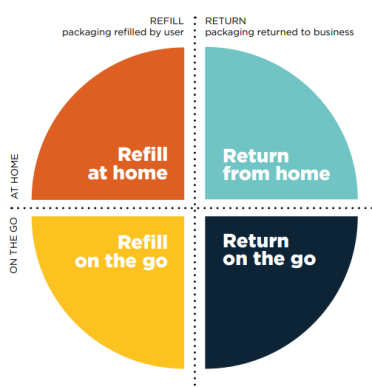


Figure 2 - The Four Reuse Models (Source - Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2019))

Some key factors that affect the company economically pointed by Coelho et. al (2020) are transport distances and logistics, the total volume of the market, fitting in a standardized system, return rates of reusable packaging, cleaning, and labour involved in these steps.

The reuse of packaging cardboards can have a huge impact in the logistics and distribution of a company, and, according to Lima Nunes et al (2015) this impact can be economic and environmental. When choosing to reuse cardboard packages, for instance, there can be a reduction of 80% in costs of packaging, as well as a reduction of 87% of the carbon footprint of this process (de Lima Nunes et al., 2015).

3.3.3.2 Zero emission deliveries

The COVID-19 pandemic brought changes to our everyday lives, notably an increase in online purchases. Home-based shopping for groceries and other essentials became popular during the pandemic and remains so after it (Jefferies et al., 2020). These deliveries carried a considerable volume of carbon emissions with them, as most physical stores chose this method to continue their businesses during the pandemic.

Cities are home to over half of the world's population, and the site of most of our built assets, economic activity, and greenhouse gas emissions. Most cities are already feeling the effects of climate change and nearly all are at risk (C40 Knowledge Hub, n.d.) As with any human activity, online trade exerts pressure on the environment, particularly on the urban environment, where the majority of the population resides. Last-mile deliveries (LM) (transportation of merchandise from the nearest distribution point to the final destination, such as a home or business) of online shopping, are a significant contributor to increased emissions, and city congestion related to last-mile deliveries is predicted to rise by 21% by 2030 (Mucowska, 2021). Research shows that congestion related problems cost US drivers nearly USD 300 billion in 2016, with similar burdens felt across other global cities (Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2017). The whole set of activities performed for delivering goods in urban areas—namely, LM delivery—is one of the most expensive and complex within supply chains, adding up to 40% of supply chain costs (Cagliano et al., 2015; Roumboutsos et al., 2014), which in turn is an important fraction of operating costs (Zissis et al., 2018). Thus, LM is not merely a logistics problem, but it has become a crucial urban planning challenge (Ewedairo et al., 2018), with the ultimate goal of making the associated services sustainable from an operational, economic, and environmental point of view (Mangano et al., 2021). In the urban freight transport framework, it becomes crucial to think about new solutions that could be able to improve the efficiency and

overall sustainability of modern city logistics (Carbone et al., 2017; Rai et al., 2017 as cited in Binetti et al., 2019) and of the e-commerce market (Mucowska, 2021).

The search for sustainable last-mile deliveries has resulted in the growth of interest in green logistics and alternative methods of goods delivery, such as cargo bikes (Ali, F, n.d.), crowdshipping (personalized delivery of freight) (Rai et al., 2017), and electric vehicles (Tsakalidis et al., 2020 cited in Mucowska, 2021).

Addressing the challenge of reducing carbon emissions in the delivery sector is not cheap. Some studies, particularly those in supply chain management, demonstrate that implementing innovations for product, process and organizational solutions, would bring substantial financial gains through cost reduction, with environmental improvements are treated as welcomed externalities (Bonilla, 2016; Brotcorne et al., 2019; McLeod et al., 2020). Today, any solutions supporting environmental sustainability are more willingly implemented by a company. A reduction in the number of vehicles delivering goods ordered online, for instance, can improve the urban ecosystem's condition and city residents' quality of life in multiple aspects (Mucowska, 2021).

Performing consolidated deliveries in the inner-city area using battery electric delivery vans and cargobikes contributes to reducing emissions, noise and traffic congestion around receivers, especially in heavily dense and congested areas. This enhances the amenity of the area and quality of life for customers, retailers and residents (Aljohani & Thompson, 2018).

3.4 Animation Plan

The use of a case study in a learning environment can happen in many ways, depending on the intended purpose. For this case study specifically, the suggestions of how it can be used so the objectives are accomplished are described in the animation plan below. The proposition is that the analysis of the case study be carried out in the classroom, in groups composed of three to five elements, so that students have the opportunity to speak and interact in a deeper way. All students should read the case individually before class, analyse the issues they will be discuss as a group and take notes on the topics they consider most important beforehand. After, the case should be discussed and worked on in groups during the class.

Although the case study is the main source of information, students can and should consult additional sources of information to solve the pedagogical case study questions. In a second class, the various groups can discuss their resolutions with each other and complete each other's answers, discuss points of view, make constructive comments, and receive feedback from the

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teacher. It is assumed that the theoretical material associated with the case study has already been taught when the case is applied.

Pre class plan – Individual Work

Step	Duration	Assignment
1	90min	1. Read the Case 2. Individual analyses of each question

Class Plan – Group Work

Class	Step	Duration	Assignment
1	1	10-15min	1. Splitting into groups (3-5 elements) 2. Sharing key insights about the case
	2	25min	Question 1 - How does the company implement the principles of the Zero Waste in its practices?
	3	30min	Question 2 - Mind The Trash has established a connection with its stakeholders. Please describe for each of the stakeholders' groups below, how this relationship has been achieved and what benefits arise from that connection. a. Suppliers? b. Consumers? c. Employees?
	4	20min	Question 3 - What challenges has the company been faced with in the implementation of its vision/ mission?
2	5	20min	1. Final details in groups and preparing to present the answers
	6	60min	2. Discussion of the answers of each group 3. Consolidation of the learning acquired from the case
	7	10min	4. Case wrap up and teacher feedback

3.5. Case Questions

1. How does the company implement the principles of the Zero Waste in its practices?
2. Mind The Trash has established a connection with its stakeholders. Please describe for each of the stakeholders' groups below, how this relationship has been achieved and what benefits arise from that connection.
 - a. Suppliers?
 - b. Consumers?
 - c. Employees?
3. What challenges has the company been faced with in the implementation of its vision/mission?

3.6 Case Resolution

This chapter presents a proposed resolution to the questions in the case. It is important to mention that the answers presented should be seen as a possibility of response, with openness to other perspectives, with the discussion and exchange of ideas being a fundamental part of learning through case studies. During individual case preparation, students are expected to look for additional and more up to date information from additional sources.

3.6.1 Question 1

How does the company implement the principles of the Zero Waste in its practices?

For Mind the Trash the concept zero waste is present in all its decisions and practices. The prevailing mindset, not only in Catarina Matos, the CEO, but also the other employees of the company, is all zero-waste and environmentally oriented. In fact, the company was built based on the very idea of having the first zero waste store in the country, allowing Portuguese consumers to change to a more environmental conscious consumption. Not only does waste cost businesses money, but it also symbolises bad design, so, as circular thinking becomes more popular, leaders from around the world are realising the the benefits between the zero waste philosophy and business performance (Zero Waste Europe, 2022). This zero-waste mindset, and resulting strategy, can be seen in many different aspects of the company: the values the company and the employees stand for, the products it produces and buys from other responsible businesses, the office organization and set up and finally the mindset and dedication of both Catarina and MtT's employees. Below, each one of these is examined in more detail.

The American Environmental Protection Agency has structured a list of principles of Zero Waste. MtT is an example in following the majority of this principles, and those that are not

relevant in the core business of the company, are addressed in MtT social media, to ensure the information is transmitted to its followers. This is a list of all principles of Zero Waste and how MtT approach them:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility and Product Redesign:** Catarina has defended that is more important for her that every employee of the production of MtT's products and its suppliers are being respected, through fair work conditions and compensation than to have the cheapest product of the market. This covers the extended producer responsibility part of this first principle of Zero Waste. In terms of product redesign, when a MtT product goes onto the virtual shelves of the online store, it has been studied to be as eco-friendly as it can be. However, Catarina is always up to date with the new trends of packaging and production, looking for further improvements where possible.
- **Reduce Waste, Toxicity, Consumption, and Packaging:** Throughout the case, many examples of these reductions have been pointed out. In terms of waste and consumption, the office of MtT proudly reuses materials to use as storage, and did not purchase any office supplies, since all employees had some at home from their school days. In terms of toxicity, all the products are produced with 100% organic and natural ingredients, representing less toxicity, less damage to the environment and to make them as safe as possible for consumers. Packaging is a major concern for MtT, and since the beginning of the company, all orders are plastic-free. Some recommendations are also made on the company's Instagram social network on how to reuse packaging that cannot be returned, such as bottles of cream products or solid toothpastes.
- **Repair, Reuse and Donate:** In addition to the recommendations on how to reuse the packaging mentioned above, MtT also provides recommendations on how to turn old sheets or other fabrics into napkins. In terms of donations, MtT not also accepts donations from the community of cardboard boxes, wrapping paper and product packaging from the products, but it has also been linked with some associations throughout the years that have needed products or financial support. More recently, MtT has posted that a donation was being sent to Ukraine, through another initiative, and that they would be possible be accepting food, clothes and other donations in their offices to be shipped to the country in the following weeks.
- **Recycle:** The awareness of how correct recycling should be done is also taken seriously by MtT on its Instagram account. Many articles on the topic, and demystifications about how the recycling process works in Portugal are posted. MtT also recycles any materials that will not serve for orders or cannot be repaired.

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- Compost: Many MtT posts on their Instagram are about food waste, how can it be reduced and where consumers can throw it. Part of the compost zero waste principle starts with sharing truthful information about the topic and offering a solution. In MtT's online store consumers can find Ecoliving's compostable garbage bags, which are made from wood pulp waste and are therefore 100% biodegradable and compostable. They have an FSC certificate, which guarantees that their material comes from well-managed forests.
- Down Cycle and Beneficial Reuse: Downcycling is a recycling practice that involves breaking an item down into its component elements or materials. Once the constituent elements or materials are recovered, they are reused if possible, usually as a lower-value product. Ideally, only elements that cannot be reused are discarded. A practice that MtT uses to downcycle cardboard boxes that are too thin to be used as packaging for orders, is cut to them into little squares, write a thank you note and leave them inside the order box. An example of beneficial reuse - turning would-be waste into a valuable commodity, would be the recommendation on MtT's social media of using torn tights to use the tiny pieces of bath soap or solid shampoo that are more difficult to use all the way through.
- Waste-Based Energy as disposal and Landfill Waste as disposal – Like Composting and Down Cycling, these principles are only addressed in publications on MtT's social media since they are not part of the core business of the company. Through these posts, MtT is able to, after long research, share information with its community about these issues.

One important factor determining the behaviours and decisions of people in organisations is the organisation's values, sharing beliefs that influence behaviours and the establishment of goals that are mutually desirable among the members of the organisation (A. Buchko, 2007). The values the company chose to adopt, such as transparency, quality and, coherence, all contribute to maintain its commitment, made since the beginning, of being zero waste. Without a well embedded set of values, MtT would not be able to consistently improve their no waste commitment.

The products Mind the Trash sells all abide by a specific set of rules imposed by the company. This allows Mind the Trash to assure that all the products on its website are reliable and consumer safe, whether they are produced by the company or not. This means that MtT's suppliers are all fighting the waste battle alongside it. All the products sold are plastic free and made with natural ingredients, made to last, and the packaging they are sold in, is recyclable or returnable to the company.

The office of Mind the Trash is unique in many ways: the office supplies are all from the employees' school days, the shelves are organized with boxes that donated by stakeholders, and the orders are packaged in boxes from the same origin. Part of the office is reserved to store the donated boxes donated that will one day will be carrying a customer order or used to organize the office. In an interview given by Catarina Matos, she highlighted organization as one of the most important aspects of Mind the Trash, feeling that that was probably the secret for the achievements her company has reached until now, and that brand new office materials were not needed for such accomplishments. If a product gets spoiled or damaged, but it is still good for use, it is not thrown away; instead, it is sold on the website at a lower price, avoiding it going to waste.

Catarina and her team mindset is very important to ensure the improvement of their practices every day in terms of zero waste and business efficiency. In fact, many of these practices are now performed naturally and without any kind of effort. The biggest advantage of MtT of having this commitment to being zero waste is without doubt having these ideals since day one.

To be zero waste will always be one of the biggest challenges of MtT, new barriers will appear every day, since every business is dependent of many external factors such as the environment, suppliers, consumers, and new discoveries. However, MtT has proven to be prepared and ready to deal with these obstacles and maintain its commitment and objective of being zero waste.

3.6.2 Question 2

Mind The Trash has established a connection with its stakeholders. Please describe for each of the stakeholders' groups below, how this relationship has been achieved and what benefits arise from that connection.

a. Suppliers?

The relationship between a company and its supplier is many times seen as an alliance and alliance partners must be willing to give to and take from one another (Brouthers et al., 1995), to achieve a successful win-win relationship. Since MtT's mission is to be a sustainable company, it only associates with brands that fulfil this requirement, since they play a prominent role in assuring sustainability, by maintaining green criteria (Roy et al., 2020).

Some of the suppliers have been partners with MtT since the beginning of the company, and according to Catarina, for a strong business relationship to be established, trust and

consistency are essential. Catarina was a consumer of these brands, and when MtT came to life, no better partnership than with the brands she already followed, trusted, and had a personal experience with. Many of the relationships between MtT and its suppliers started like this: Catarina got to know them, tested the products, as did the rest of the team, friends, and family, and then, after much research, the “partnership” came to life. The challenge is to create this type of connection with the 27 suppliers MtT has today. The number of suppliers has grown throughout the years; however, the proximity and importance of these relationship was always a priority for Catarina. The quality of the relationships between the suppliers and MtT has been achieved through communication and transparency.

As Roy et al. (2020) note, choosing suppliers is a crucial decision. Catarina knows this, since she has talked about how hard it is to accept, choose and approve these “partnerships” between MtT and its suppliers. The performance of a company will be improved if such “partnerships” turn out to be successful (Taherdoost & Brard, 2019). For example, the relationship MtT has established with Georganics has allowed both companies to grow, improve products together and to gain more brand awareness. When MtT came to life, Georganics and other brands already have this type of relationship with the CEO.

The benefits that can come from a good supplier relationship make all the time and energy you put into it worth it in the long run (Smith, 2020). The benefits that arise from that strong relationship are primarily a good working system for both companies, since they can trust each other, so if there is a problem with an order or even a last minute one, for example, both will work together, to achieve common success. Catarina describes this closeness with her suppliers, and says that in many situations, if was not for this rich and strong relationship, neither company would be where they are today. Once a solid foundation and relationship are developed with suppliers, constructive communication can be free-flowing and lead to a positive impact on the procurement process, the supply chain, and the actual quality of the procured items themselves (Smith, 2020). MtT only partners up with suppliers that respect and share the same values of the company, so the benefit is that they both keep an eye on each other’s business to make sure no mistakes have been made, which represents mutual support. Catarina described a situation, where the distribution company of the Infinity book (a Portuguese notebook that can be cleaned and so used indefinitely), were sending their packages filled with plastic. MtT had to notify the supplier, and they immediately solved the problem. Finally, if there is a strong connection, when some defect or problem happens with a product, both companies will work together to make sure that it does not go to waste.

On the other hand, this “partnership” can also be potentially damage to the companies involved. MtT has strict requirements, and if a supplier fails to fulfil them, MtT’s reputation can be harmed. Catarina has shared that all their suppliers are now like friends of MtT, but still need to be overseen and controlled. An example of this needed supervisions is when a supplier, after changing its delivery contract, uses plastics in their deliveries, MtT cannot stand by and consent this behaviour, so an action must be set in place, and either this supplier rectifies this incompatibility, or the partnership is dissolved. Catarina needs to pay attention to all these situations, since the MtT’s reputation is correlated with her suppliers’ reputation.

b. Consumers?

Small businesses have the advantage of making more personalized relationships with their customers and partners. Whatever the industry, there are ways to creatively showcase sustainability efforts, be it on the website, company e-newsletters or social media (Cruz, 2021). Companies spend years building loyalty and trust with their target audience, and a key method for building that trust is honesty. When customers perceive that a business does things the right way and cares about creating a quality product or service, they tend to reward that business (Quain, 2019).

Catarina had an Instagram account which already had some followers, where she posted and shared content about her day-to-day trying to reach a zero-waste life. At the time, she was living in London, and these followers were mainly from the UK. When she decided to open MtT with Christian, she converted her personal account into the MtT account. This first step was one of many to ensure consumers and followers not only associated MtT to a person, but that the journey of the company started with a feeling of closeness with who was behind the account. Throughout the years a strong relationship has been formed, and the authenticity of how it started may be the secret of how it turned out so strong.

Many benefits arise from this connection to the company: the closer it is to the consumer, mainly through social media, the more feedback it is likely to get; customer comments and suggestions can be considered and integrated, and products can be more aligned with what the customer really wants. Catarina and her team all take advantage of the huge community that has been created mostly on Instagram, through Q&As and direct questions. Consumers can give their personal opinions of the products, orders, perceptions of the companies and suggestions for the future. The CEO defends that this transparency through social media has helped them achieve many victories, since Portuguese consumers are increasingly concerned about the same topics MtT has been defending since 2017, the beginning of the company.

Business transparency is the process of being open, honest, and straightforward about various company operations. When something goes wrong in business, transparent companies do not try to hide it. Instead, they are upfront about the issue (Kappel, 2019). Transparency means that a firm is open with stakeholders, granting access to, at a minimum, information that allows them to better understand the company, its products, and reasons for certain actions and decisions (Parris et al., 2016).

The main benefit is that MtT fights for having continuously improved products for its consumers, and a strong connection with them will help achieve that perfect fit. Catarina and her team, make an effort every day to get closer to what consumers want, since if they find what they want, it is more likely that the product will be used entirely. At the same time, if consumers know what they want, they will not want to return it, which will avoid many unnecessary trips, and lead to less carbon emissions to the environment. If this perfect fit is achieved, both consumers, MtT and the environment win.

c. Employees?

Encouraging the employees to think outside of the box and giving them time and resources to explore new areas for innovative ideas is the key to cost-effective business solutions (Sokolova, 2015). If a business is conducted in an openness and ethical way, and employees can see it, they are more likely to follow that example (Buchko, 2006).

Catarina describes her team as a family, where everyone has a voice; their DNA is in the company's DNA and vice-versa. She proudly portrays a healthy and happy work environment where every employee fights for the company's mission and represents the company's values. Catarina also fights for their benefits and rights every day, believing that what is established by the government is not enough, and that she should keep fighting and trying to provide beyond what she's obliged to by law. An example of this is the vacation days. According to the 238th article of the Vacation section of work code, the annual vacation period has a minimum duration of 22 working days. Catarina has already achieved 23 days per year and another half day per month for her employees. This can be seen as a good first step; however, more practices are not being considered for now, because MtT is a very small company, and they want to have a responsible growth. If Catarina wants to give more to her employees, she has to assure that the company is ready for that step, for example, to offer another day of vacation to her employees, she has to assure she has the financial stability to afford all employees to have it, and also that the operations will not be affected as well as the workload for the ones that are not on holiday.

Work motivation is critical for ensuring the sustainability of any business firm. Having motivated personnel helps an organization achieve its organizational goals and objectives. Hence, it has become an essential duty for business managers and management committees to identify the motivating factors that would strongly affect their employees (Rahaman et al., 2020).

Since MtT's main objective is to achieve zero waste, if the connection and relationship with its employees is strong, they will all work towards this same objective, help the company to grow, fight for achieving more environmentally conscious practices and finally, themselves become personal ambassadors of a zero-waste life.

3.6.3 Question 3

What challenges has the company been faced with in the implementation of its vision/mission?

“Today we must recognize that we live in an increasingly growing economy where companies will only survive if they maintain their competitive advantage. But rather than seeing this as a barrier to sustainable development and environmental improvement, corporations should take it as an opportunity. Their success lies in combining this competitive advantage with effective sustainable strategies”(Khadri, 2018).

The mission of Mind the Trash is to become zero waste, maintaining the transparency, quality, and coherence of the business and products, without ever compromising the stakeholders and giving into pressure of growing in the market. It is impossible to define today's challenges without looking at the ones from the beginning and even reflecting on what challenges the future will bring. The challenges can be divided into three main categories: the challenges which arose when Catarina and Christian founded Mind the Trash, the challenges that still exist from the beginning and have not yet been fully overcome, and the challenges the future holds.

In the beginning, Catarina and her partner decided that a store with this mission and vision was their dream, but everyone around them discouraged them to invest, since nothing like that existed at the time, and it would probably fail. When everything started to come together, another difficult challenge was finding suppliers that would be also aligned with MtT's values and mission, in other to sell their products. This required a lot of investigation and study about these companies, just to ensure that both businesses were aligned with the zero-waste goal Mind the Trash was trying to reach.

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Today this challenge remains since MtT's team is also fully committed to keeping track of the activities of its suppliers' businesses, since their image and actions are directly associated with actions of MtT, and affect, both positively and negatively MtT's reputation. The MtT family, as Catarina Matos describes it, has grown slowly over the past few years, for two main reasons: Catarina wants to ensure that growth is sustainable and well thought out, economically, environmentally, and socially, and the secondly, can be challenging to hire employees that are fully aligned with the mission and vision, that respect the practices and commitment to achieve zero waste at MtT.

From a more external point of view, since Catarina has vowed to be as transparent with her business as she can be, with that statement comes a big responsibility. On both her personal account and the MtT one, she and her team are dedicated to being informative, trustworthy, and honest.

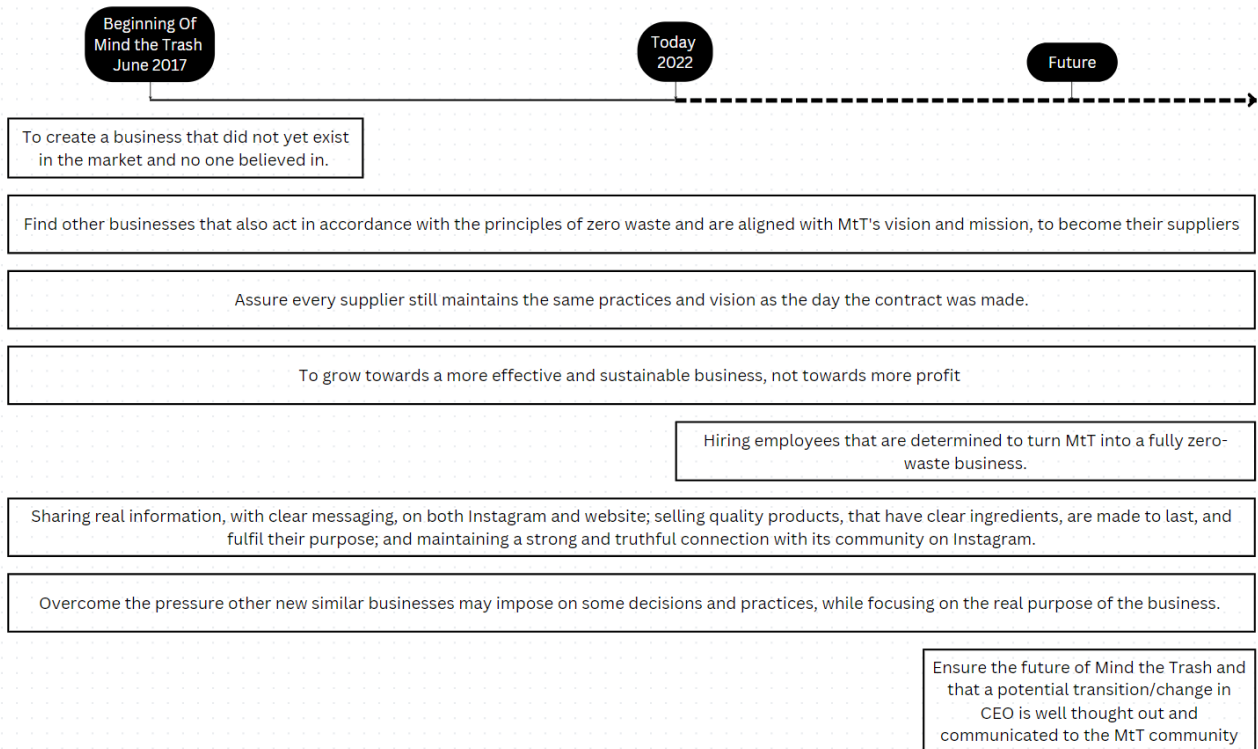
Another known challenge, that has accompanied MtT since 2017, is since MtT was and is the first business seeking to be zero waste, other businesses have now followed the same example, creating what is now strong competition in the Portuguese market. Catarina recognizes that many stores have followed their steps, but she says there is nothing to worry about, no other brand is MtT, and if they stick to their goals, mission and vision, customers will be happy, and employees will be happy to be part of a sustainability-oriented business. Some positive consequences come out of having more competition throughout the years, and since MtT was the first, every new business is competition. More products, more consumers and a changing mindset of the society are some of the positive outcomes of the growing market.

The main challenge identified that MtT will face in the future is substituting MtT's CEO, Catarina, which will not only be difficult for the internal logistics, but also for followers to accept a new one, since Catarina has established such a strong connection with them, being the face of the business.

In summary, after addressing them, here is a list of the challenges that were addressed throughout this answer of implementing the vision/mission of MtT:

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Figure 3 - Timeline of the Challenges MtT had to face since the beginning of the company



3.7. Resolution Slides

The slides of this case are attached (Appendix C)

Conclusion

Creativity and innovation within a well-run company have always been recognized as a sure path to success (Sokolova, 2015), and MtT is no different in the matter. With the evolution of both business models and productive processes, companies have been achieving products and services that are environmentally friendly and at the same time contribute to economic growth and social wellbeing, without overloading the planet's resources. In a world that is resource constrained, where ecosystems are degraded, climate change is now clearly linked to human activity and where growth has so far been unable to include all citizens on our planet, the traditional role of the business is not good enough to achieve a sustainable development (Danciu, 2013).

The search for solutions for the growing climate change has been rising, and methodologies and practices such as Zero Waste and Circular Economy have garnered more interest. Both seek to rectify the impact human race has already had on planet earth. We must change course, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, or we risk missing the point where we can avoid the “disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us” (United Nations, 2022).

Entrepreneurship is seen as a driver for economic growth, competitiveness, and job creation (Thurik & Wennekers, 2004). And Catarina Matos, the CEO of Mind the Trash has been, since the foundation of the company, a real entrepreneur. She created a business that at the time had not yet been explored in Portugal, and her main focus was to create a business that could fill a gap in the Portuguese path to sustainability. Zero Waste has always been since day one, the main goal, and to achieve it, for Catarina, it had to be alongside with a strong, transparent relationship with the team, followers, customers, and suppliers. People are looking for companies that not only sell products and services, but also make the world better, brighter, or more meaningful in some way (Quain, 2019). Catarina Matos and all MtT team follow a business model that looks for original and up to date ways to have a more responsible business, in terms of impact on the environment, relationship with stakeholders.

Thus, it is intended that this work is studied by management students, who will be the managers of the future, but also by current managers and entrepreneurs, who want to rethink their business model, using this example as inspiration. By introducing students to this practical case and business example to follow, they are expected to take the initiative to develop profitable and innovative solutions, that replace the current unfeasible traditional methods, and that contribute to the minimization of global problems.

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The companies which choose sustainable strategies and practices will be in the position to drive value by growing revenues through new products and services, reducing costs through eco-efficiency, managing operational and regulatory risks more effectively and building intangible assets such as brand, reputation and collaborative networks with customers, competitors, and suppliers (Danciu, 2013).

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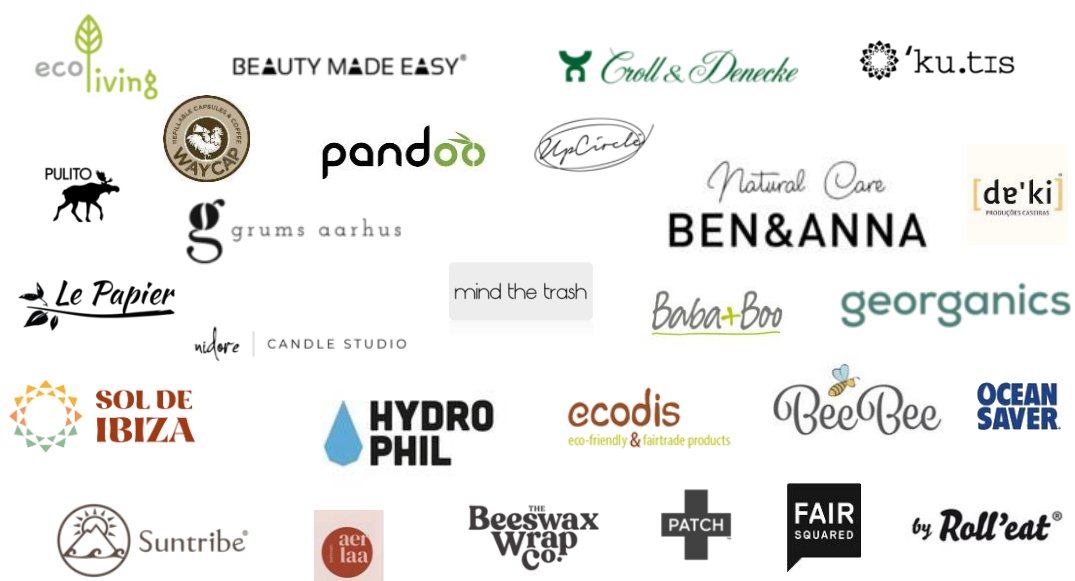
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Annexes

Appendix A– 27 Brands of Mind the Trash’s website



Appendix B - Post by MtT on Instagram regarding their activity on the 4th of Sep 2021



Appendix C – Resolution Slides

Pedagogical Case Study
Mind the Trash
Resolution

Question 1.
How does the company implement the principles of the Zero Waste in its practices?

Zero Waste Principles

- Extended Producer Responsibility and Product Redesign
- Reduce Waste, Toxicity, Consumption, and Packaging
- Repair, Reuse and Donate
- Recycle
- Compost
- Down Cycle and Beneficial Reuse
- Waste-Based Energy as disposal and Landfill Waste as disposal

Company values, Office supplies and Products

- Zero waste and Mind the Trash' values help and guide Catarina and her team to follow the guidelines for zero waste and to innovate towards it.
- The office is organized with reused materials, as office supplies are surplus materials that employees have and bring from their homes.
- Mind the Trash has established strict rules for products to be allowed on the virtual shelves of the online store

MIND THE TRASH – PEDAGOGICAL CASE STUDY

Question 2.
Mind The Trash has established a connection with its stakeholders. Please describe for each of the stakeholder groups below, how this relationship has been achieved and what benefits arise from that connection.

- Suppliers
- Consumers
- Employees

a. Suppliers

- Good working system for both sides, since they can trust each other. Hence, if there is a problem with an order, for example, or a last minute issue, they work together to resolve it and achieve common success.
- Once a solid foundation and relationship are developed with suppliers, constructive communication can be free-flowing and lead to a positive impact on the procurement process, the supply chain and the actual quality of the procured items themselves.

a. Suppliers

- Both companies keep an eye on each other's businesses, which represents mutual support.
- If there is a strong connection, when some defect or problem happens with a product, both companies will work together to make sure that it does not go to waste.

b. Consumers

- The closer the company is to the consumer, mainly through social media, the more feedback it gets. Comments and suggestions are considered, so products will be closer to what the customer really wants
- The main benefit is that MtT strives to have products made for its consumers, and a strong connection with them not only increases loyalty, but helps achieve that fit

b. Consumers

- If consumers know what they want, they will not want to give it back and ask for a refund. This will avoid many unnecessary trips leading to less carbon emissions to the environment.

c. Employees

- If the connection and relationship with its employees is strong, they will all work towards the same objectives, help the company grow, work towards achieving more environmentally conscious practices and finally, try to themselves be personal ambassadors for a zero-waste life.

Question 3.
What are the challenges of the implementation of the vision/ mission of the company?

Challenges Timeline

