

## Soap Buffet Executive Summary

Every year USA get rid of 33.6 million tons of plastic. This proposal aims to reduce the plastic problem by tackling the liquid soap industry, specifically in New York City. Plastic water bottles and plastic bags are beginning to get attention, however people don't tend to think twice when discarding liquid soap bottles.

The primary ingredient in plastic is polymerised hydrocarbons. These are extracted from the ground in the form of crude oil and fractionally distilled. This is done at high temperatures and causes greenhouse gasses. When the hydrocarbons are polymerised, toxic additives such as BPA are used. These toxins tend to get released into the ground when the plastic is disposed of. Plastic also makes its way to the ocean where it may sometimes be consumed by marine life. 50 percent of the plastic we use, we use just once and throw away.

Liquid soap has become a daily necessity. Americans spend almost twice as much on it compared to bar soap. This is problematic for the environment as liquid soap requires more packaging. There are also synthetic products in most liquid soap, which are difficult to break down.

Some solutions to this problem have been to use bar soap. However bar soap tends to absorb bacteria as people wash themselves with it, hence they shouldn't be shared between family members. Liquid soap is also a luxury that people aren't likely to go back from. There are businesses that sell liquid soap by the gallon, yet this doesn't get rid of the problem of plastic being disposed of. It merely slows down the rate of plastic disposal. Also, these containers may be too bulky to use efficiently. What comes closer to a valid solution is *Common Good*, a brand of refillable soap in NYC (Baker, 2013). Aside from the container, there are soaps that use natural as opposed to synthetic oils namely Dr. Bonners All-One.

The solution I plan to implement will be called *Soap Buffet*. It will incorporate *Common Good*'s refillable soap system and Dr. Bonners' All-One organic soap. Customers will purchase either a 42 ounce or 6 ounce container (or both) and refill it with liquid soap. When it they run out, they will come back and refill the container and be charged by the ounce. The product will consist of a life cycle with an overall description, as well as a design for the container. The container is the element that will enable consumers to use the product. If the container has a design that is durable and also looks slick, it is likely to be used and reused over and over.

Some issues might be that the manufacturing and transportation are process that will emit greenhouse gasses. Also with locally sourced organic ingredients and NYC's high rent and storage prices, costs will be high and hence the price of the product will have to be high, which may discourage customers. However the sheer amount of plastic saved will make a substantial difference to the environment. While the solution is not revolutionary, it is surely a step in the right direction.