

Design activism and the favorable conditions for craft engagement Bière de la Rade case study

Susana Paixão-Barradas

Kedge Business School

susana.paixao-barradas@kedgebs.com ✉

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ABSTRACT: This article presents the requirements surrounding activism and focuses the activist stance of the designer and the brewers. These requirements based on sustainable development, manufacturing and local consumption, highlights a variety of tensions and ambiguities, including technical feasibility and economic viability that companies affront. Far from suggesting that they could or should be removed, these questions are valued in this paper, as they illuminate the meanings of engagement reproduced through co-design practices. The argument is illustrate through a case-study of a craft beer company – Bière de la Rade, that led a local mobilization with some local initiatives in the sense to promote Zero Waste production. The study establishes an original theoretical framework, illustrated with the analysis of six specific codesign projects developed by the company with design students. The main results show how company can reduce their impact and wastage at the end of the manufacturing process: especially on packaging and transport. Analysing these solutions we can say that design activism is motivated by the craft engagement, that makes it possible because there are values, methodologies and common practices.

Keywords: Craft beer. Design activism. Craft engagement. Co-design. Zero waste.

1 INTRODUCTION

Craft beer companies cross a good time today to develop economically and creatively. Consumer demands are not restricted to the taste or aesthetics, a new generation of consumers calls for the creation of eco-responsible products, is concerned with protecting the planet, wonders about the production process of what suits and above all manifests itself through what it consumes. (MANZINI; MERONI, 2007).

Most of these companies understand and share these requirements by offering a varied, aesthetically accurate product that integrates circular economy principles into their product. To make this happens the craft beer companies give to us the example producing beer based on global knowledge with local resources and for local people.

Given the current circumstances related to globalization and export markets, the impact of products and companies have on the environment is undermined. There are countless social actions that express this concern for natural resources and their preservation, with the impact we produce on what we consume and acquire. International movements like Zero Waste, The World Clean Up Day, The Ocean Clean Up, The For Oceans, etc. are an example of this citizen posture that encompasses and integrates collective, associative and corporate structures. An ethnographic analysis of a case-study based on design activism is used to verify the favorable conditions for this engagement between companies and design students.

The main objective of this paper is to verify by a case study, the elements that contribute to the engagement on the activism found on the theory and answer this questions: *How students designers and the company Bière de la Rade are engaged to co-design Zero Waste solutions?* Identifying the company Zero Waste practices and the solutions coded together, this paper provides a list of favorable conditions to practice design activism.

In the following section, the case-study is introduced, with a discussion of its relevance to this special issue. In section two, the theoretical framework is established, borrowing from both recent insights of activism and engagement by companies and citizens. In section three, this framework is illustrated through its application to six specific codesigned solutions that were set up by the craft engagement postures.

2 BIÈRE DE LA RADE CONTEXT

The beer contributes to the European economy with a successful mix of world-leading multinationals, deeply-rooted regional breweries, and thriving SMEs. Europe's 8500 plus breweries generate around 2.3 million jobs, equating to 1% of all EU jobs; around €51 billion in value-added every year and around €42 billion in tax revenues every year. (THE BREWERS OF EUROPE, 2017). Alongside the increased beer exports and external investment, beer still remains primarily a local product.

Brewers take environmental sustainability very seriously and understand the importance of 'reducing, reusing, recycling', limiting environmental impact and increasing efficiency efforts. By using fewer natural resources, cutting CO2 emissions, and producing less waste, brewers actively support the EU's drive towards sustainable consumption and production. Brewers are also finding innovative ways to save resources, the reuse of secondary products such as brewers' grains to feed cattle and biogas to produce green energy. (THE BREWERS OF EUROPE, 2017).

The image of beer in France is changing rapidly and positively (PEPITONE, 2019). In 2017, France produced 21000 hectoliters per year and consumed 21500 (THE BREWERS OF EUROPE, 2018). Today have more than 1,600 breweries of all sizes (PEPITONE, 2019), more than 1.000 are micro-breweries, both independent and artisanal (MAROT, 2017). From Bretagne to the *Rhône-Alpes*, these micro-breweries still looking for an identity of their own, the majority are currently inspired by the Anglo-Saxon attitude, in search of the most aromatic hops.

The distribution is mainly local, due to reduced production volumes but the more and more craft beer bars and festivals are emerging throughout France, helping to introduce the breadth of French beer and the talents of French brewers. This development is supported by brilliant design and marketing strategy, including

stylish labels and a clear message: f*ck big breweries and their crap beer (PEPITONE, 2019).

It was in this effervescent context that *Bière de la Rade* was born in Toulon (south of France) in 2016. Found it by two brewers, today they have 9 employers, and they produce 9 types of beers, more than 6000 l per year. They sell 70% of their product to the other sellers (BtoB) and 30% directly to the final consumer (BtoC).

It is a dynamic company with a young and active spirit. They have the factory installed in a large industrial warehouse, just outside the city. They built a beer bar inside this warehouse where they offer their draft beers and do concerts, electronic music or live music. In this bar they have a small boutique where they sell their bottled beers, and some select products, including craft beers from other brands. They sponsor many of the region's socio-cultural events dedicated to music and dance, especially outdoor festivals. We can find some of their products in traditional and local market stores or over the internet.

Claiming the preservation of the environment and defending it with an attitude of reuse and recycling, *Bière de la Rade* promotes several co-creation activities. Workshops with their customers to create new beers, allowing them to test and innovate new products; and the promotion of workshops for to create furniture or decoration accessories from discarded materials, such as beer drums or pallets, allow them to interact with their customer, making them aware of reuse and recycling.

In this sense *Bière de la Rade* appealed design students to help them to find Zero Waste solutions for all waste production they have. As a starting point for this collaboration, they identified to the students two problems:

- What we can do with the plastic film that we use to pack and protect the pallets?
- How we can optimize the transport of glass bottles? Would it be possible to sell craft beer on can?

3 A FRAMEWORK: DESIGN ACTIVISM AND CRAFT ENGAGEMENT

This study argues that design activism requires a similar posture and a number of common engagement principles of all participants to codesign solutions. In order to develop this argument, the theoretical framework is established below, with reference to the main pillars of analysis.

The activism is defined as the active participation of individuals in group behavior, for the purpose of creating change in attitudes, knowledge and behavior (CHAMBERS; PHELPS, 1991). Is a developmental phenomenon, where the participants in activist engagement are participating in acts of leadership as well (CHAMBERS; PHELPS, 1994). According to Marcelo Svirsky, the activism involves three interconnected qualities: “a confrontation with a stratifying organization, a situational engagement,” and finally, “an inquiring attitude towards the actual” (SVIRSKY, 2010).

A designer as an activist orientated start processes to make things happen as soon as possible, by putting in place different forms of prototyping and learning from the related mistakes and failures (BROWN, 2009). The activist stance of the designer is also manifested in the way they approached the stakeholders and the community (SANDERS; STAPPERS, 2008); the designer becomes part of the team or community attempting to undertake the challenge (FASSI; MERONI, 2013).

In the moment that the dawn of capitalism emerged, designers have the practice and the possibility to develop tools to transmute the craft. Craft-work was transformed from artisan work to industrial labor, from use value to exchange value. Craftivists develop values and practices also created a community. Collective works toward building a community that promotes equality and social change (BRATICH, 2011). The communal craft circle and the ability to produce a community through production and distribution of the object.

Handicrafts in contemporary culture offer a critique of the regime of technology and the culture of speed. Crafting also ruptures the seamlessness of the technological present, is a way of rethinking the capitalist industrialized moment itself and the patriarchal division of labor.

The educational environment today provides multiple opportunities for students to become involved in their own learning and in the shaping of institutional policies, procedures, and positions on many critical issues. Student activism has been, and will continue to be, an important part of students' learning experiences, whether as participants or observers. Students reflect those values and attitudes in their personal, academic, and social choices.

If all participants have the qualities required on activism to confront an organization and an inquiring attitude: ***Which are the conditions to engagement people on codesign activities?*** In this specific case study, we want to verify and analyze the truth of the following hypotheses:

- Activism results from understanding the situational engagement linked to the craft activity that all participants practices; and,
- The craft engagement of designers and the company in the codesign activities arises from the sharing some values, practices and creative methods.

4 METHODOLOGY

This study is an exploratory study based on a single case study that meets all the requirements of the theory. Mainly of data was collected using ethnography methods based on participative observations to the company meetings with some unstructured interviews. An analyses of records and archives provided from the company was useful information about the context and the sector.

To analyze the opinion of user about their preferences for bottle or can, a user test was done. Designers students interviewed 35 users (20 in Milan and 15 in Toulon), proposing to taste the same beer, served on the same temperature provided from different supports: bottle and can. The beer it was served on a plastic cup on the backstage and people evaluate their preferences.

The goal of this study is to build up a clear and reasonably detailed picture of the sequence of the events took place and of the context in which they occurred: know the process of making the beer as well as the bottling and the packaging, and discuss about life cycle of product. To build meaningful casual explanations we provide and map the sequence of the events bellow.

5 RESULTS

We obtain two kind of results. Firstly we analyze the values, the practices and the creative methods practiced by the company linked to the Zero Waste actions. These data was identified by the students through ethnography methods and unstructured interviews. After that, we obtain the second type of results: the co-designed products that responds to the company's challenge to reduce its waste. These products are the result of a collaboration between company and students, based on experimentation and testing.

5.1 Zero Waste Actions Practiced by the Company

The students, asking about the brewing process and observing the employees, identified several Zero Waste actions as well as opportunities for improvement. As we can see in the following table.

Table 1, the company mainly maintains the practice of Zero Waste at the beginning of the process. The process does not require large losses, because the liquid (which will be beer later) is transferred from barrel to barrel, does not produce waste. Waste was only identified in the final stages of the brewing process: in preparation for shipping and sale.

Table 1 - Company maintains the practice of Zero Waste at the beginning of the process.

FABRICATION PROCESS	ZERO WASTE ACTIONS
Malting : - Malt bags made from barley or wheat. - The employee pours the bags of malt into a machine that grinds the grains into powder.	The bags are filled with hops (which remains from the second stage) and sent it to a local manufacturers. Some bags remain.
Crushing and pasting - This machine pours the malt into a big tank, mixing it with water.	The remaining dough (the dredge) is given in its entirety to local farmers for livestock and otherwise used to make biscuits. It is 100% reused, there are no waste.
Brewing - This mixture is transferred to a boiling tank for thiging and sterilization.	There are no waste.
Fermentation - The must is placed in a fermentation vat, cooled and sown with a brewer's yeast. - Transformation of sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. - Beer comes beer at this stage.	There are no waste.

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Ripening - Preservation of the beer in a cuvette at 0 ° C.	There are no waste.
Filtration - In this case, there are no filtration because the beers are refermented in bottle. - This process is done after bottling, keeping the bottle at 25 ° for 24 hours.	There are no waste.
The conditioning - In 25cl glass bottles. - In 75cl glass bottles. - In aluminium drums.	There are some bottles during the change of beer that are wasted.
Customer Transport - The bottles are packed in cartons, then packed with plastic film for transport to the customer. - The drums are also transported in pallets, packed with plastic film.	Drums and pallets are recovered and reused. The cardboard, and the bottles are lost at the customer, maybe they recycle or reuse it. The plastic film is wasted (no recycling, no reuse).

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The opportunities to improve the company's Zero Waste performance and reduce wastage are at the end of the manufacturing process: especially as regards the packaging and transport, either in bottle or barrel.

Students focus on this specific problem associate to the plastic to protect pallets, but also others that will enhance the brand's image and positioning in the local craft beer market, to reduce their environmental impact.

5.2 Propositions Codesigned with the Students

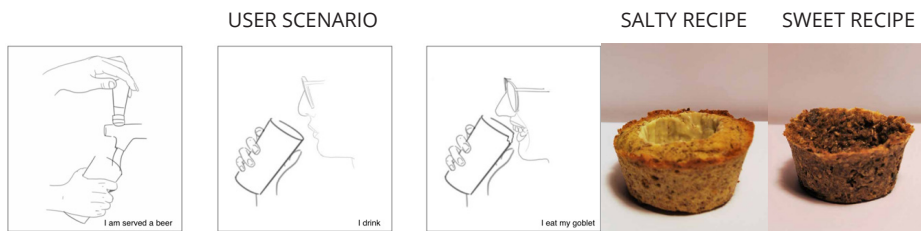
A close relationship between the company and the students provides an easy understanding and identification of the company's needs to maintain brand values, identity and positioning. Students propose to work on these 3 steps of the product manufacturing process: Beer Conditioning, Packaging & Stacking, and Product Communication; which constituted three axes of reflection. In total, 6 projects was developed.

- Beer conditioning:

Students presented three different beer container proposals to answer to the following question: How to encourage drinking in a more responsible manner? Three solutions was developed: The Ecocup, The Canned and The Amphora.

The ecocup is a new cup for the special events. This product propose a new tasting experience with eatable goblets create it through dung. The possibility of varying tastes, experimenting with different flavors. The objective is raise new aromas, attract new clients, promoting Zero Waste and reinforces the avant-garde image of the company, look at Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 – The Ecocup product and his usability.

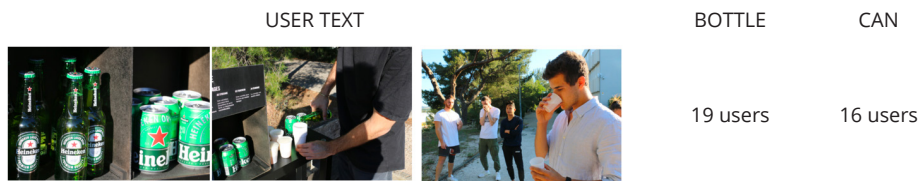


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Developed with the company and with a local baker, these two prototypes have different flavors: Salty and Sweet. The salty one was produced with seeds of squash and sesame; and the sweet with white chocolate and amonds. Both was create it through the grains obtained from the Pasting process. The tests was realized with different types of beers. The product present potentialiaties but need to be tuned on the form and the aspect with a specific company.

The idea to conceive a **Canned Beer** came from the exchanges from the company and the students. The owner of the company defends that canned beer maintains the same product quality that in glass bottle and is lighter in transport. This allow logistics more effective and represents a consequent reduction on ecological impact. Not convinced with this, students compared the opinion of some young beer consumers (35 participants : 20 in Milan and 15 in Toulon) about their taste preferences. Unaware of where the beer came from, most young people prefer beer coming from a glass bottle (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 – Testing the taste of a beer coming from a bottle and anther coming from a can.



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By the other hand, the participants were asked about their preferences to buy one or the other format 'bottle or can?' – Fig. 3. And the results shows that a 'bottle use' is associated with recycling, sweeter taste, availability, image and easy

drinking. While canned beer is associated with the most economical, the facility to transport and unbroken pack, the facility to opening and link in travel.

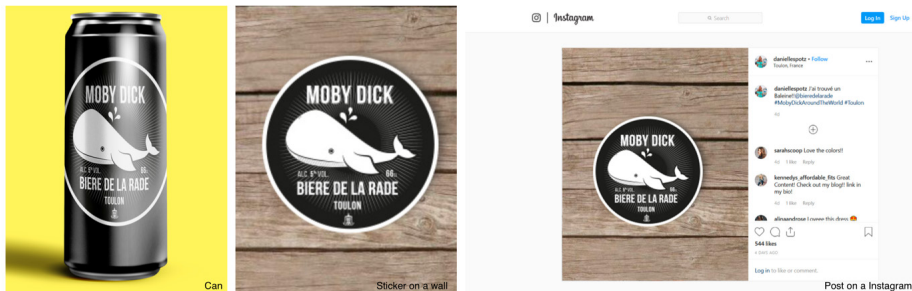
Fig. 3 – People noting the advantage of using beer in bottle and /or in canned.



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While knowing that their favorite beer comes from the glass bottle, and that its image is related to recycling, the students wanted to develop a canned beer that would satisfy the company with regard to the environmental impact on transportation: The Moby Dick beer - Fig. 4.

Fig. 4 – Moby dick can, created by the students.



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This can has a label that is a sticker, which peels off and then favors the promotion of the brand by its users, encouraging them to send the label pasted on other surfaces and spaces and share it on social networks, to favorize and promote Bière de la Rade.

The last product proposed to contain the beer was this new concept that serves to aging the beer. Students propose to develop a premium product with the company. They was developed a clay amphora that offers the possibility of being filled with a type of beer and for 10 days to continue the aging work to obtain a special taste – Fig. 5.



The amphora closes with a cork and a stainless steel locking system. The tap at the base is also made of stainless steel. This product can be bought on the brewery, and used at home. It is a collection product, which can then be reused.

Packing and Stacking

This work gave rise to a design proposal, which aims to replace the plastic film with an elastic screen, in the protection and packaging of cartons or beer drums. It is intended to completely eliminate the use of plastic and propose a material that is resistant to be reused in each order. This product aims to promote the company

with graphic identity. The elastic screen will be fixed to the cardboard boxes and after delivery, is returned to the company, as you can see on the figure below – Fig. 6.

Fig. 6 – Textile

USER SCENARIO



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The prototype composed of an adhesive angle, a serigraphy, a fixing scratch and a Velcro has been tested several times and adjusted for wear. At this time the product is used by the company.

Product communication

This proposition, mainly addressed to the customer who goes directly to the factory to buy their beers, gave rise to two different proposals that favor awareness of the reuse of the supports and the recycling of bottles: the Bottle holder and the transport bag.

Currently cartons are given to carry the beer, but people throw them and by extension it creates waste. The first proposition is to create a Bottle holder on wood, that people can be reuse it to refill beers and to take the bottles to recycle, or on the future to reused by the company – Fig. 7.

The prototype was made it through wood by laser cutting with a rope handle. It has a capacity of 6 bottles, allow to see the label of each one. The product is economical and easy to transport.

Fig. 7 – Bottle Holder

USER SCENARIO

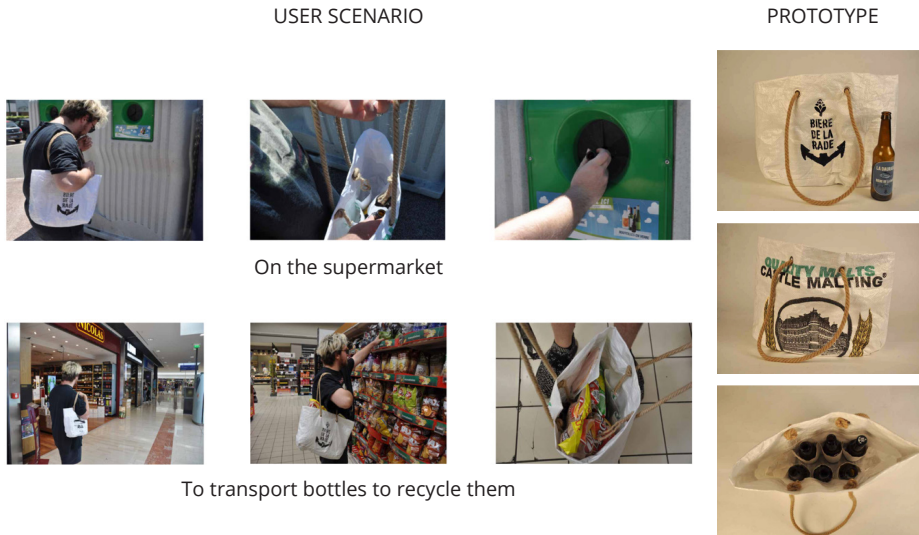


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Malt sacs are used only if there are no more crates to return the grain and send it to the breeders. To reuse these sacs and promote Bière de la Rade, a sac for shopping was developed – Fig. 8.

Test returns that have been made. The sac must be reinforced and can be used to go to the beach or other business carrier.

Fig. 8 – Malt sac.



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6 DISCUSSION

Understanding activism as a movement that manifests itself voluntarily to respond an imposed and disproportionate consequence, students and Bière de la Rade share the three interconnected qualities described by Marcelo Svirsky (2010), as you can see on the figure below.

Fig. 9 - The qualities of activism versus designer students and Bière de la Rade.

<i>DESIGNERS (students)</i>	<i>ACTIVISM</i>	<i>BIERE DE LA RADE</i>
- School	Confrontation with a stratifying organization	- Beer market
- Produce models to test their acceptance and appropriation	Situational engagement	- Transform products and reuse it
- Asking for acceptance and appropriation	Inquiring attitude	- Workshops with clients

Font: Own elaboration.

Students are confronted by the school and the company by the market but all together are committed to the environment and sustainability, they want to do better and well for society. They affront these context conditions and respond this situation because they engaged by the craft. They can produce models or transform products to exchange and to interact with their clients, seeking for truth, information, or knowledge - seeking information by questioning (inquiring attitude). We can deduce that the conditions to engagement the company and the students on codesign activities are linked to the craft and we will see that are values, practices and similar creative methods are adopted, Fig. 9.

Fig. 10 - Craft Engagement and the values, practices and methods found on design students and company.

	<i>DESIGNERS (students)</i>	<i>Craft ENGAGEMENT</i>	<i>BIERE DE LA RADE</i>
Values	- Ecology - Team spirit	Sustainability	- Biological raw materials - Zero Waste movement
Practices	- Study - Go to the festivals	Language	- Sale beers - Music festival sponsors
Creation methods	-Based on experimentations, tests and prototypes	Interactions	- Based on Experimentations with their clients

Font: Own elaboration.

This engagement is visible on the adequacy of the results and the presentation of solutions that share these values, practices and methods. Craft engagement is supported by sustainable values, based on a similar language and provokes several interactions.

7 CONCLUSION

This case study show that sharing common values makes a positive contribution to design solutions that satisfy all stakeholders. The co-design process works fully when all participants are in harmony and share the same ideals. Iterations between conceptual research and material experimentation flow naturally with the involvement and interests of all participants on the same object.

In this project, design students was identified with que research subject, the brand values and the product. The company is young with an young spirit, has shown confidence to students, participated and made available at all time that students needed.

The company's activist stance manifests itself in its willingness to do differently and make things happen quickly by organizing workshops with its customers and establishing contacts with local networks to recycle their waste. Students are part of this team by gathering their technical knowledge and bringing their design sensitivity, enhancing and highlighting the actions of the company, strengthening their Zero Waste posture through craft.

Students were interested on the subject, they were motivated to find the right solution, ethically and environmentally correct. Observing the 6 solutions presented by codesign, we can say that design discipline strongly contributes with it methodology, to develop sustainable solutions. In this case, we verify that design activism by craft engagement works well because it was related to sharing sustainability values, transmitted by an identical language and causing the interactions with local people, through prototypes, experimentations and tests. However, further case analysis would be needed to verify the accuracy of this finding.

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