

What goes around in a circular economy

Circularity, a closed-loop economy, is a model of production, but also of consumption, which allows us to save natural resources, but also allows us to give value to waste, meaning to reuse it for new packaging or products.

As Żabka, we feel a responsibility in this regard and have set ourselves a target. Our goal is to achieve packaging neutrality for own brand products. It means that we want to collect as much packaging material from the environment as we have introduced with our products, but we also want to close the cycle of these materials and give them value. To effectively close the loop, we need to start working already at the packaging design stage, which means to create the packaging in such a way that it can be recycled. But that is not all.

We also work with our franchisees. We help them to recycle collective packaging. We also have initiatives in which we involve our consumers. This is, for example, 'Ekorabat', where the customer receives a bonus for returning a glass bottle, so we influence the positive habits of our consumers. There is also the pilot of the OdNowa project in Bydgoszcz, where for every plastic bottle or metal can, the customer receives a bonus in the form of Zapps points. Thanks to the material collected this way, we can close the loop and use it in the packaging of our OdNowa water bottles.

It is extremely important to design solutions that make life easier for our franchisees and consumers because together we can do more!

Would our circularity goals be achievable without packaging transformations?

The Ecodesign Policy is a document that clearly explains what packaging design should look like in our chain. It is based on 4 rules. The first of these rules is to Loop. To loop is to think about making recyclable materials standard in packaging, so that the packaging is recycle-friendly as well as having recycled content.

Another rule in the Ecodesign Policy is to Reduce. In reduction, we focus on reducing weight, reducing the virgin material, meaning material that comes from oil in the case of plastic, and reducing the packaging itself from an ergonomic point of view, so that it is adapted by its size very precisely to the product itself.

The third rule is to Communicate. In this rule, we have used pictograms on our packaging that send a clear message to the consumer about what to do with the packaging, what fraction it should be placed in after consumption, whether the packaging is recyclable and, importantly, whether the packaging contains recycled content, which shows the circularity of our products. The fourth rule is to Simplify and

simplifying is about ensuring that the final designed packaging can be recycled without any adaptations, that recyclers have the opportunity to repurpose it and use it in other new packaging and more.

We are aware that packaging has a very important role in a product because of how consumers perceive the product. Is plastic good or bad? Today, without plastic, it is impossible to build a future. We just need to learn to manage it well. Plastic allows us to minimise food waste, which is important nowadays. Closing the loop, and circularity in packaging is crucial. Ultimately, let's remember that when we design the end is the beginning of something new, new packaging or any other element of the world that surrounds us every day.