



Stanford eCorner

The Importance of Product Adoption

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To find success, you need to design innovation for adoption by consumers, says Adam Lowry of Method Products. According to Lowry, no matter how innovative or sustainable your product may be, if using it is difficult or inconvenient for customers, they will not buy it.



Transcript

In other words, you know, what's really important about our innovation model is that while technology and design and creativity are critical to our innovation process I would argue that actually the most important part of it is adoption, because you can create the most beautiful, the more sustainable product in the world, but, if nobody wants to buy it, if you don't get a lot of people to buy it then I would argue that it's actually not innovative. I will give you another quick example. We get - so this is an all purpose cleaner that we make and I get the question a lot, you know, why don't you guys just install a machine in stores where I can take this back in and scan the barcode and it fills it back up and it's good idea, it actually would be a more sustainable format than selling you another one of these or even a refill for one of these, which we do sell. But, what's interesting is this is actually been tried and aside from some of the hurdles of getting a retailer to install plumbing and electricity and all of that to the aisle, you know, here's another example actually from the UK where you can just kind of go and put your fabric softener in there and do it, these formats have been tried over and over again but they never really caught on because while they are interesting and actually you could argue are more sustainable formats of product, they make it less convenient to actually get - do the sustainability thing, not more convenient. So how many times have you forgot this on the back of your car and the back of your bike when you go to the grocery store. Now imagine trying to bring your bathroom cleaner, your toilet clear, your empty laundry bottle, it's not going to happen, right. There have been other formats that have been tried where you know, like this one where you have a little teeny bottle of concentrate that you put in there and then the consumer fills up the water and you kind of shake it up and you do that thing, but same thing, you are actually making it harder on the consumer to actually adopt that habit. And so without building that into the design process, you haven't actually designed innovation for adoption and I would argue that's why these formats haven't necessarily caught on. What I think is interesting is I mentioned we have refills for pretty much everything and we have a refill for this product. The refill is a nice, more sustainable format, I mean the starter unit comes in 100% post consumer plastic, there is a lot of benefits to it, putting in a refill reduces the footprint of the system by a lot more but again you could argue that that refill thing is a more sustainable format.

But what we've done is actually much more powerful, is we've gotten people to use this format and we've gotten a lot of people to use this format.