LEARNING JOURNEY
CIRCULAR DESIGN CASE 2017
The Circular Design Case

An opportunity to start your own circular design journey.

The Circular Design Case, in association with The Circular Design Guide, is as much a learning experience as a design competition. Its purpose is to help designers take their first steps on the journey of creating products, services and systems for the circular economy - an economy that is regenerative and restorative by design.

Running from the 10th to the 24th of November.

To make sure not to miss anything, check out our Kick-off live session page.

Submit your entry latest by Sunday 19th of November at 23:59 GMT.

For any questions you might have, please either ask directly on the Kick-off live session page or on Twitter.

#circulardesigncase
A circular economy is an attractive and viable alternative that businesses have already started exploring today. To drive the transition towards a more regenerative economy, we need to design differently.

Today’s linear ‘take, make, dispose’ economy relies on large quantities of cheap, easily accessible materials and energy, and is a model that is wasteful and polluting.

THE BRIEF: Your mission

A circular economy is an attractive and viable alternative that businesses have already started exploring today.

To drive the transition towards a more regenerative economy, we need to design differently.
THE BRIEF: Your mission

Understand an everyday product by exploring the system it is part of. Imagine how both could be redesigned to be in accordance with the circular economy and its three principles:

1. Design out waste and pollution
2. Keep products and materials in use
3. Regenerate natural systems

Think of an everyday product that is made out of plastics or plastics-based fibres such as polyester. Some examples include a cup, a bottle, a shirt, your trainers, a toothbrush, or a carpet in your flat. Think of the precise context it falls into.

Think of how it is made. It might be made of plastics and molded or extruded. It might be made of fibres and knitted/woven or nonwoven. Think of its packaging.

Ask yourself: Can you zoom out from end users and consider the wider network of stakeholders? Can you identify how they influence each other? Look at the material flows and examine where they come from and where they go after use? Can you find opportunities to redesign this system?
Submission Process: 1

Submit both files together in JPEG or PNG (max 5MB) through Twitter #circulardesigncase #thinkdif

The 1st submission requirement of the Circular Design Case is:

1 x system map with up to 3 highlighted circular opportunities:

A system map around the product you chose. We are interested to see the important stakeholders and the connections between them. On top of that, we ask you to highlight up to 3 opportunities to make your everyday product more circular. Think about what would need to change in the system and what this change involves for the stakeholders.

FORMAT: Map either by hand (then take a picture and upload it) or with a software of your choice (then convert it to JPEG or PNG).

TIPS: You might find much more information on the system by choosing a product you own. Remember this is an exploration process, you might have to do a few iterations.
**Submission Process:**

Submit both files together in JPEG or PNG (max 5MB) through Twitter #circulardesigncase #thinkdiff

The 2nd submission requirement of the Circular Design Case is:

1 x “One question for systems change” template:

A synthesis of your reflection on the circular opportunities you explored. **Formulate your most critical question on the “One question for systems change” template.** If you could ask one question to make your everyday product more circular, what would it be?

**FORMAT:** Fill in the “One question for systems change” template either by hand (then take a picture and upload it) or with a software of your choice (then convert it in JPEG or PNG).

**TIP:** Think of this question as your own design challenge. What would you like other people to focus their attention on?
Judging Criteria

There are six criteria your entry will be judged against – make sure you consider them all when posting your final solution on Twitter #circulardesigncase #thinkdif:

1 System mapping
The important stakeholders of the system are mapped out & the relationships between them are clear.

2 Circular opportunities (max 3)
They fulfill the principles of the circular economy & give insights on the relevant stakeholders that need to be involved.

3 One question for systems change
It is specific and action-oriented.

4 Visual clarity
Information is easy to grasp and visually appealing.

5 Public voting
Your entry has traction on Twitter (likes, retweets). Please note that the judging process will stop on Tuesday 21th November, thus public votes coming later will not be considered.

6 Magic
Your entry shows a high degree of creative confidence.

The judging panel’s decision is final.
We are here to help you

To help you with your mission, we have prepared a learning journey building on the Circular Design Guide and additional resources.

This journey is modular. You can choose your own level of depth and further dive into areas that interest you.

Entering the Circular Design Case can be as quick as an evening of work. Follow the “Minimalist” track.

To go further and learn about circular design in more depth, have a look at the “Bonus” track at the end of this document.

Ready? Let’s jump in!
Start your circular economy journey

You may be wondering “What is a circular economy”? Have a look at our introductory video to get into the concept.

Listen to Tim Brown introducing the circular economy from a designer point of view.

Now, have a closer look at how to create for the circular economy!
Design for the circular economy

What does it mean to design for the circular economy?

Get a sense how design thinking helps to design for the circular economy!

Circular design is about designing for users, stakeholders and the systems they are part of.

Are you starting to see how your everyday product could be more circular? Check out the different loops you can design for.
Start your systems thinking journey

Keep zooming in and out throughout your journey!

The Circular Design Case is all about learning to adopt a systems mindset.

Do you start realising the system your everyday product is part of?

Take an extra step in systems thinking on the next page.
From linear thinking to systems thinking

Leyla Acaroglu and UnSchool introduce us to the key concepts and tools of system thinkers:

**TOOLS OF A SYSTEM THINKER**

- **Disconnection**
- **Interconnectedness**
- **Linear**
- **Circular**
- **Silos**
- **Emergence**
- **Parts**
- **Wholes**
- **Analysis**
- **Synthesis**
- **Isolation**
- **Relationships**

Illustrator: Emma Segal
Source: [https://online.unschools.co/collections/systems-thinking](https://online.unschools.co/collections/systems-thinking)
Systems mapping and influence diagrams

‘When individuals have a better understanding of systems, they are better able to identify the intervention points that lead to desired outcomes.’ *Jules Hayward*

A simple starting point is to map the system of your chosen product.

Put it in the middle of the diagram. Then let your mind roam freely. Identify the many components / agents that influence it or who are influenced by it - people, flows of materials and energy, sources of money, legislation, information.

Draw the connections between the agents to show what influences what. Look in particular for feedback loops. Are they reinforcing or balancing?

Get further help by looking at the [systems mapping tool](#) for systems thinkers.

Remember that you cannot know everything – make sure you make a conscious decision as where to stop!
Finding circular opportunities

‘We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims’
Buckminster Fuller

Think of what would need to change in the system and how it could be redesigned

Once you have a deeper understanding of your object and the system it is part of, it’s time to identify circular opportunities.

Ask yourself
What forces at play impede the system to be fit for the circular economy?
How could new opportunities make the system more circular?
Who would benefit?
Who would need to be involved to make this change happen?

Make sure these opportunities fit the principles of a circular economy:

1. Design out waste and pollution
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You can find on the next two pages an example of how an entry could look like. We take the example of an homemade apple pie (outside the scope of the case).
CIRCULAR DESIGN CASE
IN ASSOCIATION WITH

One question for systems change

HOW MIGHT WE SOURCE INGREDIENTS FOR OUR APPLE PIE LOCALLY, WHILE REGENERATING THE SOIL THEY ARE GROWN IN?

What is the one question to ask to make your everyday product more circular?
Now it’s time to roll up your sleeves!

It’s time to prototype.
Get yourself going at system mapping. Remember that you will need a few iterations.

Explore and refine.
You can now synthesize your system map for others to understand it. Make sure your system boundary is clear.

Identify.
Discover potential circular opportunities by knowing what you want to solve. Once done, can you ask the one question that, if answered, could lead to designing a better system for your everyday product?
Are you ready to participate?

Do you feel you adopted the right mindsets throughout your journey?

Do you feel you proposition makes your product a better experience?

Make sure you understand our submission process and judging criteria.
WHAT'S NEXT?

Join us for the **Finale** on 24 November.

Are you inspired? Do you want to redesign everything for the circular economy? Join our emerging community of circular designers.

Are you looking for further material on circular design? Find a collection of resources on the Circular Design Guide.
We would like to thank players of People's Postcode Lottery for supporting the emerging circular design community and the Circular Design Case.
BONUS
More on the circular economy

Examine our butterfly diagram as well as the building blocks of a circular economy.

The New Plastics Economy is an ambitious, three-year initiative to build momentum towards a plastics system that works. Start to understand what the opportunity of a circular economy means for plastics.
More on design for the circular economy

Do you want to learn more about how designers turn common products into service models? Check out the Service Flip method on the Circular Design Guide.

You can also examine the Biomimicry and Regenerative Thinking methods to get inspired by nature.

For a deeper dive have a look at our numerous case studies. Get inspired by how others are driving the transition towards a circular economy.
**More on systems thinking**

Adopting a systems mindset requires training your brain to think differently. Get acquainted to the habits of a systems thinker.

There are also courses available on systems thinking. Check out what UnSchool have put together.
More on finding circular opportunities

Make your ideas more tangible by filling in the circular opportunities worksheet.

To further enhance the circularity of your product check out our method on embedding feedback loops.

A $2m New Plastics Economy Innovation Prize was launched in May, calling designers, entrepreneurs, academics and scientists to rethink the plastics system and eliminate plastics packaging waste. Get inspired by the winners!