

DESIGN FOR PRODUCT CARE

The throwaway culture that we live in has made it often far easier to throw away products and buy new ones, instead of maintaining and repairing the things we have. By evoking behavior from the consumer that persuades or stimulates them to maintain or repair their belongings, the lifetime of products can be lengthened and thus can be considered more sustainable.

This is product care. Product care can be understood as any action that helps to prolong the lifetime of a product, such as maintenance or repair. These product care activities could be conducted by the consumer itself or by a service. Product care can contribute to a shift towards a more circular economy.

This graduation assignment aimed to discover design strategies that can be used by designers to be able to stimulate product care behavior by the user. Through creative sessions with designers and design students and by diving into the context of product care with users, design strategies for Product care were developed.

These strategies were embodied in a design tool meant for brainstorming and ideating. The tool consists of different cards of facets that are important to consider when designing for Product care. The tool provides examples and inspiration for the different strategies.



Experiences

Think about how you want product care activities to be experienced by the user. Make use of the emotions that can be felt beforehand due to the user's expectations and look into the experiences and emotions experienced during and after Product care activities.



Enabling

Think about how you can make product care behaviour easier for the user to perform, how to provide them with the necessary tools, means or help and thus lower the threshold for them to perform product care behavior.



Reflecting

Think about how to make the user reflect on what value a design has to them, through the meaning of the design, or the memories or stories they contain.



Social

Think about making use of the user's social connections. Think about product care leading to social connections or product care as the facilitator of product care.



Change

Think about how the design can create a change or disruption in the day to day routines of the user to bring attention to product care.



Informing

Think about how you can heighten the knowledge of the user, through traditional forms of information, through interactive sources of information and through information hidden in your design.



Control

Think about if your design played the dominant role in the relationship, if it would make decisions itself, steer the user unconsciously or even force the user to perform product care.



Appropriation

Think about creating appropriation possibilities for the user; by providing personalization possibilities, changeable products or by stimulating the user's creativity.

Design strategies for Product care

Existing strategies that related to this topic are often not based on empirical research and do not explain how they could be implemented in a design. The strategies developed in this project were made through a practice-based approach. By clustering design solutions by design students and designers, my own design solutions and existing products that already stimulate product care, the different strategies that designers use were found. The clustering process led to 8 design strategies: *experiences, enabling, informing, change, reflecting, social, control* and *appropriation*.

These can be linked to existing strategies and theories regarding Circular, Emotion-centered and Behavioral design.

Design tool for Product care

The Product Care Kit was developed to teach designers about Product care and provide inspiration on how to design for it.

The card set consists of:

- 7 Product care type cards - These describe the different types of product care activities.
- 8 Design strategy cards - These describe the different design strategies a designer can use.
- 8 Persona cards - These can be used as inspiration for designing for a specific user.
- 6 Product cards - These can be used as inspiration for designing for a specific product.
- A bunch of example cards! - These are examples of the design strategies to derive inspiration from.

The Product care kit will help designers to get a feeling for the many facets that one needs to take into account when designing for Product care. These are: the type of product care, the targeted user, the type of product and the possible design strategies. After using this card set, you should have a better idea on how to make the user perform more repair & maintenance activities.

The process of working with the Product Care Kit is flexible. The cards are meant as a trigger, providing inspiration, starting discussion and trying out different angles for your solution. The cards are magnetic, which makes it possible to use them on whiteboards and easily hold brainstorm sessions around them. They present questions which trigger

the designer to think about how to target Product care with their design.

Working with the Product Care Kit can result in different outcomes, depending on the goal of the designer. A few examples for results of the tool are: conceptual product ideas, a visual map of the context, deep discussions and new insights and knowledge related to Product Care.

The tool can support evoke sustainable behavior change by design.

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Design for Product care: The development of a design tool for product lifetime extension
5 March 2019
Design for Interaction

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