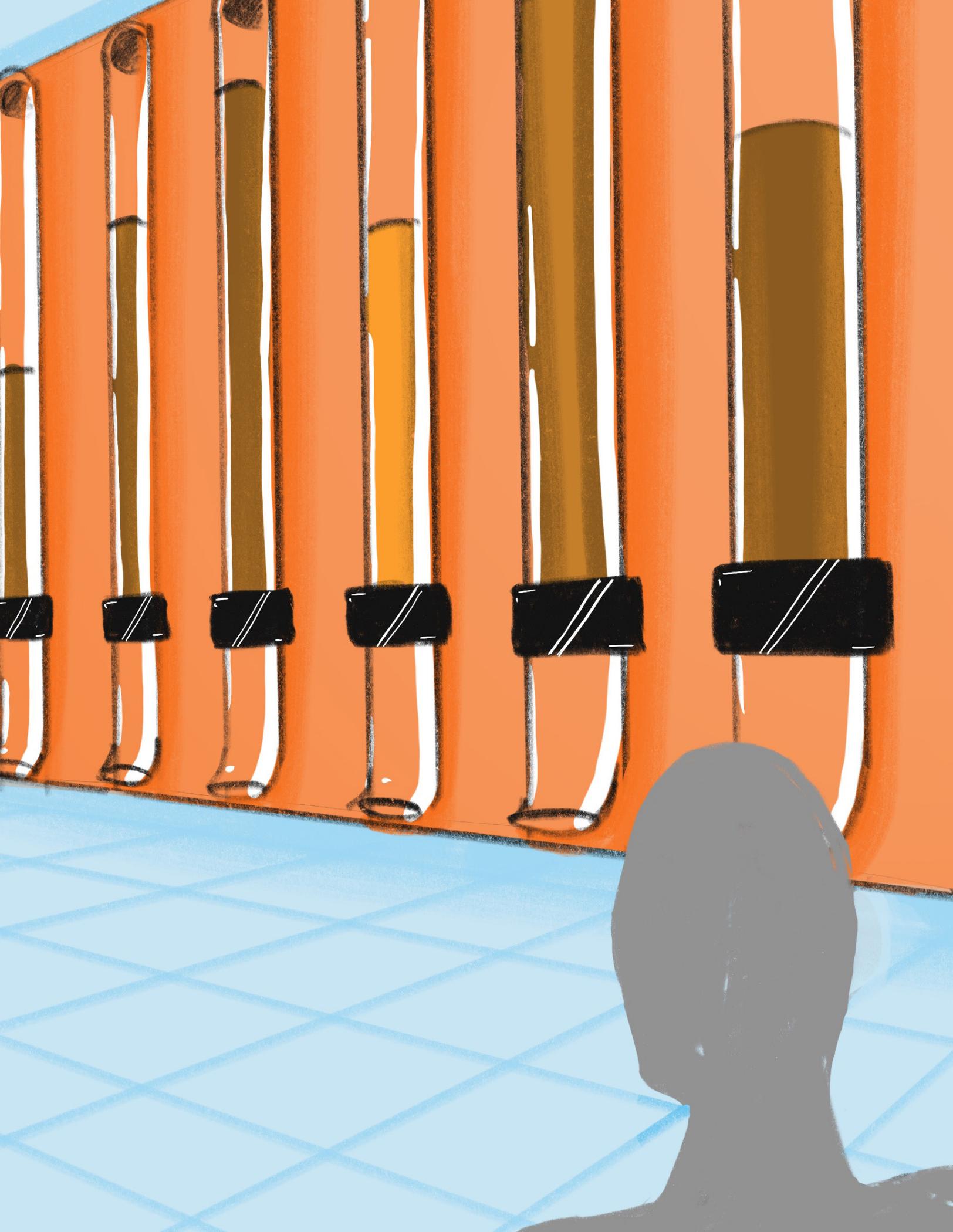




Pet Food Packaging Reimagined

Team 2: Michelle McGuire, Kelsey Cowan & Louis Boehling



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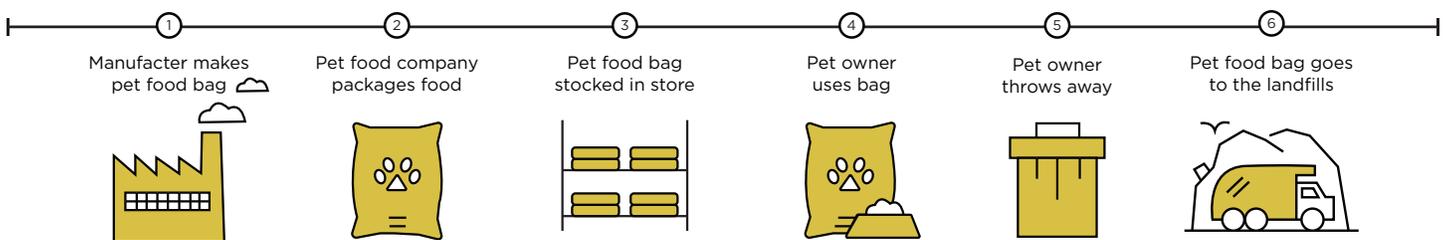
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ASK

Change the status quo of pet food packaging by:

- Changing the packaging: Create a new use for pet food packaging to extend its life
- Changing the cycle: Develop a new circular or low-waste model for pet owners to receive their pet food





OPPORTUNITY

The current life cycle of a polypropylene pet food bag ends in a landfill almost 100% of the time. It's filling our landfills and clogging our oceans. According to the the American Chemistry Council, polypropylene is one of the least recycled post-consumer plastics at a rate below 1 percent for post-consumer recovery. And on top of that, consumers aren't even happy with the current packaging. There's an opportunity to rethink the entire life cycle of pet food packaging.

"[The bag] is too heavy, pouring or opening it makes it **spill everywhere** since it's so big it's hard to get precise."

Owner of Capone, The Pitbull

"Something **resealable** would actually be amazing."

Owner of Plot Hounds

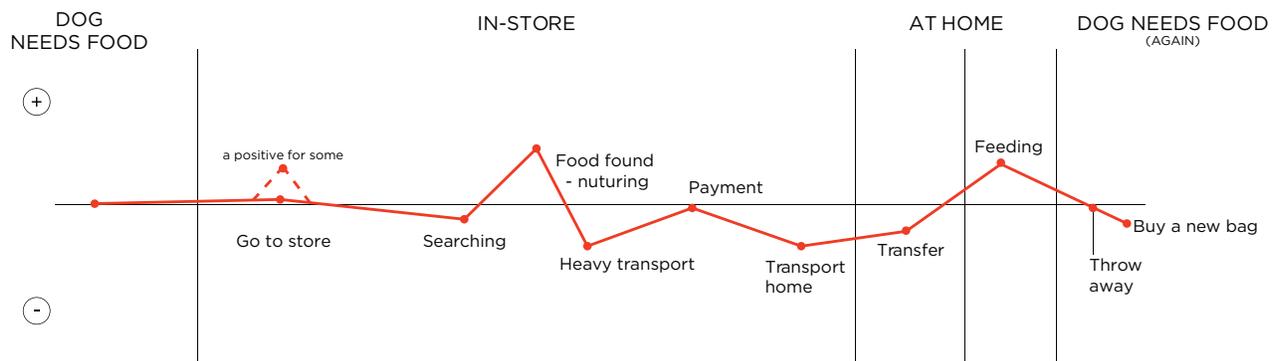
"The food bags are a bit heavy. **Difficult to store in the pantry.** They don't reseal well."

Owner of Larry the Lab and Phil the Shih Tzu

"I wish pet food packaging was **easier to carry and store.**"

Owner of Calla and Blaze, Mutts

PET FOOD BAG USAGE JOURNEY





SOLUTION

Our team designed a new system for Petco's WholeHearted food by recycling existing pet food bags into a "Let's Eat" product line and eliminating the need for future bags by creating a zero-waste way of distributing WholeHearted food.

Strategy : **Reimagine pet food packaging to make the pet owner happier and the environment healthier.**

Why Petco?

- Second top pet retailer in the USA
- Has its own pet food and pet accessory lines
- Open to innovation
- Currently uses unconventional distribution methods for kitty litter and dog treats



Our leading rewards program offers a wide array of benefits you and your pets will love.



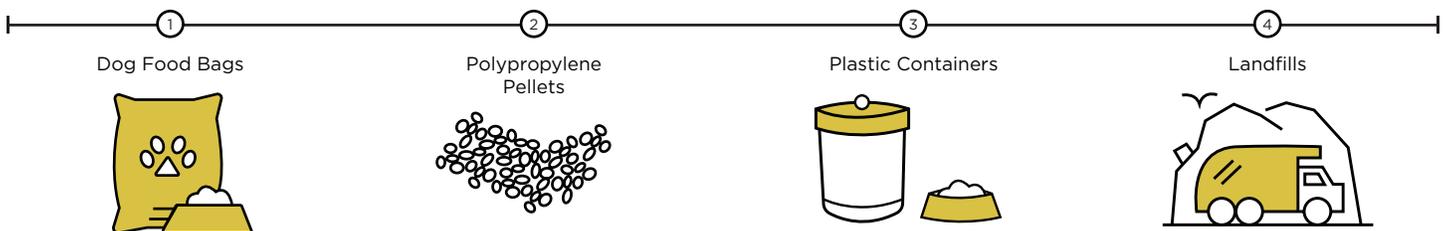
First, the bags...

First we wanted to design a new way to reuse polypropylene packaging to delay the landfill portion of the process. Petco currently has a dog food brand called WholeHearted that uses natural ingredients. We decided this line would be best for our new product innovation “Let’s Eat.” “Let’s Eat” offers a variety of customizable dog food bowls and storage containers.



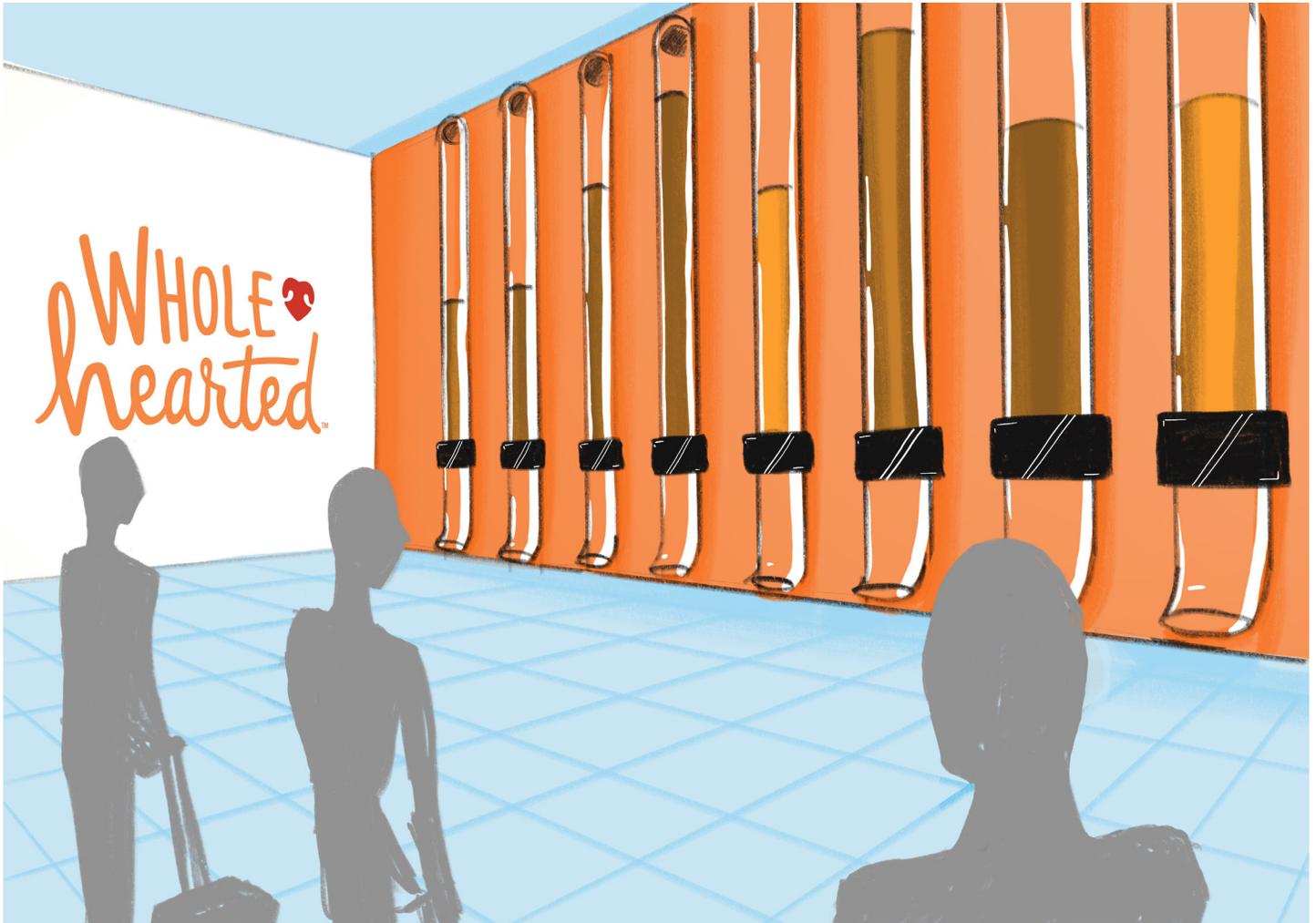
How This Works

1. Pet owners return any WholeHearted pet food bags to any Petco location
2. For every 10 bags received, pet owners get a free bag of food.
3. The pet food bags are repurposed into a Petco line under WholeHearted as “Let’s Eat.”

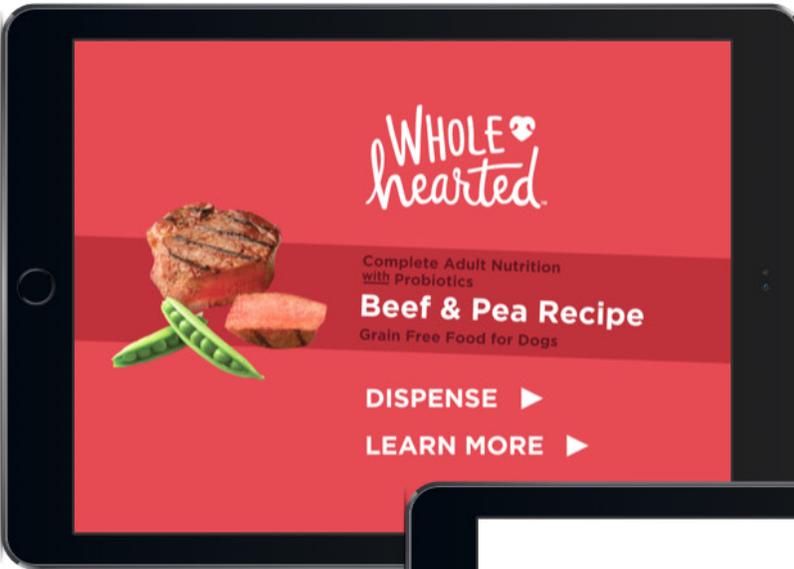


...now the entire cycle.

We replaced the existing space in Petco's store layout taken up by WholeHearted pet food bags with gravity dispensers with screens. Pet owners purchasing food put in their number tied to their Pals Rewards or new customers can use any identifying number to pay for food.



Food is dispensed using the application interface on the screen that is attached to the tube into a container. The process is described on the next two pages.

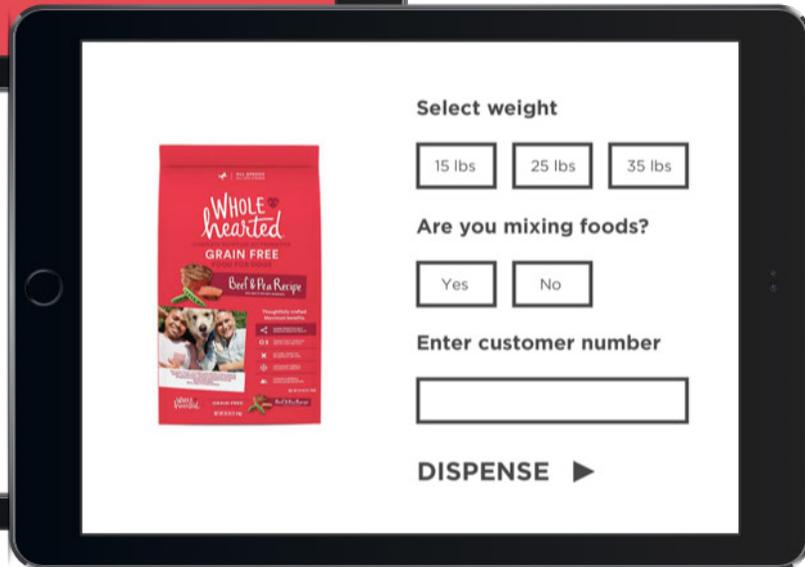


Home

The Home page shows the type of food and the branding represents the previous bag branding so customers are not confused.

Dispense

Users can dispense food by various weights. If they want to mix food they can select separate weights. They pay with their PalsRewards customer number or another identifying number.



About

Users can learn about the food before they decide to dispense it.

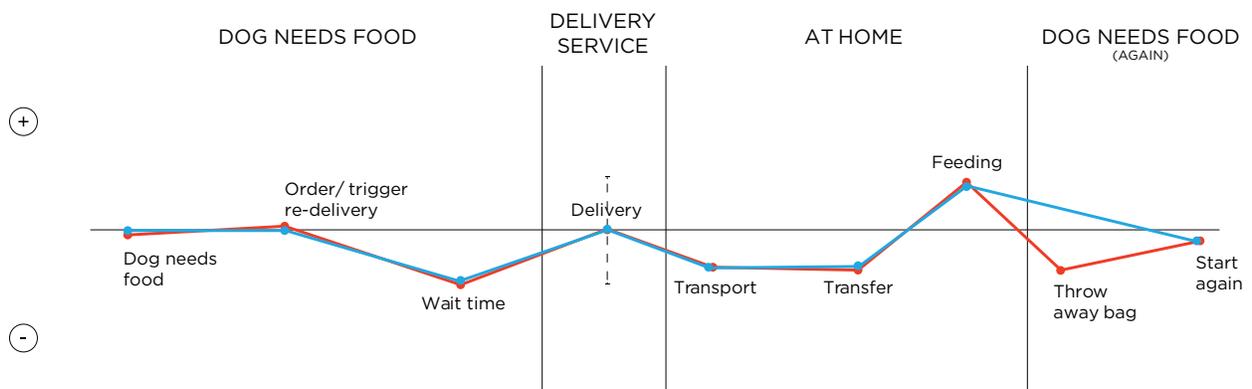
Petco will offer a line of rolling containers made of polypropylene, similar to the “Let’s Eat” line. With the WholeHearted tube dispensing system in the store, we developed a special container that clips into the tubes. The food is dispensed into the container and never needs to be transferred to another container. The container is on wheels and easy to move. The container addresses several of the pain points we found through our survey: heavy bags, cumbersome transportation, and moving the food from the bag to a separate container.



User testing brought up a good point - “what happens if I forget my container but I need food?” With a 50 cent deposit, Petco offers a sealed polypropylene tote that food can be transported in. The tote can be returned via pre-paid postage or dropped off at the store. The totes also address packaging concerns for the small percentage of those surveyed that said they buy food online.

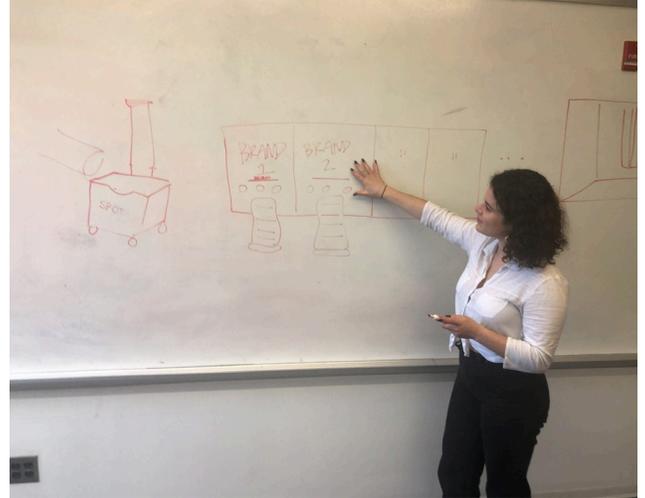


PET FOOD BAG USAGE JOURNEY



PROCESS

It all started with a trip to pet stores. We went to Dogma, Petco, and Dog Krazy and asked employees about the current pet food process. What did consumers like in pet food? Did they even notice the packaging? Did they ask about recycling? We let the conversation flow.



We gathered our notes and built a survey. We collected data from 55 pet owners and found that they don't like pet food packaging because it's not resealable, difficult to store, hard to carry, and they don't even know if it's recyclable or not.

Pet Food Survey

Thank you for taking our survey! Please let us know your thoughts on pet food and pet food packaging.

How do you typically buy pet food?

Online

In-store

Other: _____

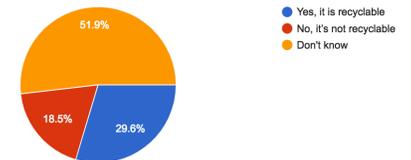
Why do you buy online/in-store/other?

Your answer _____

Is there anything you wish was different about the way you buy pet food?

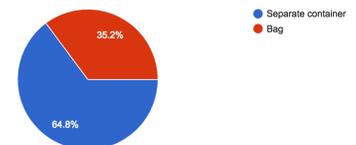
Do you know if the pet food bag you buy is recyclable or not?

54 responses



Once your pet food is at home do you transfer it to a separate container or keep it in the bag?

54 responses



After collecting pain points on the packaging, we did research on polypropylene and the pet food industry to try to determine what solutions existed to our problem. Why do pet food companies use this material and how could this packaging become something else?

Polypropylene

<https://www.azocleantech.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=240>

- A non-recyclable material
- Used as an alternative to recyclable materials because it is more durable.
- Is a thermoplastic polymer — basically meaning that it reacts and changes to heat or cold and thus can be broken down chemically into its component molecules.
- On its own polypropylene is considered to be non-toxic, however the chemicals needed to produce the polymer are very toxic to humans. How efficient is the wash process in synthesis? Could a cleaner wash be a solution?

Current recycling solution

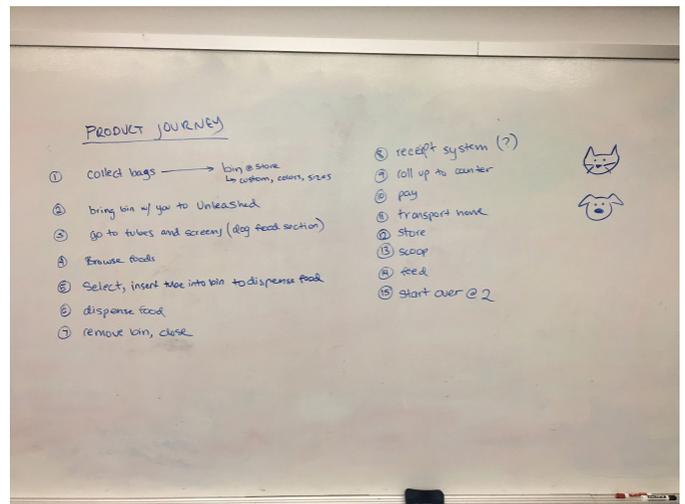
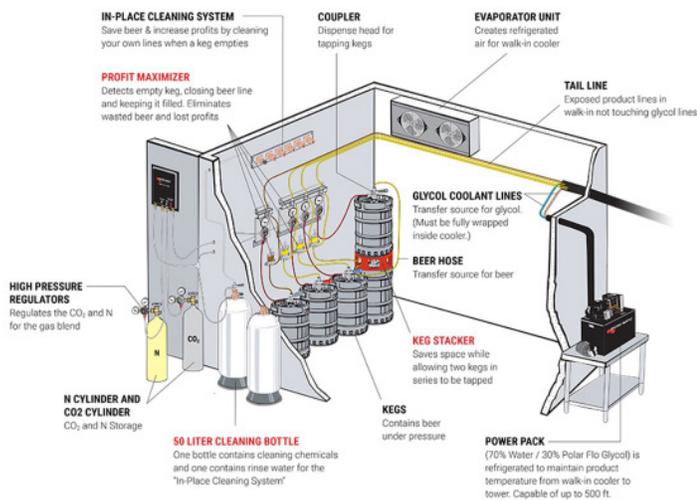
<https://greenamerica.org/green-living/greener-paths-plastics>

- Polypropylene is melted down and made into plastic chips that are sold in bulk to shipping companies. They are often turned into containers or barrels used for shipping and long-term holding.
- This is the end of the lifecycle as they are no longer chemically relevant and cannot be transformed into another material cheaply.
- Lots of DIYers use them to make totes or sacs.
- Check bio-plastic alternatives to eliminate the use of polypropylene

It was time to start to think of solutions. Our first round of brainstorming included making pet food packaging into building materials for developing countries or for dog parks. But after thinking through this, we decided the solution should be something more easily incorporated into the existing cycle.

We needed to narrow down our thinking for solutions. We decided to focus on Petco because it's the second top pet retailer in the USA and it has an existing rewards program that can be used to incentivize consumers to be a part of our solutions. Petco is also open to innovation. It is already experimenting with new ways to dispense kitty litter and treats.

Our first testable solution went BIG! It was all about a entirely new and complicated pressurized distribution system built into a room at Petco that can serve up any pet food on demand via a user interface. Pet owners would use a bin made out of polypropylene to use the system.

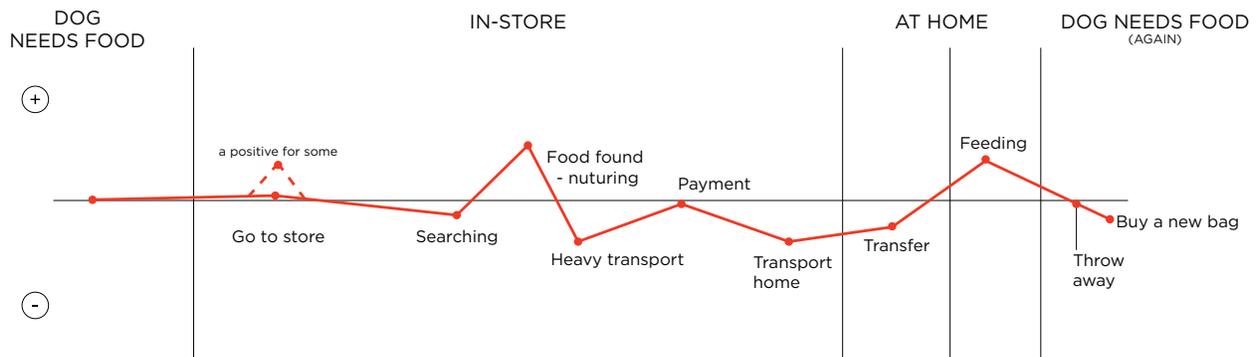


We quickly realized this was too expensive and complicated. How would Petco pay for this? Why would pet food brands want to be a part of this? We then narrowed our thinking down to Petco's own WholeHearted food line. This let us experiment more with Petco's rewards program and existing pet food systems.

TESTING

We tested our solution with users by walking them through the user journey. We described the experience to them and then asked them to note any pain points that they saw in the system.

PET FOOD BAG USAGE JOURNEY



Though our testing we found that people really gravitated towards customization and the new store experience with their pets. Testing also urged us to address the issue of the moment a pet owner inevitable forgets their bin, so we developed a new in-store tote system.

**Together, our solutions make a
healthier environment, happier
pet owners, and a better Petco.**

