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New automated re-use system for to-go F&B packaging at venues closes waste loop

The piles of single-use plastic cups, lids, containers and cutlery at events such as music festivals, sporting events or exhibitions could soon be a thing of the past if venues adopt a revolutionary new closed loop re-use system from Berlin start-up 1Less. The company has created a complete ecosystem of technology, using RFID tagged dishware and a smart waste bin, linked to a digital IoT platform, to create an entirely new way to deal with these containers and cutlery.

Every item of dishware, a handy name for food-service packaging and utensils, contains a robust and long lasting RFID tag. This transforms every item into a data carrier and transmitter, able to communicate valuable environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data to stakeholders. Thanks to the tag each unit of dishware has its own unique ID, so it can be tracked through the entire collection, cleaning and re-use process. Every item can be used 800-1000 times and then fully recycled at the end of its life, with the tag removed and re-used again, says the company.



The smart bins can be located around any venue and the consumer simply puts the container or cutlery, or indeed any waste item, into it. There are no special sorting decisions required as the bin's brain and sensor identifies the 1Less dishware, while a sorting mechanism separates it from other waste items. It also interacts with the 1Less cleaning-staff service App to inform them when to empty or maintain the bins.



The whole process is enabled by a digital IoT platform and the service App. The IoT platform collects all the data and controls the individual bin brains. It keeps track of each, used, 1Less dishware item and checks that only these are recognised to go to the cleaning and re-use process. The bin also logs each item and sends the information to a databank, which generates reports on key information for 1Less customers. All the information collected is GDPR compliant.



Gerald Lamusse, one of the company's co-founders explains, "What sets the 1Less System apart is the offer of a deposit-free, intelligent and automated smart re-use system for these closed environments. This is based on the IoT platform and brings together the 1Less trackable, reusable dishware and smart sorting bins, which are integrated into the on-site

customer waste management system. It puts this hybrid smart tech solution in a different league, in fact it is the only smart, Circular Economy, IoT based re-use system available globally.”

“For every kilogram of 1Less dishware items it is possible to save 25 kilograms of single-use plastic, resulting in almost 50 times less CO2 emissions. As no deposit or refund system is necessary the consumer simply buys the item for consumption from the vendor, resulting in much lower transaction costs and making it very straightforward and user-friendly,” he added.

Once the 1Less IoT platform is enabled for aggregation, analysis and reporting, the data harvested forms the basis for new business and revenue models. This makes it a very attractive proposition for vendors who can license or purchase the hardware.

1Less is currently looking for investors to scale up its development. Boris Jebsen co-founder of 1Less comments, “The 1Less technology and IoT solution can turn any single-use packaging into a smart, re-usable pack, while taking automated returns to the next level. Last year the company successfully applied for funding for Phase 1 of the EU EIC Accelerator Fund, for individual start-ups and small companies to develop and scale up game changing innovations. The market potential, over the next 5 years, on a realistic business model, is €275m in the EU alone.”

www.1Less.org

About 1Less

1Less is a Berlin-based start-up that has made it its mission to fight plastic waste. It was founded in 2019 by Boris Jebsen, a serial entrepreneur and technologist, with Gerald Lamusse, former SVP of a leading exhibition company. It has developed the first deposit-free, intelligent and automated smart re-use dishware and collection system for closed environments.

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