



GVV Case Study: Plastics and Sustainability - Part B

Olivia learned that the other members of the design team shared her concerns about the environmental impact of the disposable glove design. As a team, they began to brainstorm other possible solutions to the problem. Could the glove be reusable? Was there another alternative to the glove design altogether?

After coming up with a few ideas, the design team explained their concerns about the single-use plastic product to the animal services company and presented their alternative ideas. However, the company already had a factory that created products out of non-woven, plastic material, and their focus on consumer goods put them at odds with the design team's suggestions. The company filed a patent on the glove design and seemed prepared to develop the product.

Later on, the design team learned that the product never went to market, though the reasons for canceling its development were unclear. However, as a result of this experience, Olivia and a few of her colleagues formed a group of like-minded people who were concerned about sustainability in the design process. The group began hosting sustainability workshops for the various projects in progress at the firm. In these workshops, they focused on questions about the impact of their designs and how they could brainstorm ways to create products that would have less of an impact on the environment.

Although the initial concerns surrounding the disposable pet grooming gloves weren't necessarily resolved, Olivia and her colleagues found a different way to stand for their values by creating the sustainability workshops. And by addressing sustainability questions as part of the design process, Olivia and the rest of the sustainability team influenced future product designs and, by extension, the firm's future impacts on the environment.

This material has been adapted for the Online Ethics Center from the Giving Voice to Values content created by Dr. Mary Gentile.