Poland Springs Life Cycle

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The standard water bottle may seem like a simple item, but the process behind creating these everyday bottles is quite complex. The minds that work at Poland Spring are constantly churning to create designs that are environmentally friendly and recyclable as well as sellable and profitable. There is no sense in selling water that no one wants to drink or manufacturing bottles that aren't saving them money. Poland Springs is only the 6th most popular water brand in the United States, so they definitely have some competition in the sales department. Their team must depend on researching the most environmentally friendly way to retrieve water and manufacture their water bottles. Marketing their product has become their driving force as they recently reinvented their bottle design a few years ago.

The marketing of water bottles has exploded over the last few years. Many changes have been made to the bottles, with the particular brand of Poland Spring being one of the most well-known for marketing its changes. Huge efforts have been made to market the more ecologically friendly bottle design. Poland Spring worked on limiting the total amount of plastic used in the production of each water bottle. One of the main features that is especially emphasized is the slim cap that was reduced significantly to lower the overall plastic needed in the cap. The bottle itself was also altered to require less plastic for manufacturing. The total weight from 2005 to 2012 dropped from 14.6 grams to 9.2 grams just from changing the cap size and bottle design shown in the picture to the right. This is a great marketing technique to get consumers to buy their specific brand of water due to the idea that if consumers purchase Poland Spring bottles of water, they will be helping mitigate the negative effects on the environment. Poland Spring also markets their water as being better than others with the slogan of “Born Better” implying that their water tastes better and is cleaner right from the start compared to other bottles of water. They also use the motto of “The Natural taste of Tradition Since 1845” which indicates
that Poland Spring is a company that considers sustainability and maintaining their water resources to continually produce clean good tasting bottled water since 1845.

Manufacturing of water bottles is also important when considering the cycle of the plastic and where the bottle ends up after it is used. Poland Spring uses many types of plastic for each kind of bottle they produce. For 3 liter bottles, the type of plastic that is used is called #1 PET polyethylene terephthalate which is near the top of being one of the most recyclable plastics. However, for Poland Spring’s 1 and 2.5 gallon bottles, a plastic called #2 HDPE à high-density polyethylene which is also fully recyclable. Many of Poland Spring water bottles also have a label saying rPET bottles which indicate that they are recycled from already used PET plastic which requires less energy to reconstruct into bottle form than from all new material. The water itself comes from carefully preselected springs that they claim to maintain the great taste and reliability of their water. The spring that the water comes from is also indicated on the caps of their bottles. The shaping of the plastic bottles has also become easier and more efficient to shape due to the overall decrease in the plastic used. The bottle initially starts out as the shape of a test tube and is heated while air is blown inside, stretching the plastic to the desired Poland Spring bottle shape. The heating of the plastic and expanding of the plastic with air now uses less energy due to the decrease in overall plastic. Less heat is required to heat the plastic because there is less and the necessary air pressure needed to expand the bottle to its shape is less because less air pressure on thinner plastic will result in the same expansion as thicker plastic with more air pressure. This results in an overall decrease in the energy needed to make a single bottle.

In addition to this energy saving manufacturing process, Poland Springs makes sure that all of their bottles are filled within their own factories. This allows for trucks to avoid transporting thousands of empty bottles to a different facility to fill them. A decrease in the number of trips the trucks are taking keeps the company from spending unnecessary money on
gas. As a result, Poland Springs is also helping by preventing additional air pollution from the automobile emissions.

Regarding its sales, Poland Springs water bottles had reached $580 million on sales in 2015, competing the big brands of bottled water such as Dasani and Aquafina especially in the northeastern United States. Today, Poland Springs sells its water bottles in different sizes like 500 mL, 700 mL, 1 L, 1.5 L and 5 gallons, which is useful for office uses. Such bottles are distributed to big supermarkets firms including Target and Walmart. In addition, there are distribution contracts made with large distribution firms such as Rainbow Distributions.

Water bottles are one of the most widely used products in the world. Over 50 billion of them are consumed each year. That number is astounding especially considering all the other resources that are needed to create and transport each bottle. The average American alone uses approximately 167 bottles each year. About 11.8 billion dollars are spent on bottled water in the United States while over 60 billion dollars are spent around the world. With the marketing industry becoming more and more prominent in the water bottle industry, the numbers of consumer use are actually increasing despite constant efforts to show the problems with the industry. By cutting down on bottled water use, the environment can drastically heal and also it would be a very cost efficient to the consumer. Bottled water cost approximately $1.22 per gallon. That amount is nearly 300 times that of a gallon of tap water. Is the cost really worth it?

Water bottles are dealt with pretty terribly after their use in most cases. Up to 80% of bottles end up in a landfill which is really inexcusable considering every house has a recycling bin that is typically right next to a trashcan. Also, most bottles are only used one time and then thrown out despite the fact that they can be refilled and used multiple more times. Over 17 million barrels of oil are used in the production of water bottles alone, however, if we recycled then this number would decrease significantly. Plastic water bottles are also not biodegradable
meaning they won’t decompose over time and will simply sit there unless someone takes the actions necessary to recycle them to be used in the future. Not only do these bottles litter the landfills, they cover some streets making for unsightly views as well as possible danger to animals that try to eat them. When plastics are recycled they can be broken down back into oil or even as energy in plants that are designed to run off the recycled plastics.

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