

Making packaging disappear

 By [Angie White](#)

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Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez started day 2 of Design Indaba on a high note when he presented on the Ooho! - the disappearing biodegradable water-filled bead made from brown algae and calcium chloride (seaweed).

Gonzalez is co-founder and co-CEO of Skipping Rock Lab, a London based startup with the goal of making packaging disappear. Ooho!, which is Skipping Rocks Lab's pilot project, won the Lexus Design Award and the World Technology Award for environment.

Sustainable packaging

In his presentation, Gonzalez explained that it takes 5L of water to make one 500ml water bottle and that the idea to create the Ooho! was born out of the need to create something more sustainable to help combat the amount of plastic waste and sea pollution. The Ooho! can be eaten or discarded, and it only takes six weeks to biodegrade.

“ *This is his proposal for an alternative to plastic bottles. Biodegradable and edible, it literally makes packaging disappear. He just ate a one on stage. [#designindaba pic.twitter.com/SxfrBm5T](#)— Design Indaba (@designindaba) February 28, 2019* ”

Gonzalez says they decided to utilise seaweed as a material as it is both biodegradable and edible. Through experimenting with different methods to create different layers, the group of chemists commissioned to investigate and create this packaging have come up with different methods and uses for creating and using the Ooho!.

These innovative little beads have been used at festivals, by retailers and pop-up stores, mostly for water but also including a variety of flavoured drinks. Gonzalez says the Ooho! offers different solutions for plastic packaging in many industries, and its purpose is not solely for packaging water and beverages. He says it can be used in hotels to package small amounts of soaps/shampoo/cosmetics, energy gels (as opposed to energy bars wrapped in plastic), and even for condiments and sauces in fast-food establishments.

Repurposing plastic bottles

Going one step further, after creating a sustainable solution to plastic bottle packaging, Gonzalez has also spearheaded the Devere project - one that uses plastic bottles as a material to create structures. The best part is that these plastic 'bricks' can be reused and reshaped for different structures over and over.



Creativity: Just do it!

Gonzalez has some tips for coming up with creative ideas:

1. Observe a problem/Identify a need: This can be anything that needs a solution
2. Pass it along: Share your ideas with people you trust and make allow/make the idea grow
3. Score: Implement your idea(s). Don't wait until your idea is perfect to implement/create it – just do it!

This creative genius shared amazingly inspired ideas with the audience, from cars that also function as public benches in order to incorporate them more into society, artificial clouds to generate rain, a spoon that wraps around a little girl's disabled arm allowing her to feed herself, to his personal fold-up bike.

Gonzalez is also the inventor behind Hop, a suitcase that follows its user around. The suitcase has receivers that are able to receive, identify and triangulate different signals coming from a user's cell phone. A microcontroller interprets these signals calculating the phone's position in relation to the suitcase, allowing the suitcase to follow the user at a constant distance. If the signal is lost the user is alerted by the vibration of the phone and suitcase locks itself.

This presentation from Gonzalez was innovative, inspiring and offered great advice for creatives and everyone with the desire to create!

“ Observe, pass it around, don't wait, just do it. Sound advice from Gonzalaez on howto cultivate and nurture ideas.

[#designindaba](#)— *Design Indaba (@designindaba)* [February 28, 2019](#) ”

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