

Supply chain management research

with Professor Andrea Genovese and Dr Tommaso Calzolari

Talking points

Knowledge & Comprehension

1. What is a multinational enterprise?
2. What is a circular economy and how does it differ to a linear economy?
3. Andrea mentions that multinational enterprises usually have a very limited view of the circular economy. What drives multinational enterprises to adopt only very basic circular economy practices?

Application

4. How might the findings of Tommaso and Andrea's work be applicable to both governments and companies?

Analysis

5. What are the motivations behind circular economy practices? To what extent do you agree with circular economy ideas, and why?

Evaluation

6. Tommaso mentions that changing social norms and values is necessary to encourage circular economy practices. How do you think we can radically change social norms?

Creativity

7. Imagine a 'post-growth' world where production and consumption are limited, and companies make decisions based on ecological impacts rather than financial growth. What three things can you imagine in your day-to-day life that might be different in this world?

Activity

Think of your own, brand-new circular economy solution. This could be a circular economy idea like setting up a free repair workshop in your own town, or creating a new circular economy product like foldable, reusable cutlery. You could also think of circular economy schemes such as 'mug libraries', where mugs are free to borrow and return to different drop off points, encouraging people to not use disposable coffee cups. If you need some inspiration, read about these 39 innovations (www.wbcsd.org/Overview/Panorama/Articles/39-innovations-bringing-circular-economy-solutions) or these 17 ideas that are accelerating the transition to a circular economy (www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/04/17-innovations-accelerating-the-transition-to-a-circular-economy).

When you have come up with your idea, create a physical prototype of it using materials from home that can be reused or recycled in some way. If your idea is not a physical product that can be designed, create a poster that explains your idea.

When either creating your poster or designing your product, think about things such as:

- How to use your idea and what it is for
- The cost of creating and distributing your idea
- How your idea encourages sustainable and circular economy practices
- The benefits of your idea, including how it will help both people and the environment
- How you will encourage people to use your idea. For example, if it is more effort to use your product, could there be a fee for using the alternative (think about the policy of charging for single-use plastic bags to encourage reusable bags)? Or, will you try to change social norms and values to make more people adopt your idea?

Afterwards, share your poster or prototype with your classmates or family members and ask them for their feedback. Can they suggest anything to improve your design that you did not think about?

More resources

- Read the ReTraCE project's blog (www.retrace-itn.eu/blog) for interesting news about circular economy practices happening around the UK.
- Watch this lecture from Andrea on the past, present and future of the circular economy: www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcC182fH28I
- Read some of the global statistics on waste worldwide. You can look at single use plastic waste in different countries, food waste and ocean waste: www.statista.com/topics/4983/waste-generation-worldwide/#statisticChapter