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# Case Study - The Red Sock Laundryette & Cleaning Service

## Where Circularity & Waste- Reduction are Inherent



Circular Economy  
Digital Toolkit

# Red Sock Launderette & Cleaning Service

Red Sock provides laundry, dry cleaning, and professional cleaning services to residential and commercial customers. This service-based model, in itself, is in line with the circular economy, as it reduces the need for individuals to purchase heavy-duty equipment, instead providing these as products-as-a-service. Red Sock has gone further by adding other circular economy initiatives such as through clothing repairs and waste reduction, saving both them and the consumer money. While circularity comes naturally to their business model, Red Sock continues to explore ways to take this even further, while maintaining high-quality service.

## Extending the Lifetime of Textiles and Appliances

- **Equipment Repair** - Rather than replacing equipment at the first sign of wear, Red Sock extends the lifespan of its machines through repair and refurbishment. Replacing equipment is resource-heavy as many different components, metals, and plastics go into making them.
- **Reconditioned Equipment Purchases** – When practical, the business sources high-quality second-hand refurbished tumble dryers, irons, washing machines, and other equipment from local suppliers, as these have already been manufactured. One of their washing machines was purchased second-hand in 1999, proving the longevity of well-maintained appliances.
- **Extend the Life of Clothing and Linens** - Customers can have textiles mended instead of having to buy new, reducing the demand for new resources.
- **Dry Cleaning & Fabric Care** – Proper textile maintenance through professional cleaning and steam ironing helps extend fabric longevity.



## Business Model

The very nature of Red Sock's service-based business model aligns with circular economy principles by reducing the need for individual households to purchase resource-intensive equipment (such as heavy-duty washers, dryers, steam irons, and dry-cleaning machines) by providing a centralised, highly efficient service. This is much more efficient on resources than having underutilised equipment in individual homes and businesses.

The same goes for cleaning supplies; customers don't need to buy their own chemicals, and instead employ Red Sock as a launderette or cleaning service. This is a much more efficient use of chemicals, as Red Sock has the capacity to buy in bulk, refills containers, and thus save the individual from purchasing endless small containers, contributing to plastic waste.

Red Sock's circular business model improves resource efficiency and reduces waste, while offering customers an affordable and convenient service.



## Waste Reduction

- Local Sourcing of Cleaning Supplies – Reduces the added packaging waste associated with long distance shipping.
- Diluting Chemicals from Bulk Bottles of Concentrate – Reduces plastic waste by refilling reusable spray bottles instead of buying new single-use containers.
- Plastic Waste Recycling – Soap and detergent containers are all recycled, lowering landfill contributions.
- Paperless Accounting – Since 2018, accounting has been digital.

## Business Benefits & Further Environmental Benefits

In a circular economy, business benefits go hand-in-hand with environmental benefits, as business inputs and outputs are reviewed more carefully, improving efficiency and the sharing of resources, even unlocking new revenue streams.

- Bulk purchasing and the refilling of cleaning products reduce operational costs and waste.
- Maintaining and repairing instead of replacing, and buying second-hand when possible, reduces equipment replacement costs and the environmental impact of manufacturing those.
- New is sometimes necessary. But, by purchasing durable equipment, and using it efficiently—this can still be in line with circular economic principles. Red Sock buying a new machine, and using it in their service-based business (where the initial purchase is paid off by the revenue the machine provides), works from a business viewpoint. From an environmental viewpoint, there are still advantages, as Red Sock's service prevents other businesses from having to purchase similar equipment, thus lowering resource demand, and passing immense savings to the customers who can purchase the service, instead of the product.
- Going paperless with accounting simplifies operations and lowers costs.
- By offering cleaning and laundry services, even in tandem, Red Sock enables individuals, holiday lets, hotels, and restaurants to operate more efficiently. This business model also gives Red Sock a variation of revenue streams, improving their competitive advantage.
- Repairs and alterations give customers a sustainable, affordable alternative to purchasing new clothes and other textiles—also providing Red Sock with an additional revenue stream. This service reduces waste, promoting a more circular fashion economy.
- Sourcing locally supports regional businesses and reduces the additional packaging waste associated with long-distance transport; it also improves business self-sufficiency.



# Why circularity works for Red Sock L & C.S.

The Red Sock Launderette & Cleaning Service is a prime example of how businesses we encounter every day are already deeply embedded in the circular economy. Service-based models, like launderettes and cleaning service providers, inherently reduce overall product consumption by providing shared access to high-resource equipment, allowing individuals to pay for a service, instead of their own underutilised expensive equipment—eliminating unnecessary production and improving resource efficiency.

Additionally, by offering clothing repairs and textile care, repairing equipment, buying second-hand where possible, and minimising plastic and chemical waste, Red Sock demonstrates that circularity requires a holistic approach—it's about rethinking how we consume, share, and maintain resources to create a more efficient, self-sufficient, collaborative, and circular economy.

## Their advice to other small businesses



**“Take advantage of local initiatives, and speak to other local businesses to see how they are managing their sustainability practices and circular economy.”**

Rebecca Reid, Owner

Red Sock Launderette & Cleaning Services demonstrates how circular economy principles are inherent to many of the service-based businesses we are already familiar with.

