Where there is action there is waste.

Think about it: We produce a huge amount of waste every day. Physical waste like the plastic bottle that we drop in the waste bin after we satisfied our thirst. Intangible waste like the waste of time that we produce when using Facebook or other social networks. The good thing about the latter is that it does not have to be stored or removed somewhere; it does not bother anyone besides us. The former, however, pollutes our landscapes and oceans; it takes about 200 years to decompose and when composed it goes back in the food chain. So, indeed this type of waste does annoy people. That would not be a problem if globally we would not produce 3.5 million tons of waste – per day.

While reading this number, one might be shocked and feel remorseful, but then, one might think: *What can I myself do about it? Probably not much.* Well, we from RethinkResource think everyone can do a lot to help to decrease global waste production that is why we started our company. We want to pioneer the emergence of a circular economy. We want to start a shift of thinking where waste is not longer considered as waste but as a useful resource that can become a new product. We hope that we can help shape a future without waste. Actually, we will.

What is the circular economy?

The circular economy aims to close the loop of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use which is beneficial for both the environment and the economy. Recently, the European Commission adopted an ambitious Action Plan for a Circular Economy setting clear targets for waste reduction and establishing a long-term path for waste management and recycling. The EU aims, for example, to recycle 75% of packaging waste by 2030 as well as provide economic incentives for manufacturers to produce greener products and support recovery and recycling schemes. Moreover, the EU promotes re-use and stimulates industrial symbiosis - turning one industry's waste into another industry's resource. That is exactly the idea we are pursuing with RethinkResource – turning waste into opportunities.

Who can benefit from the circular economy? Everybody. Seriously. Let´s take businesses for example: New business opportunities can develop because better product designs lead to new production technologies and materials. Small and medium-sized enterprises can find differentiation opportunities through more resource efficient processes, which will also yield financial savings. In addition, the circular economy is advantageous for customers as well: Improved waste management and value generation from waste will reduce the cost of products, when purchasing them as well as at their end-of-life. Improved product design will make products more durable and efficient. Last but not least, it is also good for the environment (yes, we are well are aware that you might have heard that a thousand times, but that does not make it less important). A smarter use of resources will help to protect the environment, reduce waste and decrease climate change for current and future generations.

Well, you might say that the concept sounds nice; that it is a ambitious and sustainable idea. But it is just a futuristic vision, isn´t it? It is not done yet? Actually, you might be surprised how often this principle is already applied in business. A clear but not obvious example is the recycling of glass. For centuries, it has been collected and reused because it is 100% recyclable and can be recycled endlessly without loss in quality or purity. For every ton of glass recycled over a ton of natural resources are saved, thus, manufacturers benefit from recycling as it reduces emissions and consumption of raw materials and saves energy.

A more modern but equally sustainable approach is the one of Interface, the world's largest designer and maker of carpet tile. They launched a project called Net-Works turning waste nylon from discarded fishing nets into recycled nylon for their carpet. Their goal for 2020 is to not only use recycled or bio-based materials, but to cut the dependence on petro-chemical raw materials completely.

And there is even better! Have you ever heard of a company called Method? This environmentally conscious cleaning product company launched an innovation in sustainable packaging – the world´s first bottles made from a blend of plastic recovered from the ocean and post-consumer recycled plastic. Nearly all of Method’s packaging is made of recycled material, which is an effective way to reuse plastic and prevent it from ending up in landfills and oceans. Method recovers plastics from the ocean; then they clean, blend and remanufacture it into the same quality as new high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic. Apparently, they already have trustworthy suppliers but I guess the cooperation with Boyan Slat would be handy? For sure, the Ocean Cleanup can provide some plastic waste…

After the reading you did so far, you might wonder why we as a startup are actually having a blog. Actually our blog will serve two purposes. First, we aim to inform our readers about the latest trends in the circular economy; from products that are made from secondary resources and tell you about things that catch our attention over new inventions to events, other blogs etc. who share or support our circular vision. Basically everything that has an impact to change the way we think about waste is a relevant topic for this blog. Second, we want to update our followers on the progress we as a start-up are making; through the blog they can participate in the adventure of starting a company with us. We will regularly post blogs about new partners, customers and events we have discovered trying to be transparent to our dear followers.

At the moment, we are participating in MassChallenge, a 4-months accelerator program in Lausanne, Switzerland. MassChallenge is a startup-friendly accelerator that takes no equity and is not-for-profit, providing us with the access and resources we need to succeed in business- from a free office space in Lausanne to helpful mentors and workshops as well as access to a global network. So far, we have spent already 3 months at the accelerator which helped us a lot. We have mentors that support our team and provide us with their contacts and knowledge; we share visions and discuss ideas with the other start-ups who face the same challenges as we do and we are supported by the staff at MassChallenge. To all of them we wish to send huge thanks; we had an amazing and productive time so far. In three weeks, it is time for the pre-finals where all MassChallenge start-ups pitch to panels of judges highlighting their progress during their time at the accelerator. We are looking forward to this outstanding opportunity to show our passion, progress and commitment for our startup!

I am writing ´we´ and `RethinkResource´ but you as a reader have no idea who we actually are. I want to change this and give you a little presentation of the team that wants to turn trash into treasure.

First, there is Linda, the CEO. She has as many skills as a Swiss penknife helping her to follow her passion: contributing to a sustainable planet. As a studied lawyer, it might not seem evident for her to be a entrepreneur; however, through former work experiences she found out that where there is action there is waste, so she put aside the judge´s gown and the code of law to get it started.

Anna is our CTO and had the initial RethinkResource idea. As a resource engineer she has developed a deep knowledge for different waste streams making her the perfect match for our team.

And then there is me, Susann, the COO, who takes care that the business runs as smooth as a baby´s bottom. During my studies in Sweden, besides getting to know Köttbullar, Falken and Fika, I heard about the idea of a circular economy. Pragmatic and result-oriented, turning our economy upside down seemed convincing to me so I joined RethinkResource. My Master´s degree in Business Administration makes me the economic brain that sees the need in the market before the market sees itself.

Those powers combined, we are out to save the world from waste. Or something similar.