

THE NEXT GENERATION

SINGAPOREAN INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER EASON CHOW AND SWISS TECHNICAL PARTNERS HAVE COME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE MARKET'S WASTE ISSUE WITH BIOLOGICAL COFFEE CAPSULES THAT DISSOLVES AFTER USE.

A coffee pod is elegant in its simplicity: a pre-prepared single-portion espresso shot that consumers can brew at the touch of a button. However, Pascal Schlittler, founder of single serve capsule company Mocoffee and investment platform MyCoffeeWorld, says coffee pods have become a problem worldwide.

"Today, it's estimated about 60 billion coffee capsules are produced every year. When I became involved in the single serve industry in 2009, we were at maybe 12 billion," Schlittler says. "The industry has failed to find a good solution to cope with this scale, the extension of this product on a worldwide base. Many of these products are not disposed of correctly and end up in landfill. This is a huge concern."

Some companies have begun producing recyclable or compostable capsules. However, Schlittler believes these inventions face the same issues plaguing takeaway coffee cups in many countries.

"We see large numbers of people still throwing away their capsules, whether they are recyclable or not, because people aren't aware how to dispose of them," Schlittler says.

"People try to produce biodegradable or compostable alternatives, but these, like recycling, need

infrastructure in place to support them. Today, it's estimated that only one out of five aluminium capsules are really collected for recycling."

Through MyCoffeeWorld, Schlittler supports innovative coffee concepts and companies he believes could revolutionise the coffee industry. A matter close to his heart, Schlittler spent a long time finding someone who could pose a solution to coffee capsule waste. He found it in Singapore with industrial designer Eason Chow and his Droops Coffee Maker concept. "Droops is the one project that ignited a spark in me, that I thought really focused on the topic of next generation coffee beverages. It's really ahead of the market," Schlittler says.

The Droops Coffee Maker would use dissolvable capsules to produce coffee. Creator Chow says he was inspired upon realising the level of waste coffee pods generate.

"I was working in a design agency where everybody was going for coffee three to five times a day," Chow says. "One day, I went to clean the machine and when I opened up that tray that stores all the empty capsules. It was a shocking scene. There were hundreds of plastic capsules inside that would all go to landfill."

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MyCoffeeWorld Founder

The Droops Coffee Maker will use dissolvable capsules similar to gumballs to produce coffee.



“It was in that moment I started to think: ‘Why does so much waste need to be generated for peoples’ convenience?’ I started to research it and think of new ways I could approach the issue.”

Chow says confusion around composting and recycling prompted him to find an alternative method of disposing of the coffee’s casing. He took inspiration from his favourite candy.

“Picture a Gobstopper. It is sweet, with multiple layers and a hard outer shell,” Chow says.

“Our pod’s casing isn’t exactly the same material, but it incorporates this idea of a natural shell that is also part of the product.”

Once launched, Droops plans to make its pods customisable, resembling logos or shapes that represent the coffee.

Chow says in developing the Droops concept, it was important to not solely focus on the machine’s environmental consciousness to appeal to consumers.



“We have to remember it’s really about convenience. If you make it difficult to be sustainable, less people will embrace the waste-free product,” Chow says. “It is effortless to be eco-friendly with Droops. The casing – a combination of coffee, water, and biological material – dissolves so you don’t even need to worry about throwing it out, let alone in the correct bin.”

When Chow first published the concept in 2014, it was received with great acclaim. Droops won a Red Dot Design Award in 2015 and received attention from international news organisations. “I met Pascal then, and we really started to dive into this concept, to see how we could fine tune it,” Chow says.

Since then, Droops has progressed from the concept phase to product engineering and mass production. Chow says they almost have a turnkey project at hand.

“The feasibility study has been made, the proof of concept is here, and now we need to bring this into a production phase. Our next goal is to

establish a production site and develop a variety of products,” he says.

“We are looking to work with the right people who really want to be on the forefront of this innovation and build a supporting structure to take my idea and our European partner’s technology to production and distribution.”

After Chow developed the concept, Schlittler connected with Swiss partners who had independently created the necessary shape pressing and coating technology.

“Together, we have developed technology capable of producing these capsules and a machine that can extract the pod in a way that makes a good espresso,” Schlittler says.

“I’ve tested the coffee myself, and at this early stage, it is already just as good as any of the larger supermarket coffees available today. What really struck me was, after the extraction, I could take the casules in my hands, squeeze it, and it would break down so only coffee grounds remained.”

Schlittler says Droops’ combination of convenience, sustainability, and quality will endear it to multiple demographics, whose coffee preferences often differ.

“With the technology at hand, we have an opportunity to not only appeal to general coffee pod users and sustainable minded consumers, but the wider coffee market,” Schlittler says.

“People who drink instant coffee will enjoy the convenience, while specialty or café drinkers will appreciate the quality.”

Schlittler says projections suggest that the dissolvable pods could in the long-term work out much cheaper for capsule producers.

“An industrial system to produce these new capsules will cost 50 per cent of what it takes to run traditional capsule machines,” Schlittler says. “That’s a huge trigger for the industry, and we’ve received a lot of interest from people who would like to buy or distribute these pods once they reach the market.”

Once Droops and dissolvable coffee pod production equipment receives a wide release, Schlittler hopes to share it with the rest of the coffee community.

“People are proud when they develop something, put a patent on it, then in 25 years, the industry is blocked because only one guy has the key and is able to sell the product,” he says.

“We want to be able to share this technology and make sure everyone is moving in the right direction.” **GCR**

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Eason Chow

Droops Coffee Maker Creator



Eason Chow
CREATOR

Droops began as an idea to revolutionise coffee-drinking culture through the use of fully dissolvable coffee capsules. Beyond being a more sustainable approach, it also aims to reinvent the convenient-coffee experience by taking consumers on an exciting journey as they create their own cup of coffee, likened to the fun of dispensing gumball candies.

Chow is an industrial designer who loves coming up with simple yet useful creative solutions to challenging problems.

For more information, visit www.easonchow.com



Pascal Schlittler
MYCOFFEEWORLD FOUNDER

MYCOFFEEWORLD.COM - is an initiative & investment vehicle around Pascal Schlittler.

The mission is to power and grow the future of innovation and business networks in the coffee industry.

For more information, visit mycoffeeworld.com