



Use instead of own: The Clean Laundry Product Service

Project summary

Since 2017, the repair and service center R.U.S.Z. has been offering the product service Clean Laundry under the motto "Use instead of own". It is an innovative service model by means of durable, repair-friendly rental washing machines with a consumption-dependent billing of the rental costs (pay-per-wash principle). By concluding a rental contract, the user obtains the rights to use the washing machine provided by the R.U.S.Z.. For a deposit and an initial monthly rent of € 18, - one "buys" an "eternally functioning" washing machine. There is no transfer of ownership. This offer is ideal for consumers who do not have to take possession of everything and appreciate convenience at controllable costs. In return the R.U.S.Z. is obligated to accomplish an annual inspection (like the "Pickerl" with the car), to adapt the rent to the number of wash cycles (€ 18, - apply to 4 wash cycles per week) and in case of a disturbance to have repaired the problem within three working days. Currently, there are more than 50 such rental contracts.

The Austrian Institute of Technology, AIT and the Center for Social Innovation, ZSI refer to the overall concept of the repair and service center R.U.S.Z. in relevant projects as Social Innovation (Brunauer & Schartinger, 2016; CASI, 2016)¹. This is all the more true for the product-service system Clean Laundry without Transfer of Ownership described here.

Half-hearted offers of rental washing machines have been available for quite some time.² However, these are classic leasing models: 66 monthly rents of € 27 entitle the customer to take over the rental machine after five and a half years. As a repair company with a long tradition, we know that this is exactly when the first expensive repairs are due for medium-priced washing machines. From an eco-social point of view, we consider this to be gross nonsense. R.U.S.Z. supports the systemic change from the linear "take-make-dispose economy" to a circular economy and proves with its product service that even the most difficult implementation steps of the circular economy are possible.

¹ Brunauer, Andreas & Schartinger, Doris (2016) Report: SI Drive – WP Environment and Climate Change. R.U.S.Z. Repair and Service Center. A Case Study of a Social Innovation. Austrian Institute of Technology. Vienna CASI (2016) Reparatur- und Servicezentrum R.U.S.Z. [Online] Available from: <http://www.casi2020.eu/casipedia/cases/751> [Accessed 12th January 2018]

² CLUB.WEISS Handels-GmbH, Bahnhofstraße 37, 4802 Ebensee. Siehe auch: <https://m.elektrojourn.at/elektrojournal/club-weiss-der-mittelstandskreis-erfindet-sich-neu-133093>