

COMPETITIONS ELECTIVE

DESIGNBOOM: REINVENT COMPETITION

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With the fast paced lifestyles of today's modern western society, most people find it difficult to manage their schedules and make time for chores and housekeeping. For those that make time for cleaning, it is generally not enjoyable for them to carry out the tasks required. As a result, the multi million dollar household cleaning industry continues to grow and manufacture new products to entice consumers to purchase their inventions that promise to simplify and lighten the work of cleaning.

The competition entry was initially conceptualized on the simple observation that cleaning is not enjoyable and requires too much time. Also, the time required to set up and clean up before and after the cleaning also requires an amount of time. The question raised from these observations is whether or not a product can be conceived that serves as a cleaning device but requires little to no operation. A system of cleaning that could automatically clean without active human involvement or is easily accessed when required without much preparation and foot travel. Another characteristic of this product is that it must be sustainable in that it doesn't contain harsh chemicals or un-recyclable materials that may be detrimental to the environment. Furthermore, it must be cost effective such that it could potentially compete as a product in the world market with other proven household cleaning systems.

Following these guidelines, a design solution was developed through study of current products that are both within and outside the existing line of Mr.Clean products. Two cleaning products existing on today's market were carefully studied. The first is Mr.Clean's Magic Reach. The system is essentially a mop with a pivot head that is able to navigate bathtubs and hard to reach corners. The mop head is constructed of plastic that is able to receive disposable super absorbent cleaning pads. The advantage of the Magic Reach is that the mop pole can be detached, leaving the cleaning head separate such that the user can handle tougher stains by handling the cleaning head. The pads are specially constructed so that they can easily absorb and clean floors, sinks, and countertops. In terms of feasibility, the Mr.Clean Magic Reach is reusable because of the disposable pads that can be easily replaced to fit over the cleaning head. This flexibility allows the cleaning system to be used for a long period of time and at the same time is very convenient for the users, who can simply toss the dirty cleaning pad once it has accumulated enough dirt and grime.



In a similar way, the Swiffer cleaning system is also advantageous in these respects and is the second point of departure for the competition entry. The Swiffer is similarly an extended rod cleaning system however the cleaning pads are disposable static wipes that easily trap particles of dirt, dust, and hair by simply brushing over the problem area. The Swiffer is highly effective and successful as a product because it is faster and more efficient than traditional methods of dusting where water and drying is involved. Because the wipes are static charged and disposable, it is easy to dust and maintain. The wipes offer an economical and efficient solution to an otherwise time consuming and mundane chore.

Taking the knowledge from the two previous case studies, Mr.Clean Magic Monsters was conceptualized to ease the cleaning process in a number of ways. First, it works by passively cleaning all the time without the consumer's conscious effort. Essentially, it cleans without any deliberate effort. Also, it provides consumers with the flexibility of always having a cleaning device whenever they need it. This eliminates the time needed to travel from one location to take out a cleaning agent and put it away after its use. To functionally translate these properties into a synthesis, a simple concept was shaped. Magic Monsters are adhesive disposable wipes that can stick to any surface so that all objects are transformed into cleaning devices. They are dispensed just like an ordinary toilet paper roll, and work as patches of squares that can adhere to objects. On one side, the sheet is adhesive, and on the other, it is made of a synthesis between the Swiffer's static wipes and Magic Reach's absorbent wipe. In this way, the sheets can easily trap dust and dirt when dry, but can also perform as a durable wiping cloth when wet. The goal for the wipes is to allow people to unknowingly clean as they perform their day to day activities, whether it is setting down a book, walking around the house in their slippers, or even inadvertently shifting the extension cord underneath their computer table as they are working. The result of these active and passive actions is that the sheets attract dirt because they are static charged and wipe away dust particles with each movement of the applied surface. Once the sheets have accumulated enough dirt, they can be disposed of and a new sheet can be attached onto the cleaning surface. If properly executed, the wipes will be located on almost all surfaces such that one can easily have a cleaning device whenever needed, without the hassle of locating the usual cleaning tools.

The cartoon monster theme was integrated because of the potential playfulness in the use, being adhered to children's toys and other items. It would also be more aesthetically pleasing since it would be on the surfaces of many objects. The graphic design also eliminates the mistake that the sheets are leftover toilet paper from the washroom. There is also potential for the monsters graphics to be redesigned such that they were simple color matches and patterns, or themed characters depending on commercial sponsors, rather than cartoon monsters.

This product can easily revolutionize the household cleaning industry. It fulfills the basic criteria for a successful cleaning product because of its flexibility in use, economical replacements, efficient ingenuity, and time saving techniques. As an extension, this product could potentially be applied in a much larger scale, perhaps on industrial machinery for cleaning purposes. Clothing could also adopt this technology, specifically cleaning suits that are made entirely of the Magic Monsters material so that cleaning can be an enjoyable game for children who are finally permitted by their parents to roll around in household dirt. Transparent wipes could also be developed so that the application isn't so apparent on everyday objects. This could further the adaptability of the product, allowing for application to almost every object imaginable, including items that are traditionally required to be aesthetically pure like the handbag, wallet, and cellular phone.

From the Designboom entry explanation of summary:

Stay Clean But Don't Clean

Mr. Clean Magic Monsters are disposable super absorbent static pads that stick to all surfaces and wait hungrily for dirt and messes. Simply rip a few sheets from the roll and stick them onto whatever you desire. Observe it a while later and you will discover the Magic Monsters have trapped dust bunnies and grime! Apply the disposable pads to everyday objects and soon you will always have a cleaning device within arms reach!

Bibliography:

Magic Reach image from:

<http://www.savvymommy.com/images/stories/contests/magic-reach.jpg>

Swiffer image from:

<http://www.cleansweepsupply.com/pictures/standard/bpag1500.jpg>