

Body Shop gets greener with refillable shower gel and activism zone

New concept store in central London is attempt to return to roots of founder Anita Roddick

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/sep/17/the-body-shop-goes-green-again-with-refill-stations-and-activist-zones>

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The Body Shop's trial refill station will initially just be for shower gel. Photograph: Rowan Butler/The Body Shop

The Body Shop is going back to their roots at the busiest store in the UK. The store in central London is now testing a refill station for shower gels. A refill station is a place where you can refill your own bottles with the things you need to buy. The Body Shop has already tried this before in the 1990's, but shoppers at the time didn't understand how it worked.

The Body Shop's Linda Campbell said the company was hoping to honor the spirit of its founder, Anita Roddick, who died in 2007. Roddick believed in many environmental and community projects.



Anita Roddick in 1986. The Body Shop started 10 years earlier with an emphasis on ethical sourcing and testing. Photograph: Keystone/Getty Images

Founded in 1976, the Body Shop started in Brighton in the UK selling 25 items. Shoppers were asked to recycle bottles back to the shop – mostly because the owner, Anita Roddick, did not have enough bottles at first. Roddick also placed an importance on natural ingredients inside the things she was selling.

There are about 800 products at the Body Shop with 3,000 stores in more than 60 countries. In the UK, it has around 2,000 employees. The company's most sold items are hemp hand cream and tea tree oil, with a tube and bottle of each being sold every 9 and 17 seconds.



The concept store in central London uses mainly upcycled materials. Photograph: Rowan Butler/Body Shop

Considering the growing shopper concern about the impact of single-use plastics on the environment, the store will have a water station for customers

to refill their bottles as well. Shoppers can also return empty bottles and containers from any store and get a £5 coupon for every five things returned.

Most of the items in the shop are “upcycled”, including things rescued from trash landfills. Upcycling is like recycling except you don’t send the used items to a recycling center, you instead find ways to reuse it as anything you like. For example, if you take an old newspaper and make it into a flowerpot, you have upcycled! The store will also have an area to encourage shoppers to become part of local environmental activities.

“Overall, the idea is for shoppers to have a bit of fun and to have some memorable experiences,” Campbell said. If the refill stations are successful, they are likely to be used in other stores in Europe and North America.