

Where's the polybag?



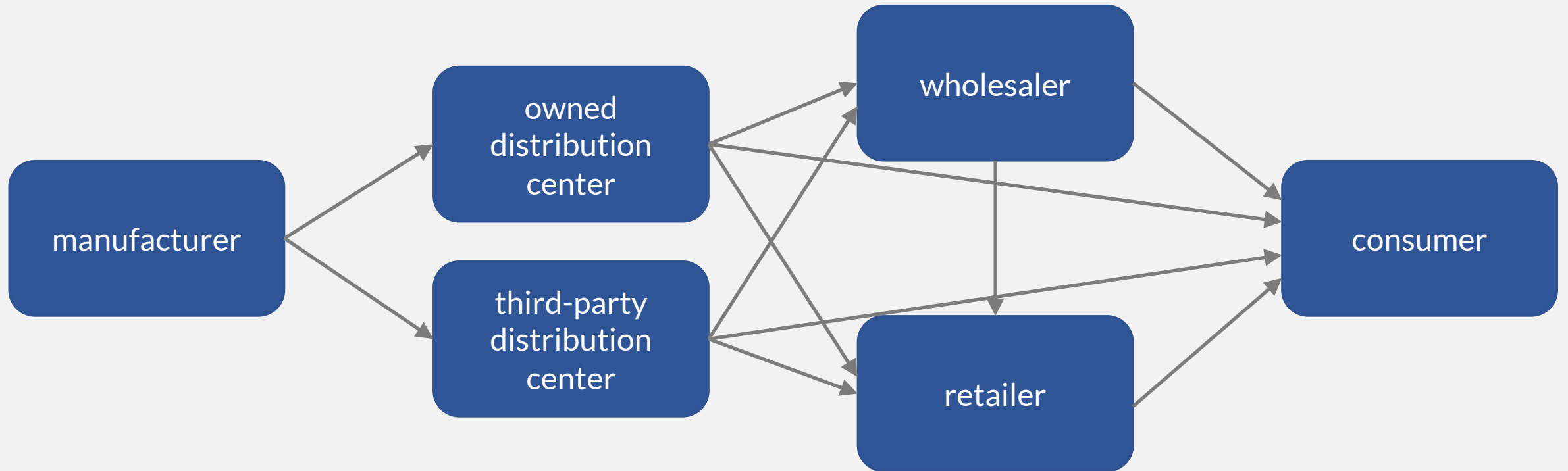
## So why does it matter?

- Quantity: likely well over a billion polybags used each year **just in the apparel industry**, representing millions of tons of plastic.
- Symbolism: the emblem of **single-use plastic packaging** in the apparel industry.
- Linearity: the vast majority of polybags **do not get recovered**.
- High-hanging (big) fruit: impossible to achieve **zero waste** operations without addressing polybags.

# What is the job we hire polybags to do?



# Where is the job we hire polybags to do?



# Exercise 1: understanding performance

What are the most important functions and characteristics of a polybag?

Which ones are the least possible to compromise?

Each participant places sticky dots (of any color) next to the **3** characteristics that you would prioritize.



# Can we simply eliminate polybags?

“We found that about 30 percent of the products were damaged beyond the point of being sellable”

- Matt Dwyer, Senior Director of Materials Innovation and Development, Patagonia



Can we simply  
eliminate polybags?

(not really)

# What *exactly* do you want to address?

- Plastic usage in and of itself
- Lack of circularity in polybags
- Attachment to fossil resources
- Visual significance to consumers
- Innovation for its own sake
- All of the above?



# Exercise 2: what do we really want to change?

What are the most important environmental characteristics that need improvement?

Which ones *matter* the most to your company or your customers?

Each participant places sticky dots (of any color) next to the **3** characteristics that you would prioritize.

# What *can* you do?

Reduce

Redesign

Recover



prAna developed the “roll-tie”  
method and system of shipping  
in a single master polybag

reduced polybag  
usage by  
**26,000 tons**  
in 2018






**30% less!**

paper-based  
“poly”bags are an  
emerging  
alternative





I'm green™ plant based polyethylene  
Made from sugarcane, a 100% renewable material  
100% recyclable

Outerknown partnered with Avery Dennison and Braskem to use polybags made of sugarcane-based PE, which is chemically indistinguishable from conventional PE.

polybags can be  
manufactured  
with 100%  
recycled content



# Bag to Better Program







Polybags collected at Columbia Sportswear's distribution center are recycled to become a portion of the 75% overall recycled content in new branded shopping bags.

GoLite uses certified  
compostable polybags  
made of cellulose-  
based bioplastic



only 9.7 percent of retailers surveyed have found a solution to recycling standard polybags, while 68.75 percent deemed them "extremely frustrating."

 **PLASTIC FILM**

MUST BE CLEAN & DRY (#2 & #4 ONLY, if labeled)

 Pallet Wrap & Stretch Wrap	 Packaging Wrap	 Case Wrap	 Individual Product Wrap	
 Dry Cleaning Bags	 Retail Bags	 Newspaper Bags	 Produce Bags	 Bread Bags
 Plastic Air Pillows (found in shipping boxes)	 Bubble Wrap	 Plastic Shipping Envelopes		

**UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS**

		
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**ADDITIONAL UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS**  
NO 6-pack Rings  
NO Frozen Food Bags  
NO...

source: <https://www.snewsnet.com/gear/golites-quest-sustainable-polybag>

A survey in Florida revealed that about 70 percent of consumers are unaware of how or where to recycle their bags and wrap.



Use **How2Recycle** to empower consumers to recycle more polybags at store drop-off collection



**How2Recycle**®

[www.How2Recycle.info](http://www.How2Recycle.info)

more innovations needed for reusable alternatives



## Exercise 3: evaluating design tradeoffs

Of these design strategies and system improvements, which ones resonate with you the most?

Which ones strike the right balance of **preserving the job** polybags are needed to do *and* **improving the sustainability characteristics** that you believe are the most important?

Each participant places sticky dots (of any color) next to the **3** pursuits that you would prioritize.

# Thank you!

starting now:

**lunch with exhibitors**

12:00pm – 1:00pm

Colorado Ballroom A-E



**SPC ADVANCE**

The Member Event