

Technical Description:
The Gillette Disposable Razor

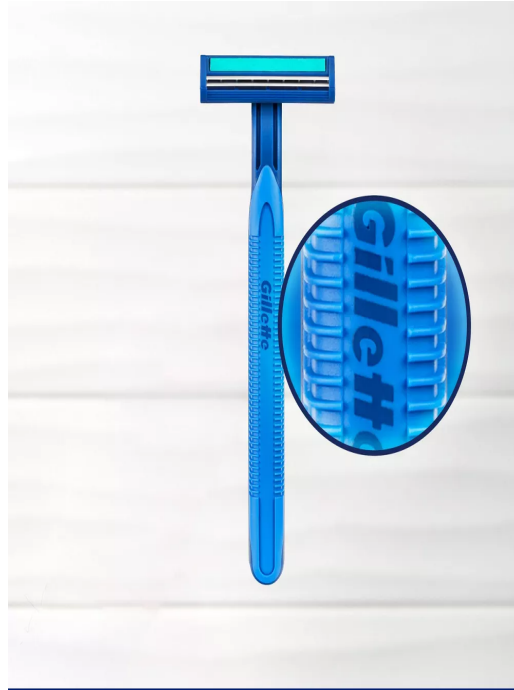


Figure 1: Gillette Disposable Razor (Target, n.d.)

Sofia Margulis

Department of English, City College of New York

ENGL 21007: Writing for Engineering

Prof. Pamela Stenberg

July 17, 2023

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Introduction

Popularity of Gillette Disposable Razor

Take a peek into someone's shower and you will generally find soap, a sponge and amongst other hygiene products you will also find a disposable razor. With the modernization of grooming, the disposable razor is a product that is used globally by male, female, and gender inclusive consumers to remove unwanted body hair. One of the most widely popular brands of razor blades is Gillette, "Global Razor Blade key players include Gillette(P&G), Energizer, BIC, Laser Razor Blades, etc. Global top four manufacturers hold a share over 80%" (More, 2022). "North America is the largest market, with a share over 30%, followed by Europe, and Asia-Pacific, both have a share about 55 percent" (More, 2022). While there are a variety of razors on the market, consumers are found to be repeatedly purchasing disposable razors. A big part of Gillette's profits come from these repeated consumers which was the inspiration to create the product initially.

History of Innovation

King Camp Gillette was the first manufacturer of a razor with disposable blades (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023). He started off as a traveling salesman but he had greater aspirations for himself to be an inventor. He was encouraged by an employer to create a disposable product to keep the consumer coming back, therefore creating a constant need for demand and supply ultimately setting himself up for a successful business path. In 1895, Gillette

was motivated by his own dull razor to create a better product. Rather than having to sharpen his own razor blade every time it got dull, “Gillette envisioned an inexpensive, double-edged blade that could be clamped over a handle, used until it was dull, and then discarded” (Advameg, Inc., n.d.). His next step was to find a toolmaker to create the product for him which proved to be difficult as many technical experts did not believe his idea would be possible and successful. It took him approximately 6 years to locate someone willing to get on board in creating a disposable razor that will be used for decades to come.

In 1901, Gillette found a partner willing to turn his vision into a reality. William Nickerson, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology-educated machinist, worked on creating sharpened thin steel blades that were attached to a handle for easy usage (Advameg, Inc., n.d.). While the process of creating the razor blade was put into action, Gillette opened the American Safety Razor Company to raise funds to cover the costs of manufacturing the disposable razors. In 1903, production began. “The renamed Gillette Safety Razor Company began advertising its product in October 1903, with the first ad appearing in Systems Magazine. The company sold “51 razor sets at \$5 each and an additional 168 blades--originally at 20 for \$1--that first year” (Advameg, Inc., n.d.). Gillette received the patent for the disposable razor a year after it started production in 1904 and by the end of the year, their sales had gone up to 90,000 razors and 12,400,000 blades.

Gillette had chosen to sell his company shares to John Joyce, one of the company’s bug investors, and stepped down from Gillette Safety Razor Company in 1913. Many historical events had increased the company’s profits such as World War 1, 1939 World Series, World War

2. “During World War I the U.S. government ordered 3.5 million razors and 36 million blades to supply all its troops.” Spang attributed Gillette's continuing success to the sports advertising program, and sports programs remained an important vehicle for Gillette advertising.

Technical Description

Purpose of the Gillette Disposable Razor

The Gillette disposable razor is a convenient, easy to use shaving tool that is widely used throughout the world in adaptation to modern grooming. Its primary and only purpose is to remove unwanted hair from the body to reveal smooth skin which can last up to a few days before one would grab the razor once again. It can be used anywhere on the body which adds to its convenience. It has an easy to grip handle that is hollowed and straight which then slightly curves at the top where it meets with the razor head. The curve allows easier usage by the individual creating an angle so there is less work put into shaving while also stabilizing the razor head. The razor head consists of 2 chromium coated blades and a lubrastrip. The lubrastrip helps with gliding the razor onto the skin while simultaneously protecting the skin from irritation. The purpose of having 2 blades is to get a closer shave which assists in the outcome of a smooth shave.

Components of the Gillette Disposable Razor



Figure 3: Razor Handle (Target, n.d.)

The soft ultra grip handle is the component used for an individual to hold the razor. They're made to be gripped comfortably, preventing injuries from occurring. The handle is made from polypropylene which is a type of plastic which is pliable allowing the grooves and curved top to be formed easily.



Figure 4: Non Pivoting Razor Head (Target, n.d.)

The fixed, non pivoting razor head is the part of the razor which connects the handle to the rest of the components of the razor. The handle curves at a slight angle as it meets the razor

head to provide an easier shaving experience. It allows the user to hold the razor more comfortably and avoid straining while shaving. On the non pivoting razor head you will find 2 blades and a lubrastrip attached.

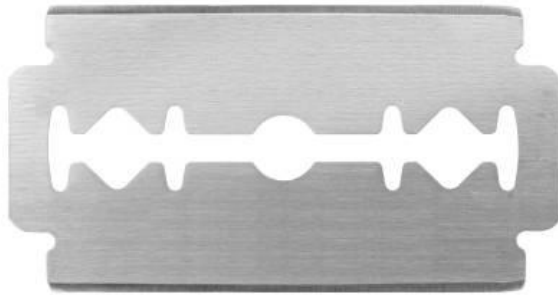


Figure 5: Chromium Coated Blade (Redmal, n.d.)

The 2 chromium coated blades are the most important part of the razor hence the blades being the inspiration of the disposable razor. “Razor blade steel is a martensitic stainless steel with a composition of chromium between 12 and 14.5%, a carbon content of approximately 0.6%, and the remainder iron and trace elements” (Wikimedia Foundation, 2021). Not only the composition, but also the shape is important to the blade. They are supposed to be flat rolled coils with a width of 23mm or 0.91 inches to ensure the sharpest, most effective blade.



Figure 6: Water Activated Lubrastrip (Target, n.d.)

The water activated lubrastrip contains aloe in addition to many other chemical ingredients. Its functional purpose of the lubrastrip is to provide an easier glide for the razor while shaving. It feels soft on the skin which can help the skin from reacting from the harsh razor blade.

Conclusion

The Gillette razor was an invention made with the purposes to improve individual's lives and create a profitable business. A disposable razor offers its customer's convenience, safety, and affordability which were the intentions of the product initially. The market has grown since the beginning of its invention in the different kinds of razors available to its consumers, including expanding in advertising to the male and female market. Although society is leaning towards a greener future, disposable razors are not considered environmentally friendly, however there are other options of disposable cartridge razors where only the razor head is disposed of. The market of Gillette razors is constantly improving and will continue to be a staple in bathrooms and toiletry bags!

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Self-Reflection

I would say writing is one of my biggest academic weaknesses and I strongly dislike doing it since I have a hard time improving. In an engineering major, there are very few opportunities to improve your writing skills since most of the classes are math based. I do appreciate a good challenge and being given the opportunity to improve my skills whenever possible. Throughout the process of writing this essay I got the chance to work on my strong suits in writing which I believe are research, organization, and formatting. I also was forced to work on my weaker skills including grammar, sentence structure, and a wide vocabulary. Additionally I have never previously used the APA citation format and this essay was the first time I had used it. There were lots of details and technicalities to pay attention to while writing which took some learning and adjustment in comparison to my usual writing assignments. I had used material that we learnt in class and Easy Bib to follow the APA format for my paper.

This was also my first time writing a technical paper and I did find this type of writing quite interesting and informative. I do think this style of writing will be beneficial to my career in the long run which makes me feel like this assignment has more purpose in my degree in comparison to previous English courses. The material we are learning in application to scientific writing has intrigued interest to invest my time in improving my writing skills. As an engineer, I used to believe I would only need to focus on my math skills and I am starting to see the importance of strong writing skills. They can be very useful for various writing opportunities such as a lab report or writing a scientific article or even a scientific journal. It is teaching me how to critically think about various details of writing such as my audience, my writing style, the language used and many other important aspects. I look forward to continuing learning and improving my skills!