

Project Abstract

Looking at all the issues within theatre, I want to investigate ways to make it more sustainable. This made me think about what is used a lot but is only used once then thrown away once it has been used. I landed on the amount of tape that is used in the industry.

The main tape that gets used in theatre are electrical tape, gaffer tape, fluorescent tape and glow tape. These are all used around the stage in different places, and you don't think about how wasteful they are. They are also not recyclable, so any tape that is used will just end up in landfill.

I want to use this project to bring awareness and find other methods that are more sustainable and less wasteful. I will do this by researching into things that are commonly used in theatre that could replace tape. I will also conduct a survey to give to my peers to find and industry professionals to find out if they know of any other alternatives to using tape as this will tell me if people are aware of what could be used instead of tape. I will also research what alternatives there are that could potentially be used instead of tape.

Pitching the Solution

My idea is to try and reduce the amount of tape used in the theatre industry. I feel that it is a big problem to the environment that so much tape just gets thrown into landfill. This is especially prominent in receiving theatres. Having worked at a receiving theatre over the summer I was able to see, due to the amount of shows they have coming in and out, the amount of tape used for each different show.

Some alternatives that I currently know of include Velcro, rope and reusable cable ties. These can be used in different ways but can also be used for the same thing. I would mainly put Velcro around the cables when they are not being used. This way they are kept nice and coiled without having to use a piece of tape. Although you would have to initially buy the Velcro then put it on each cable to replace the tape.

The rope could be used to tie the extra cable to the rig as long as people are taught how to tie knots so that it is safe for slightly heavier cables. But it could also be used to coil the cables. Having a basic length of rope that could be long enough the loop around the Scaff-bars in the rig as well as the cables would make this really useful. I feel that you might be able to use rope as part of the props table. You could tie smaller bits of rope together to create the spaces that is big enough to fit the props in.

Reusable cable ties can be used again to keep cables coiled but also to keep a few cables together if there is a few running across the stage or wings. They could also be used in the rig to hold cables out of the way. These are just a few options that I have been able to think of before doing any initial research. They may be a big cost in the beginning but once all of the materials are paid for you won't need to buy any more tape as most things are being held up by more sustainable products.

To also make people more willing to change what they use in theatres, I will be collecting 3 months' worth of tape from university and what I can collect at a pantomime that I will be working on. This will prove how much just gets thrown in to landfill.

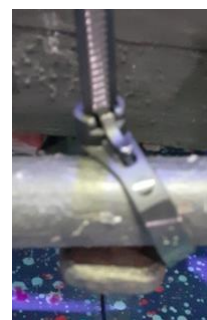
Research

As part of my primary research, I will be collecting as much tape as I can over the next 3 months to help prove how much actually gets wasted. Having a visual aid to show what 3 months' worth of tape can look like, it should get people to realise that this is an issue that needs to be resolved.

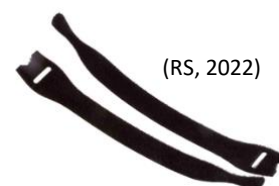
As secondary research according to (Pierce, 2018) "Electrical tapes are typically made with a polyvinylchloride (PVC) backing and a non-corrosive rubber-based adhesive." The mix of the two is what makes it not recyclable. This is proven by (Gallagher, 2021) "Traditional plastic adhesive tapes are not recyclable. These plastic tapes can contain PVC or polypropylene, which on their own could be recycled with other plastic films but are too thin and small to be separated and processed as tape." This tells us that electrical tape is not recyclable and due to the nature of it can only be used once.

What are the alternatives to using tape.

While I was working on a panto, I came across the use of a reusable cable ties. We used it as shown in the picture. We could have used tape but due to the length of the run we thought it best to keep the bar stable using the reusable cable tie. This has saved about thirty-seven pieces of gaffer tape that would have just been wasted. They are also not too expensive as (cableties online, 2022) states that "1 pack of 100 is £1.14 per pack" this amount slowly decreases as you buy more packs with more cable ties in them. I think this is well worth buying as they would only need to be bought once and you will have enough to cover all of your cables.



Some cables that I have coiled have some Velcro already attached to the cable. These are specifically made for wrapping around different objects. These can be permanently on the cable as there is a loop at one end. The image to the right shows you want they look like. Having looked at multiple different websites I found that on (cableties, 2022) you can get 750 for anywhere between £73.64 to £208.15 depending on what width and length you get. The lengths range from 150mm to 300mm. the widths range from 20mm to 25mm. This will cover a range of different cables as the longer the Velcro the more cable you can keep together.



Another alternative is rope. This looks to be a more costly as you can get 100 meters of rope for £70 on (Rope services UK, 2022). This is because you don't get as much product for what you pay for with the other options.

Overall I think there is definitely a better reusable alternative to using tape in the theatre.

To find out what other people in the theatre industry think about the wastage of tape I will conduct a survey with these questions to both my classmates and professionals in the theatre industry.

1. Do you use tape of any kind in theatre? Yes no
2. Do you think the amount of tape used is wasteful? yes no
3. Are you willing to use alternative reusable materials to tape? Yes no
4. Do you know of any alternatives to tape? Yes no
5. If yes what alternatives are available? Box for short list of items
6. If they were as easy to access as tape, would you use it more often? Yes no

I'm hoping to find out with the questions if people who work in theatre understand how wasteful tape can be, but also if they know what alternatives that are out there to replace the amount of tape used. If the sustainable products were more accessible or mainstream if they would want to use them more frequently.

Survey Results

After creating the survey, I have received 18 responses. This has been a mix of fellow classmates, university actors and professional technicians who work in the theatre industry. This has slightly swayed some of the answers to the questions, but it has given a clear view on what people in the industry think about how much tape is wasted.

The first question had 88.89% of people said yes and 11.11% said no. Clearly showing that I have 2 actors put of 18 people answering the survey.

The second question had 72.22% of people thought that it is wasteful with 27.78% thinking it's not that wasteful.

The third question had 88.89% of people willing to use more reusable alternatives and 11.11% not wanting to the alternatives.

The fourth question had 44.44% of people knowing of alternatives and 55.56% of people not knowing of any alternatives. This means people need to be educated on what sustainable products are out there.

The fifth question had the 44.44% of people who knew of alternatives to list what they knew. I had 3 different people mention Velcro, a couple of people say paper tape, two people say zip ties, one for rope and rubber ties, someone mentioned wrapping the cable around itself. I then had washable pens and liquid chalk that could be used to spike the stage. There are a few different ideas of what could replace tape in the different forms of how it is used.

The sixth question had 94.44% of people willing to use them if they were easier to access and 5.56% not will to as they don't think that it is impacting the environment that much.

So overall I feel that this has been a useful study to find out what people are really thinking about if they can see how much tape is wasted but also showing that people are willing to use the alternatives as long as they are as available as tape is.

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