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How to Bring a Product to Market: License Someone's Idea

Posted by Aliza on January 21st, 2008

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I thought it would be interesting to hear from women who started their companies that sell products. How did they find the product or develop the product idea? How did they bring it to market?

Lisa Jarrett is president of BabyPlus Company in Indianapolis. She became the sole manufacturer for the BabyPlus Prenatal Education

System that she licensed from the doctor who developed it. The system is a patented prenatal curriculum designed to strengthen a child's long-term learning capabilities.

Lisa has 7 children: step-children Jennifer, Jay and Casey and bio children Madeline: 15; Olivia: 13; Michael: 11, Lilligrace: 3.

Q: How did you come up with the idea for your product?

A: My husband is a physician, a reproductive endocrinologist, and was reading a medical journal in 1990. He came across an article about Dr. Brent Logan's work that caught his attention. The associated clinical trial compared developing babies introduced to three different types of auditory sounds and the cognitive influence of each: a curriculum utilizing simple rhythmic sounds similar to a mother's heartbeat, a classical musical piece, and a control group with simple white noise.

My husband was a Psychology major at Princeton before he attended medical school, and has always had an interest in early learning. This trial demonstrated that children who were introduced to the first curriculum were more alert and active as infants and continued to hit developmental milestones earlier throughout childhood. Later in life, these children were strong learners and more school ready.

The Clinical Linguistic Auditory Milestone Scale and the Vineland Social Maturity Scale were the developmental assays utilized. This curriculum was created by Dr. Brent Logan, a developmental psychologist. My husband was intrigued by the article and obtained the actual curriculum (cassette tapes back then) from Dr. Logan. We utilized the curriculum during my subsequent four pregnancies. I actually loaned out the curriculum to friends and continued noticing the multiple tangible benefits in our own children.

In 1998, I saw Dr. Logan speaking about his curriculum on The Learning Channel and realized BabyPlus was still hard to find on the commercial market. I contacted Dr. Logan and after approx. one year, I decided to purchase the global licensing rights to BabyPlus and became committed to starting a company to educate expectant parents on the benefits of the BabyPlus Prenatal Education System.

Q: What were the main steps you took to getting it to market?

A: Initially, we changed the product from cassette tapes to a simple single unit that contains all 16 audio lessons. This unit is light and fits easily into an accompanying fanny pouch. It is very easy and safe for a pregnant mom to wear and use twice a day for one hour at a time.

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We created an educational website that was supported by scientific principles, but not so "science-y" that it was hard for expectant parents to understand. We then went about creating literature and materials that detailed the system, the benefits for a child, the professional support we continue to receive, and the commercial availability of our product.

We found that the internet provided us a great opportunity for explaining BabyPlus. We can now be found on [Babycenter.com](#), [Babiesrus.com](#), [Amazon.com](#), and many others. Our first U.S. store distribution was A Pea in the Pod and Mimi Maternity stores. We have now sold BabyPlus in over 60 countries worldwide

Q: What was your biggest challenge getting it to market?

A: The biggest challenge for us is that we stand alone in the prenatal market. We are not a toy, nor a medical device, we are an educational curriculum meant to benefit a prenatal child's postnatal development.

Scientists, educators, criminologists, physicians, and nurse educators (our company is a member of AWHONN, the Association of Women's Healthcare Obstetrical and Neonatal Nurses) agree that both physical and cognitive development of a child begins during the prenatal months. Optimal environmental conditions, as they relate to a child's long-term development, should not just encompass the 0 to 3 years, but the prenatal to 3 year timeframe. Our company is single-handedly creating and expanding an entirely new area of prenatal care and practice.

Q: What is the main thing women with product ideas should do before taking a product to market?

A: My simple advice here is that the creation of your business must include great and undying passion for what you are trying to accomplish!

Tips for Licensing Someone's Product Idea:

- Research the validity of the license and the licensor
- Solicit help from an experienced license attorney
- Explore the license parameters of any similar product licenses, so as not to 're-create the wheel'
- Understand fully the financial impact on your business of the ongoing license
- Re-negotiate the license when necessary if your business model changes