

SUCCESS STORY

From Innovation to Commercialization and Beyond - Mandy Haberman

Inspired by her own child suffering from stickler's syndrome, graphic designer Mandy Haberman designed a feeder for babies with sucking difficulties. The Haberman feeder was patented in the UK in 1984 and Mandy Haberman initially set up her own company to commercialize the product worldwide before granting manufacturing and distribution license. The Product's success was significant, though the nature of the product limited its distribution to a very narrow market.

A few years later, Mandy Haberman, inspired this time by a friend's child spilling blackcurrent juice over a cream coloured carpet, decided to set out to design a leak-proof cup that seals between sips and created the anywayup (R) in 1992, the first of uses a slit valve to control the flow of liquid through the spout of trainer cup. Additional patents both for the UK and overseas were later filed and granted.

Prototypes of the innovative product were offered for licensing to 18 companies concerned with the manufactures of products for infants. Although the response was enthusiastic, for various reasons, no license was issued, therefore, in 1996, Mandy Haberman decided to join forces with a Cardiff-based makreting company that specialized in marketing innovative products and the Anywayup (R) cup started to sell in unprecedented numbers (a rate of 60,0000 a week). Shortly after, a US company signed an exclusive USA licensign agreement to manufacture and sell the product under the Tumble Mates brand. Over 10 million cups are now sold each year worldwide.

As is often the case, the Anywayup (R) cup risked of being a victim of its own success. Just 18 months after the product was launched, Mandy Haberman discovered that one of the UK companies she had initially approached for licensing was making a very similar product to the Anywayup (R) cup. Mandy haberman decided to sue the other company and won the legal bathle. An injuction preventing further infringement of the patent was ordered and the appeal was abandoned shortly thereafter as an out of court settlement was reached.

Over the years, Mandy Haberman and the Anywayup (R) cup have won numerous invention awards including the British Female inventor of the Year award in 2000 a Gold Medal at the salon international des invenstions in Geneva as well as the UK's top design industry awards. Today mandy haberman is a succesful entrepreneur and has taken an active role in policy-making acting as adviser to the UK governmetn and the Patent Office on Intellectual Property Matters.

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