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Success Story

Remarkable Pencils Ltd

Background

Remarkable Pencils Ltd was set up by Ed Douglas Miller to design and manufacture a pencil made from one recycled polystyrene vending cup. The Remarkable pencil was brought to market following a two-year development process, and was a Millennium Product. Remarkable now produce a wide range of recycled stationery products. The company produced licensed merchandise for the Millennium Dome and are committed to promoting recycling to as wide an audience as possible.

- *"... It's much more mass market, consumer driven products."*
- *"... Recycled is the sole agenda to the whole thing and that gives us our USP ..."*

Profile

Established	1996
For-profit	Yes
Turnover	£1,000,000
Employees	15
Products	Stationery
Recyclates	Various plastics and rubber tyres
Annual volume of recyclates	50 tonnes of tyres; 4 million plastic cups; 100 tonnes of paper & card; 20 tonnes of computer printer materials
Product recycled content	High to 100%
Post-consumer waste content	High

Products

The Remarkable pencil is made from one recycled polystyrene vending cup. The company produces a wide range of retail and promotional stationery products, all made from recycled and sustainable sources, including mouse mats, pencil cases, rulers, notebooks, pens and coloured pencils.

Recycled materials

Remarkable use a number of post-consumer recycled materials:

- Polystyrene vending cups (HIPS)
- Rubber tyres
- Plastic computer printer parts
- Paper and board

Marketing & promotion

Remarkable serve a number of distinct markets. Retail stockists range from major supermarket chains to small independent shops. Standard products are also sold through educational and business catalogues. Promotional products are either personalised by Remarkable themselves, or sourced 'unbranded' by trade customers for their clients. Each market is approached differently. Remarkable are now seeking to break into mainstream markets by developing their brand.

- *"... each customer in those different sectors has specific requirements ..."*

Lessons for success

- Market knowledge: *"... make sure you know who you're selling to, and how you can build the reputation and the link back to you and your company ..."*
- Determination: *"...just driving your idea forward and driving the whole thing so that it can actually happen ..."*
- Design: *"... Design is integral to the whole thing, it's not just the fact that it is recycled."*
- Process innovation: *"The whole process and manufacturing was, inverted commas, 'invented' to suit this process. ..."*
- Supply: *"... we have now built up ... key suppliers who are able to give us the materials that we want, when we want and how we want it ..."*
- Consumer demand: *"... I think the consumer actually wants recycled products and feels better on the back of buying them. ..."*

Current challenges

- Promoting recycling: *"... to energise people into recycling more waste materials ..."*
- Outsourcing production: *"... For us to develop a whole manufacturing network within the UK is far more attractive than to actually manufacture everything in-house ourselves."*

Further issues

- Product story: *"...one cup makes one pencil. People have a tangible recognition with what the waste was to what the product is ..."*

Contact

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