



QuickPitch™ Case study

Background

The QuickPitch™ tent design is the brainchild of former Bournemouth University undergraduate Franziska Conrad. Her lightweight pop-up tent features spring-loaded, self-erecting poles that enable it to be pitched in less than one minute.

The concept was originally showcased at the annual Festival of Design & Innovation, proving very popular with visitors.

Following a detailed market assessment, Bournemouth University's Innovation and Commercialisation Team helped Franziska to prepare patent and registered community design applications.

A potential licensee was identified in the form of Gelert Limited. Founded in 1975, this British company specialises in the manufacture and distribution of outdoor consumer products, most notably in the camping and trekking sectors.

An exclusive manufacture and distribution license was agreed, and a successful product launch led to strong sales growth throughout 2007/8. QuickPitch™ would go on to win the accolades of 'Coolest Festival Tent' by The Guardian newspaper and 'Best Festival Product' by The Gadget Show, Channel 5.

The idea

The tent was conceived as a sustainable shelter for weekend festival goers. Franziska had in mind easy handling as well as the waste aspect of festival camping, with 10000s of tents being discarded at the end of music festivals every year.

The idea was to design a shelter that was light weight, cost effective and easy to set up by a single person in any weather.

There was enough space for up to 2 people and a little storage space for a small bag and shoes.



The design process

After extensive market research, looking into UK music festivals and visitor numbers, tent manufacturers and existing 1-2 men camping and festival solutions as well as attending a couple of festivals herself, Franziska identified that setting up the tent quickly and pain-free would be the main feature of the new design.

A laundry basket served as inspiration for the pop-up mechanism.

The design was to have an integrated spring loaded light weight pole structure which allowed a single person to erect the tent in seconds by simply taking it out of its bag and letting it go.

A single skin membrane seemed sufficient considering the festival weekend use of the tent and also to keep the weight and price of the product down.

Sustainability factors in mind, research was conducted into alternative materials and coatings, bio-composites for the pole structure, recycling and marketing schemes in the UK to promote the product and appropriately dispose of it at the end of its life.

The shape was determined through sketches and drawings and then modelled in 3D. From there paper patterns were produced, which Franziska used to manufacture 3 working prototypes. She had to settle for common polyester tent fabric for the membrane; due to lack of a sustainable alternative at the time and spring steel wire was used for the pole structure. The prototypes were not weather proof due to lack of coating and seam taping.

Commercialisation and IP protection

The commercialisation team at Bournemouth University helped protect the intellectual property rights of the tent design.

To date Two European companies copied and launched their own QuickPitch™ tents in an attempt to steal market share. The Centre for Research & Enterprise has an experienced in-house legal services team which successfully enforced Franziska's intellectual property rights.

Compensation was secured for lost sales and legal costs.

Current Affairs

As one of its most successful product lines, QuickPitch™ has contributed towards Gelert's significant recent growth. Company turnover is up to in excess of £25m and the business now employs 150 staff at its headquarters in Porthmadog, North Wales.

The original QuickPitch™ has been further developed into an innovative range of tents with various colour, style, size and feature options. A double-skin membrane structure has also been developed, protected and licensed to Gelert. This range includes the QuickPitch™ Revolve, Quest, Evolution II, SS+ and Elite.