

Getting Fully Empty

MAN'S CAP SYSTEM HELPS GET EVERY DROP FROM FOOD AND OTHER CONTAINERS BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN

BURGERS AND dogs hot off the grill. Table is set. You're about to get the condiments from the fridge.

Oh, no! You have less than an inch of product left in your ketchup, mustard, and mayo squeeze bottles. Now you must invert the bottles and wait while your dinner gets cold.

Enter the Flip-it Bottle-Emptying Kit™. Although you should do a better job with that grocery list, you won't have to fret about missing these few items at the supermarket or pharmacy.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): How did the Flip-it® Bottle-Emptying Kit come about? When did you get that “aha!” moment?

Steven Epstein (SE): One winter night in 2014, I went to pump Lubriderm lotion and the pump sputtered and quit. Like most people would, I flipped the bottle and wedged it into the corner of my vanity to keep it from falling over.

The next night, I went to get the lotion but naturally I had to remove the pump to access the lotion. The first problem was, “Where do I put the wet, sticky pump that isn't a place I'm going to have to clean afterwards?”

Answer (you guessed it): in the sink. I dealt with using the lotion, careful not to turn the bottle back right side up in doing so, and cleaned up the messy sink.

As I was re-installing the pump (because there was still an inch of lotion in the bottle), I realized “I'm going to have to go through this over and over ... there's got to be a better way!” Voila—I had the “aha!” moment and Flip-It! was born.

EGT: Exactly how does it work? Does it fit all different-size caps?

SE: Flip-It is super simple. It harnesses the greatest renewable source of energy of all: gravity. By standing bottles upside down on a secure base, gravity brings the remaining product to the bottle's opening where the user simply pulls open a valve and squeezes out what they need ... no more, no less. No more shaking or pounding, balancing acts, or cutting open.

I know from my background in contract manufacturing that bottle threads, with few exceptions, are standard around the world ... the same way green means “go” and red means “stop” wherever you are, threads on bottles follow industry standards. This allows Flip-It! to function anywhere on the planet.

Having said that, of all bottle threads, there are really four sizes that are the most used, and those sizes are in every set we sell. As time went on, we received requests for the next two smaller sizes down (think travel size and hotel amenity items).

“Flip-It! harnesses the greatest renewable source of energy of all: gravity.” —STEVEN EPSTEIN



We also created an adapter to fit arguably the most common non-standard thread of all, that of Nivea®, Eucerin® and Aquaphor®, all made by the same company in Europe. People who use those brands love them, and we're happy to provide them with a way to get every drop they paid for!

An important word about sustainability: Only about 10 percent of bottles actually get recycled, the rest ending up in landfills and oceans. When people dispose of bottles with remnant product inside (soap, lotion, adhesive, oil, etc..) those remnants are free to leach out into the environment in the form of pollution.

For the increasing number of municipalities requiring residents to rinse out their bottles, Flip-It! reduces the amount of water (another precious resource) required and prevents the creation of a liquid waste stream.

EGT: Have you ever invented anything before? Tell us about your background.

SE: I grew up in a family manufacturing/distribution business, the youngest of four boys, and started working when I was 12.

In college, I became a helicopter pilot and am an ATP (airline transport pilot). I responded to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 by piloting a helicopter filled with medicine and food to Haiti from New Jersey, back and forth three times.

Yes, I've invented other things—none as important as the Flip-It!, though: a one-handed baby bottle feeder to allow the feeder to have their other hand free, a puzzle that taught young kids the QWERTY keyboard layout, and other things.

EGT: Where are you manufacturing? Any communication difficulties or quality control issues?

SE: Flip-It! is manufactured in China. I am fortunate to have started a relationship with a custom packaging vendor, Jansy Packaging, which had the design and manufacturing resources to help me prototype and tweak the design into the product now on the market. Thanks to their

support, we've had an excellent supply chain and no quality issues.

EGT: What about finding a competent factory to create the molds? Do you need to use an FDA-grade plastic?

SE: Disposable “unit tool” molds, designed to mimic production molds but at a fraction of the cost (and durability), were made first in order to tweak the designs. Once we had that figured out, production molds were made very quickly and put into service.

The original plastic we used was somewhat brittle and a few customers complained that if dropped, the legs of the tripod were prone to breaking off. We satisfied those customers with replacement goods but changed the plastic to something more pliable, which eliminated the issue completely. Because we suggest using Flip-It! on food items, we have to use virgin plastic that has been tested to be BPA free, food grade, and dishwasher-safe.

EGT: Because this product comes in contact with food, what type of quality control tests are performed?

SE: Claims about Flip-It! (food grade safe, BPA free and dishwasher safe) have been tested and verified on several occasions by independent third-party labs, Intertek and SGS. They are the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification companies.

Their product performance testing ensures our product claims are compliant with the



After standing the bottle upside down on a secure base, the remaining product drops to the opening where the user pulls open a valve and squeezes out what is needed.

appropriate regulations and supported by scientific evidence.

EGT: Please tell us about your experience on “Shark Tank.”

SE: I had applied twice prior to being accepted. The third time I bit the bullet and went to an open call in New York City in May 2018 and stood in line for hours outside, then hours inside, to deliver my 2-minute elevator pitch.

Two excruciating months went by with no contact from “Shark Tank,” until one day in early July an email popped up congratulating me on moving forward in the process. I literally jumped for joy, fist pumped, and shouted out. I was super excited.

I spent months preparing, practicing and focusing. I was not pleased with the outcome (no deal) and certainly not pleased with the edit, which left most of my message of saving the earth on the cutting room floor—all making me look less than competent.

I had not done \$2.5 million in sales nor appeared on QVC 65 times by making excuses; I did it by working hard, working smart, and having a great product that appeals to people, is affordably priced, and solves a real problem. But such is reality TV.

EGT: What advice do you have on developing a food-grade product?

SE: It’s important to have 100 percent faith and confidence in your manufacturing partner, and to budget at least \$10,000 to cover testing costs. ☺

Details: flipitcap.com

Books by **Edie Tolchin** (egt@edietolchin.com) include “Fanny on Fire” (fannyonfire.com) and “Secrets of Successful Inventing.” She has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000. Edie has owned EGT Global Trading since 1997, assisting inventors with product safety issues and China manufacturing.



2 Critical Steps to getting your NEW PRODUCT “out there”

1 GET IT MADE

Contact Edie Tolchin – “The Sourcing Lady” (SM) for sourcing, China manufacturing, product safety issues, packaging assistance, quality control, production testing, final shipment inspections, freight arrangements, import services and delivery to your door!

2 GET A WEBSITE!

Contact Ken Robinson – While your order is being manufactured, you need to start working on your WEB PRESENCE! Get people talking about your product on Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+), get good search engine placement (SEO)!

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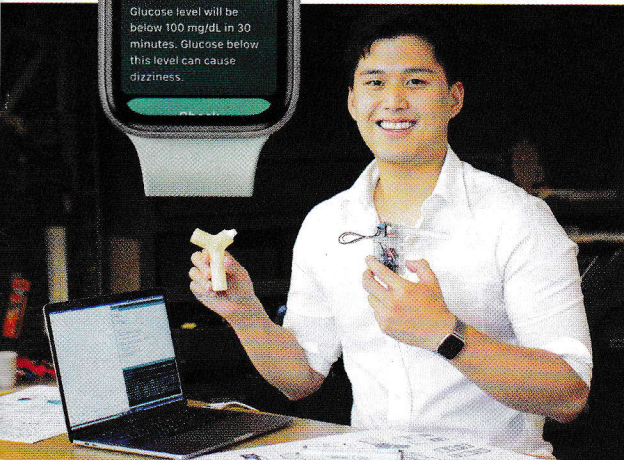
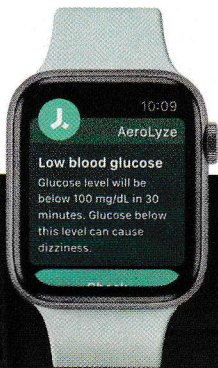
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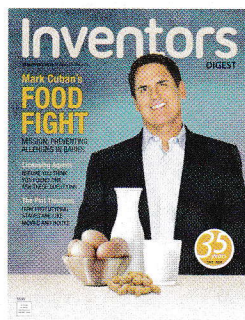
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Billionaire entrepreneur Mark Cuban; photo by ABC | Bob D'Amico

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