

Conquering Mount Walmart

VISION, PERSISTENCE DRIVE SERIAL INVENTOR JOHN MACK

BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN

THE FORCE and motivation behind starting and growing a business have always impressed me. As our subject, John Mack says, “This entrepreneurial journey isn’t an overnight instant success. You won’t be sipping Dom Pérignon and pulling up in your Lambo anytime soon. I guarantee that!”

Successfully navigating the mystery of selling to Walmart is an amazing feat. Here are the many interesting triumphs of serial inventor John Mack, and the characteristics it takes to reach one’s goals.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): Tell us about your two new, innovative products, the Multi MIT Universal Series glove and the i-Flo “Just Huck It” winter glove. Why are they different from other texting gloves?

John Mack (JM): The difference between my glove and every other glove on the market: The patented Middle, Index and Thumb (MIT) fingers have retracting tips on both gloves that are held back by Velcro tabs. This feature allows the user easy access to their (middle, index and thumb) fingertips for any activity that requires tactile feeling, such as small piece handling or using a touchscreen device without compromising full hand protection. The Universal/Utility glove has a variety of applications: mechanical, tactical, fishing, gardening ... the list goes on!

The Multi MIT Universal Series glove has retracting tips, held back by Velcro tabs, that give the user easy access for any number of activities that require tactile feeling.



The i-Flo winter glove eliminates the days of losing your glove while taking that important selfie on the ski lift. The glove has a separate patented feature that sets it apart from the rest: a two-piece magnet system that connects the glove to a magnet affixed on the zipper of any garment. This allows the user to easily keep track of their gloves upon removal. A small magnet sewn into the wrists of both gloves attaches to a magnet that is affixed on the zipper of a coat or backpack. This feature allows the user to hang the wet, bulky gloves from the zipper of a coat or backpack and ensures the gloves won’t be lost or left behind.

It’s a well-known fact that the texting gloves currently on the market don’t work very well, and it is all too common that the user pulls off the glove to text. My gloves allow the user to perform many different tasks that require the precision of tactile feeling without compromising full hand protection.

EGT: Where do the names come from?

JM: Honestly, Multi MIT was created from a brainstorming session with my girlfriend, and i-Flo was my idea. I-Flo was a name that seemed to encompass my enthusiasm for the action sport lifestyle.

EGT: Please tell us about your background.

JM: I had a business that manufactured and sold a line of antenna figures called “Korrupt Kittens.” They were little plastic stripper dolls that spun around the antenna of a vehicle. This is where I got my feet wet with manufacturing and selling a product. It was my real-world schooling on business. It was great at the time and an incredible learning experience for my current business.

EGT: And your other products?

JM: The Max Rax is a garage rail hanging system that uses the existing garage rails to hang anything you want off the garage floor. They hold 50 lbs., and I currently sell them to Walmart and other retailers. Yes, they are patented.



“I packed my bags, loaded my 1984 RV and took off on an extended road trip ... determined to come home with names and orders from Walmart! And you know what? I did!” —JOHN MACK

Multi MIT was created during a brainstorming session Mack had with his girlfriend.

Another product is a line of all-purpose bags (two styles: canvas tote and nylon gym bag) that have a clear, plastic sleeve on the side or top of the bags where you insert your hand-written goal for the day. The idea is to encourage people to write down their goals and achieve them, because an unwritten goal is just a wish. Reading your written message or goal every time you pick up your bag is a helpful reminder of where you want to go! These bags come with a set of “Daily Goals” pad of paper and can be purchased separately when the pad runs out.

EGT: How and when did you first approach Walmart, and how long have you been supplying Walmart?

JM: When I finished the idea of the unique line of gloves, I realized I had a product that is so versatile that selling to a large retailer made sense. My plan was to start selling in my own backyard, then take off to other states. I did some research, and off I went selling to my local Walmarts—and to my surprise, I was shut down! I was told no. I was told I needed an appointment. I was told I was “doing it wrong.”

I sat in my office and felt defeated. I was discussing this with my girlfriend and she said, “When did someone saying no ever stop you? Take a grass-roots effort. Get names of all the managers that are interested and go that route.” I

I have never been much of a rule follower, so I packed my bags, loaded my 1984 RV and took off on an extended road trip to visit Walmarts in Utah, Nevada and California. I was determined to come

home with names and orders from Walmart! And you know what? I did!

I began calling store managers, setting up meetings to present my line of gloves. If the store manager feels they will fit into their store or market, they will fill out an item submission form for you. I drove thousands of miles, meeting with store after store to amass a huge amount of these item submission forms.

I have been a supplier for Walmart for four years now, and I still travel from store to store and market to market. Walmart is like no other retailer, and they are outstanding to work with.

EGT: Tell us about your patent process for the two glove products.

JM: I did the working patents myself. I learned that patenting a product is a straightforward process, starting at USPTO.gov. There is a great deal of information on that website that helped me.

EGT: Are you selling these products only to Walmart, or to other retail? On your website?

JM: A large portion of my sales comes from Walmart. However, I am selling to HomeDepot.com, Ace Hardware and True Value.

EGT: How are the products packaged, and who designed your packaging?

JM: I created the packaging specifically to highlight the feature of the gloves. The packaging is a cardboard hand inserted into the glove to showcase

the unique feature of the middle, index and thumb fingers retracted. It looks pretty damn cool.

EGT: Where are you manufacturing?

JM: I manufacture everything in China. I have been importing things from China for 15 years, and it's an ongoing learning process. What I know is to always expect the unexpected. The bottom line is this: You get what you pay for.

EGT: Tell us about your experience with the "Entrepreneur Elevator Pitch" show and what has resulted from it.

JM: It was great experience. The production company is friendly and helpful. I went in prepared and knocked everything out of the park. I secured unlimited funding and advisory roles from some unique people. The show has led me to this interview with *Inventors Digest* and to Entrepreneur Media, who are going to feature an article about my story with Walmart. The more media coverage of what I'm doing brings a larger reach of product awareness of Multi MIT and i-Flo.

EGT: Any advice for novice inventors?

JM: You'd better learn how to be self-taught, develop some grit, grow a set, and develop some huge

self-confidence! This entrepreneurial journey isn't an overnight instant success. You won't be sipping Dom Perignon and pulling up in your Lambo anytime soon. I guarantee that! You will have door after door slammed in your face. You will be told "no" more times than you will be able to count. If you don't have thick skin, you will fold up like a lawn chair. Simply put, Rome wasn't built in a day and neither is a successful business.

EGT: Will you be adding any other products to your line? Anything else?

JM: I am providing a service to help introduce products from other companies to Walmart for a fee. So far, I have had several companies hire me to introduce their products to Walmart. If you have an idea for a product or a finished product, please feel free to reach out to us. ☺

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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!

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2 GET A WEBSITE!

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