

Order is Restored

MAKEUP BAG ENDS THE BLACK HOLE OF SEARCHING FOR SCATTERED COSMETICS

BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN

A WOMAN can never have enough makeup, except when it's scattered all around one's powder room—or worse, gathered from said powder room and strewn into a suitcase when preparing for a last-minute trip.

Here's a neat solution to the damage that smeared eye pencils and hastily spilled nail polish bottles can cause: the Makeup Junkie Bag, which is strong, washable and water resistant. It's pretty and stylish, too!

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): How did the Makeup Junkie line come about?

Meredith Jurica (MJ): I am a speech pathologist-turned stay-at-home-mom-turned-Makeup Junkie creator and founder. I have always enjoyed makeup. It's just fun.

I had a lot of it, and I was tired of cosmetic bags that didn't deliver. If they were wide enough, they fell over, sending cosmetics tumbling about. As if I wanted more messes to clean up. If they were deep enough, they became a black hole where you couldn't find anything you need—you know, that favorite eyeliner that you can never find in the dark abyss of a deep cosmetic bag. If they were pretty, the interior was not water resistant or washable and it became dirty very quickly. We've all got one of those under our bathroom sink.

So naptime for the kids turned into craft time for Mom, and voila! I created something I needed, and apparently everyone else needed, too!

EGT: What are the unique features of the Makeup Junkie Bag?

MJ: Buckle up: My bag lies flat and the medial zipper allows the bag to gape open, which allows easy access to everything in it. That favorite eyeliner? It's right there. No more digging!

The interior is not only easily wiped clean, it is also water resistant. There is no other bag like this



“We sell out within minutes every week when we upload a fresh restock to our website.” — MEREDITH JURICA



on the market. The way these bags are made solves essentially every problem users have had with their cosmetic/toiletry bags.

Because these bags lie flat, organizing a suitcase, for example, is a cinch. You can pack more items and take up less room in your luggage. Leaky hairspray? No worries; the water-resistant interior keeps leaks from ruining your entire suitcase.

EGT: Tell us about your initial prototypes.

MJ: I created the first large bag based on my favorite eyeshadow pallet, and how many pallets I wanted to keep in the bag. I simply measured it, cut my fabric, and there I had it. I couldn't believe it!

My mother-in-law is the one who ever-so-patiently taught me to sew. I am so thankful to her for that. She is a gem. I posted a picture on my social media just as a “Look what Mom did today!” and before I knew it, it turned into friends asking me to make them one, to people asking me how to buy them! I was setting up tables at school events, church events, and they were all sell-outs!

My invention had essentially gone *viral* overnight! It all happened so fast; two years later, here we are. I am still in shock some days.

EGT: How many different styles are you featuring? What is the retail pricing?

MJ: The fabrics we use on our bags range from vegan crocodile leather to velvet to 7-oz. cotton. The leathers we use are all vegan. I also really love loomed fabrics. I am always looking at new fabrics to see what can work for this design.

Our bags come in four sizes: Mini (4x7”), \$32; Small (7x9”), \$36; Medium (8x11.5”) \$42; Large (9.5 x13) \$48. We are constantly adding new colors and fabrics to accompany our 11 core colors.

We also have a Mommy Junkie line with fun prints, as well as a Man Junk line. Don't want to leave the fellows out. The versatility of these bags has made them useful for so much more than just makeup.

EGT: Are you manufacturing in the United States, or overseas?

MJ: Initially, it was just me at my kitchen table sewing away, and my sweet husband, Chad, would help me fill orders. We make a really great team.

Eventually, I had to hire outside help to keep up with everything. Fast-forward to today: We currently manufacture here near Houston, Texas, mostly on site in our facility. We have recently expanded our facility but still use some offsite manufacturing, all here in the United States. We are working daily to grow our staff and keep up with the demand.

EGT: Have you tried crowdfunding?

MJ: No, I have not tried crowdfunding. My husband used the money he was saving for a down payment on a new vehicle to get this business going. So far, we are currently a self-funded operation.

EGT: I understand you were featured on “Shark Tank.” How was that experience?

MJ: The “Shark Tank” experience was life changing, and I'm very thankful to have been chosen to be on the show. Each time I made it to the next round was completely surreal, truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When I faced the judges, I felt confident in my invention and my business, and could not believe I had three offers to choose from. It was so hard coming home and keeping quiet until the show aired. (She struck a deal with Lori Greiner: Makeup Junkie Bag gets \$200,000 as a loan in exchange for 5 percent of the company. Greiner also receives 75 cents per bag in perpetuity.)

EGT: How are you handling your PR?

MJ: PR is currently handled entirely in-house. We have a social media team that handles all of our accounts, as well as monitoring email in the event customers have a question or issue that needs handling. Our team is always brainstorming ways to increase brand awareness while staying true to our vision.

Chad and Meredith Jurica, shown at the Season 10 premiere of “Shark Tank,” were thrilled she struck a deal with Lori Greiner.

Opposite page: The medial zipper on the Makeup Junkie Bag allows the bag to gape open for easy access to anything.

EGT: Please share your experience with patenting the Makeup Junkie bags.

MJ: I knew from the beginning, with as quickly as my makeup bags went viral, that I needed to patent my invention immediately. The patent process has been long and requires patience, but I felt like it was important to protect what I invented.

I'm like most people and wish that I could simply have had the patent overnight, but there is good reason behind the patent system, and we just have to trust that. I encourage everyone with a solid invention to start this process.

EGT: Will you be increasing your product line?

MJ: We are expanding our production line daily, and our branded lines. We have core styles but are often—sometimes even weekly—adding new colors and fabrics to our lineup. We are creating a sister brand that will be available soon. Be on the lookout for those. We can't wait to share those details with everyone. We have big things in store for this year.

EGT: What has been your biggest obstacle in product development?

MJ: Our biggest obstacle has been keeping up with the demand. Demand has steadily grown since I started as a one-man show. After "Shark Tank," no matter how many we make, the demand goes up quicker than we can make them. This makes

having my on-site facility with exceptional seamstresses so valuable. We sell out within minutes every week when we upload a fresh restock to our website. We are adding more machines to our fleet and hoping to get more bags in more people's hands.

EGT: Do you have any encouragement for novice inventors?

MJ: Never think "It can't happen to me," because darling, it most certainly can.

I was a stay-at-home-mom, just looking to make something useful for myself. If you've got nothing to lose, then try everything. I can't stress this enough.

I read somewhere that a river cuts through rock because of its persistence, not its intensity. Be persistent. Never give up even if you meet little failures and defeats along the way. 🐾

Details: makeupjunkiebags.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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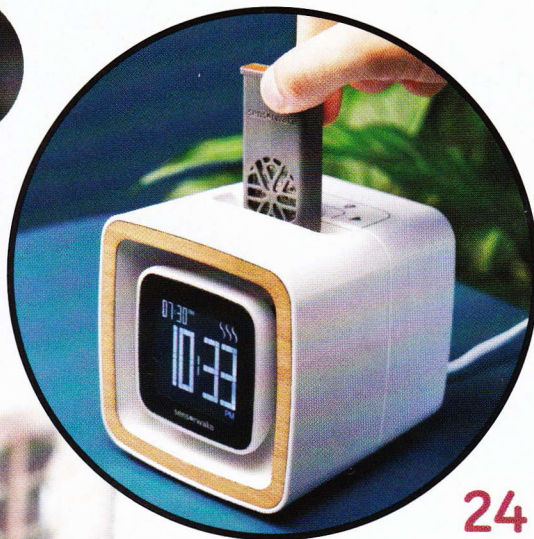
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Maria Sharapova, world-renowned tennis player and inventor of the candy line Sugarpova; photo courtesy of Daniel Boczarski (Getty)

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Sweet Savvy

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