

Taking the 'Eew' Out of the Go

WOMAN'S PUBLIC RESTROOM KIT EASES
THE STALL HYGIENE DILEMMA **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

ACCORDING TO marketwatch.com, the “personal care industry ... was estimated to reach more than \$716 million by 2025.”

Through the years, I've covered many personal care products, including Undercare (*Inventors Digest*, March 2018); Epic Wipes (November 2016); and The Pee Pocket (January 2016).

The pandemic spawned even more of a need for these products. Kenya Adams invented PantyBuddy for use in public bathrooms.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): Please tell us about yourself, and if you've invented before.

Kenya Adams (KA): I reside in Nashville with my husband and three sons. I am so excited to introduce you to my idea that was born out of pure necessity.

I don't typically consider myself a germaphobe, but whenever I use a public restroom I become completely obsessed with avoiding germs. I do not want to make any contact with the toilet or anything else in there. I want to get in and get out as safely as possible, but I often find that I am struggling to do so.

Between holding the crotch of my panties and pants, reaching for the toilet tissue, and trying to keep the flow going directly into the toilet, it's like a real tightrope balancing act once that stall door closes.

Over the years, I have often wished I had an extra hand to help me in the restroom. After a few months of unsuccessfully searching for a solution, I decided to create the solution!

The idea of the PantyBuddy lived in my head for about four years before I got the courage to journey down the path of inventing a product. The more I talked to women, the more I realized I'm not the only one who would love to have

better control over all that's happening behind closed doors in a public restroom. So, I've taken my bright idea and have turned it into a business.

I embarked on my entrepreneurial journey and started PantyBuddy, LLC, and used the COVID-19 quarantine period to focus on getting my product manufactured to bring to market. This is my first attempt at becoming an inventor.

EGT: What exactly is PantyBuddy?

KA: The PantyBuddy is a public restroom kit for women which functions as a fashionable wristlet.

PantyBuddy is the ideal travel companion for using public restrooms—whether traveling across town, across the country, or across the world. It improves personal hygiene in public restrooms and ensures that you are never without the essentials to quickly get in and out of small, cramped, and germ-filled public facilities.

It comes with an emergency supply of toilet paper, toilet seat covers, and our patent-pending panty protecting strap. The panty protecting strap wraps around the crotch of underwear and garments and enables the user to easily pull everything away from gross surfaces when using public toilets.

The PantyBuddy is perfect for women who use public restrooms in corporate offices, airports, airplanes, concert venues, or even gas stations. It makes sure that women always have the essentials, regardless of the conditions found in the restroom.

EGT: How did you create your prototypes? How many tries did it take before you were ready to go into production?

KA: When it came to creating my prototype, I knew that I did not know how to sew, but I

knew exactly how I wanted the product to look and function.

I went to the store and purchased a boys' vinyl tri-fold wallet, a dog leash, and some Velcro. I stuffed it with tissue and toilet seat covers and started to use it. It was not pretty, but it was functional.

For my next attempt, I wanted to make it larger, so I enlisted the help of a friend who is a seamstress. I drew out what I wanted, and she was able to make three versions of the design. These prototypes were more appealing but still were too bulky.

Ultimately, I used those prototypes, enlisted the help of a professional product specifications designer, and landed on the drawing that I used to get the PantyBuddy mass produced.

EGT: Where is it selling?

KA: PantyBuddy is for sale exclusively at pantybuddy.com.

EGT: What is the retail pricing? Is the product refillable?

KA: It comes in eight trendy colors and retails for \$30. Refill packs of toilet tissue and toilet seat cover retail at three for \$5.

EGT: Has the pandemic affected sales?

KA: The pandemic affected product sales. I used it to perfect the design and manufacture the PantyBuddy and launched in January 2021.

The PantyBuddy is for women on the go and the pandemic stifled travel, which directly impacted my sales. With the world opening back up, PantyBuddy is poised to take off this year.

EGT: Is the PantyBuddy patented? If so, was it a difficult process?

KA: The PantyBuddy is patent pending. I have officially filed the non-provisional patent application for the PantyBuddy and am searching the USPTO's website weekly for approval.

The most difficult part about the patent process is waiting for approval. I would



“The more I talked to women, the more I realized I’m not the only one who would love to have better control over all that’s happening behind closed doors in a public restroom.”—PANTYBUDDY INVENTOR KENYA ADAMS

encourage anyone seeking to patent to hire a patent attorney.

Some say you can do it yourself, but there were a lot of things I would not have known to do if I embarked on this process solo—one of which is that the USPTO does not like you to use brand names. So you must file it as the description of the product instead of the name of the product.

EGT: Are you planning any new products or add-ons?

KA: I have recently added hand sanitizer wipes to the PantyBuddy. I am also in the process of

designing the male version because I get so many guys asking for a similar solution to nasty public restrooms.

EGT: Where are you manufacturing?

KA: PantyBuddy is manufactured in China.

EGT: Have you had any problems during any phases of product development?

KA: I am a big proponent of asking for help. The product development/manufacturing space was new for me, so I sought a mentor. She walked me through the entire process step by step and kept me from committing some huge mistakes.

That is not to say I have not faced problems.

One issue with manufacturing overseas is the delays in getting samples to review. My manufacturer would ship me a sample; I would examine and tell them what changes I wanted. Then I would wait 10 to 14 days for those changes to be implemented and sent to me.

I repeated this process three times, so it took almost 2 months to get the final approved sample.

EGT: Do you have advice for inventing for the personal care industry?

KA: My advice would be to find an issue you (or friends) are having in the personal care industry and create the solution.

Suzy Batiz, the founder of Poo-Pourri, is one of my “she-ros.” She is the perfect example of finding a creative solution to an everyday problem. Pooping is not necessarily a sexy subject, but it’s something we all do and she found a way to make poop spray a household name.

I want to do the same for the PantyBuddy. The PantyBuddy is here to change the way women use public restrooms forever! ☞

Details: info@pantybuddy.com

Edith G Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000. She is an editor (opinionatededitor.com/testimonials), writer (edietolchin.com), and has specialized in China manufacturing since 1990 (egtglobaltrading.com).



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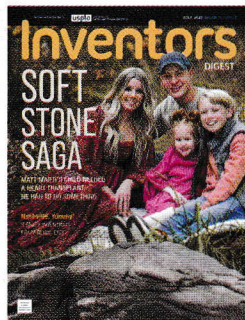
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