

# Reducing **Truss Fuss**

ENTREPRENEURIAL PARTNERS' PRODUCT FOR COOKING CHICKEN RESULTS IN 'SHARK TANK' DEAL **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

**I'M A VEGETARIAN**-pescatarian! There—I said it. But I still love culinary arts and have nothing against cooking for my carnivore family. So as a “Shark Tank” addict, I needed to interview the inventors of Turbo Trusser (no, I’m not going to taste the results, but I’m sure my family will love taste testing).

I spoke with Brian Halasinski, president of Turbo Trusser. He is co-inventor with vice president Kirk Hyust and shared their story.

**Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): Please tell us about your backgrounds.**

**Brian Halasinski (BH):** I was born and raised in Canton, Ohio. I’ve spent the last 20 years in the pharmaceutical industry but always had that entrepreneurial spirit.

I’ve been married to my wife of almost 15 years, Brie Halasinski. We have two sons, Nathan and Hudson. Kirk, my co-inventor, and I met seven years ago when Kirk was renovating our new home. Since then, we have become friends and inventing partners.

Kirk was also born in Canton. He is a chef who was trained at the Culinary Institute of America. After getting burnt out in the restaurant business, he started in the construction industry and has been a building contractor for the last 20 years.

Until recently, he was also a product development and licensing coach at InventRight, where he helped fellow inventors and worked directly with his mentor, Stephen Key. In his spare time, he likes to travel and fish.

**EGT: How did Turbo Trusser come about, and exactly how is it used?**

**BH:** In December 2019, I was trying to

truss a chicken for my smoker. This proved more difficult than it looked.

Trussing is a technique that brings the wings and legs closer to the body of the bird. This, in turn, will produce a juicier chicken or turkey.

After much frustration, I reached out to Kirk and said we need to invent something to make this easier. At this point, Kirk and I had been inventing partners for a couple years and had a much better understanding of the process.

The Turbo Trusser is designed to make trussing turkeys or chickens easier. Using the two wire hooks placed in the stainless-steel trusser, you attach it to the legs and wings. The legs are then placed into the specially designed slots on the trusser.

**EGT: How many prototypes did it take, and of what materials were they made before you had the “perfect” prototype?**

**BH:** All in all, we made at least a dozen prototypes. The first prototype was made of cardboard and looked like a spaceship from “Star Wars.”

We eventually made them from wood and ultimately found a job shop that cut them with a laser. Our final design was finely tuned at the stamping facility but was mostly unchanged from laser-cut prototypes.

**EGT: Did you land a deal on “Shark Tank?”**

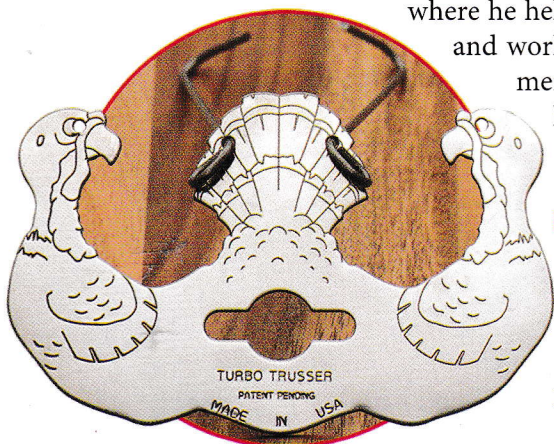
**BH:** Yes, we secured a deal with Kevin O’Leary, aka “Chef Wonderful.” (Final terms: \$100,000 for a 33 percent equity, plus a royalty of \$1 per unit in perpetuity.)

“Shark Tank” was an unbelievable experience. It was intense from the first phone call from ABC, until we walked out of the “tank” with a deal! We closed the deal the morning the show aired and haven’t looked back since.

Being partners with someone like “Mr. Wonderful” is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. He knows business; he knows how to take small

Below: The Turbo Trusser has two wire hooks in the stainless-steel trusser that are attached to the turkey or chicken’s wings and legs. The legs are then placed into the specially designed slots on the trusser.

Opposite page: Turbo Trusser vice president Kirk Hyust demonstrates the product with Kevin O’Leary of “Shark Tank.” Hyust and co-inventor Brian Halasinski landed a deal with O’Leary.



businesses and make them big; he knows how to take a big business and make it huge. It's the perfect opportunity for us to learn and grow and take the Turbo Trusser to the next level.

**EGT: Have sales increased since "Shark Tank"?**

**BH:** Yes, we have seen a tremendous uptick in sales. In the two months after the show aired on Sept. 30, 2022, we did five times what we had done in the previous nine months.

In addition, we have picked up a few additional retailers and online partners since airing! It has had a very positive effect.

**EGT: This is a food-grade item. How is food safety guaranteed in production?**

**BH:** This is where choosing your suppliers is so important. We work directly with our two suppliers, Cleveland Metal Stamping, and Wire Products Inc. Both companies keep our certifications on file and adhere to rigorous manufacturing protocols. We regularly meet with our suppliers to discuss material quality.

**EGT: Was Turbo Trusser patented before, during or after "Shark Tank"?**

**BH:** It is currently patent pending. As with all our prior inventions, we initially file a provisional patent application. When that is close to the one-year mark, we file all non-provisional patents. This allows us to have an additional year of patent protection.

Prior to the launch of our product, we did also file trademarks.

**EGT: Have you had any problems with product development?**

**BH:** I wouldn't say we have had problems with product development—we have lots of ideas. Kirk and I focus on simple ideas that can be easily manufactured with current capabilities.

All in all, we have developed six unique products. We eventually licensed two of them, but both companies failed to bring them to market, ultimately resulting in zero royalties.

**"The first prototype was made of cardboard and looked like a spaceship from 'Star Wars.'" —BRIAN HALASINSKI**





Co-inventors Kirk Hyust (left) and Brian Halasinski showed pluck and cluck.

**EGT: Any knockoffs challenges?**

**BH:** Yes. It wasn't long before we had Chinese knockoffs showing up on Amazon, eBay, Alibaba and more. It has been a challenge, but we have managed to keep them at bay on Amazon for a couple of weeks. We are currently working with a company to take legal action against these counterfeit sellers.

**EGT: Are you planning to introduce any new products soon?**

**BH:** We are getting ready to launch two new products in 2023. First will be a Turbo Trusser for Cornish hens. This will come in a two pack. Second will be the launch of a version designed for ducks.

We are working on a few other concepts for cooking poultry but can't share any details yet.

**EGT: Can you offer guidance for novice inventors wanting to develop a food-grade item?**

**BH:** Work with suppliers that you trust. We purchase and manufacture all our products in the USA. Also, develop a protocol with your suppliers to maintain raw material quality standards.

I also encourage you to ask for the certifications for the material and keep each production run on file. 📁

Details: [turbotrusser.com](http://turbotrusser.com)

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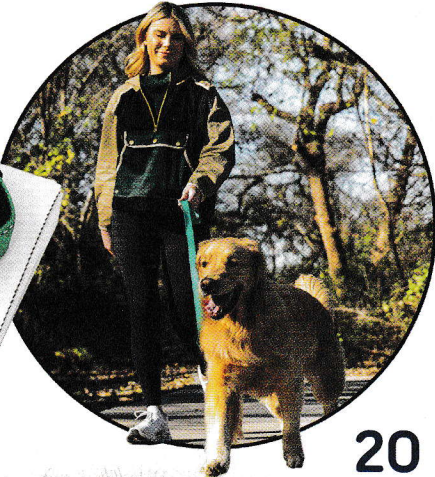
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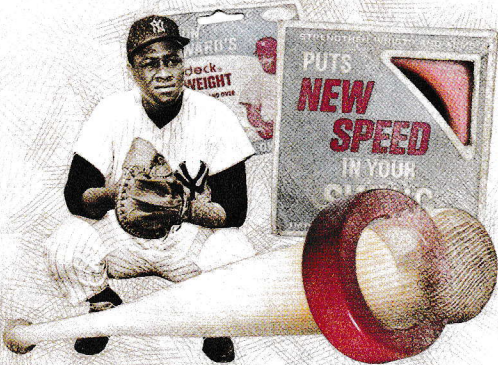


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