

Turkey Soda & Spanx

Strange New Product Ideas

When Peter van Stolk decided that he wanted to develop a line of sodas that tasted like holiday meals, the idea didn't meet with a lot of enthusiasm from friends who thought the idea was nuts. Stolk proved skeptics wrong as he has expanded his specialty soda company into other amusing and nightmarish sounding flavors, such as the vegan soda counterpart, Tofurkey.

Then there's pantyhose: the conventional product was uncomfortable and posed a number of problems for users. Sara Blakely decided to design one without feet, which would allow women to wear any style of shoe. She also created the product so that the visible lines of undergarments that usually showed through clothing would disappear. When Blakely tried to explain her idea to a patent attorney, he who thought the concept was ridiculous and that Blakely was there to film a segment for Punked Television. Today, Blakely's product, which she dubbed Spanx, has made her a billionaire.

Lesson: In some cases, there is a fine line between a nutty and a clever idea and outsiders fail to see the possibilities. Peter van Stolk had a track record in the beverage industry before coming up with his savory soda idea. He knew the trends and believed the timing was right to introduce his idea to the marketplace. Sara Blakely invented Spanx because she was had trouble wearing what was available in the marketplace and believed she could create a better product.

References

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