

# Big Help for Tiny Babies

BABY BUBBLES UPDATES THE 'ONESIE'; PROCEEDS GO TO FAMILIES WITH PREEMIES **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

**I** love sourcing and manufacturing baby products because I like challenges. When I began working with China factories in 1990, the sourcing process was either winging it or common sense. For example, if we wanted to make a safe product for a baby, we would not use components such as sharp objects and dangerous dyes.

Eventually, that wasn't enough. After countless product recalls over the years, the United States created the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act in 2008. This required manufacturers to undergo complex testing for their baby products and comply with other regulations in order to introduce safe products to the market.

Teresa Skrepenski has a new line of safe baby products with a business model you'll all like: giving back—in a big way.

**Edith G. Tolchin:** What makes Baby Bubbles products so different?

**Teresa Skrepenski:** Baby Bubbles are a unique twist on the favorite newborn outfit—the “onesie.” They come with removable and interchangeable Velcro patches featuring messages such as “Baby Girl/Boy,” “Daddy’s Girl” and “Tickle Me.” Baby Bubbles ooze adorable, special, clever and cute.

My niece, Ruby, was born prematurely. Baby Bubbles was created as a way to help families with preemie babies. A portion of all proceeds from sales will be donated to help those families. Born weighing 2 lbs., 1 oz. and just 14.5 inches long, Baby Ruby was a fighter who wasn't going to give up. Fortunately, today she is happy and healthy.

Preemies begin their lives in an incubator (bubble), where their environment is controlled and sterile. They're constantly being monitored and are heavily

dependent on IVs, feeding tubes and in some cases a breathing apparatus.

In addition to donating proceeds to families of preemie babies, we encourage and promote young artists by having them not only create patches but also be involved in approving the final product. The patches can be used to teach children their alphabet, colors and numbers, among many other things; and they can be saved as memorabilia after the child has grown out of his or her onesie.



Teresa Skrepenski was inspired by her niece, Ruby.

**EGT:** Tell us about your business model.

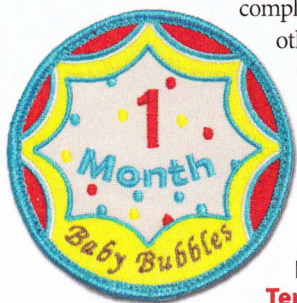
**TS:** It is our company's philosophy to give back as much as possible, our highest priority. We partner with organizations to give as much money as possible to families that need it most. Currently we are giving 100 percent of all proceeds because we found an orphanage that we visited in Mexico and felt that we needed to help them. We are currently reviewing what percent we will give moving forward.

There are so many expenses that insurance companies do not cover, so families of preemie babies have to absorb additional costs such as hotel stays, food, rental cars, flights and more.

**EGT:** Has your personal background helped in creating your business?

**TS:** When I was a child, my sister and brothers and I had to donate some of our toys before Christmas each year to families who were less fortunate. This really had an impact on me and made me realize at the young age of 5 that there were people in this world who needed help. I later started a scholarship foundation and then created Baby Bubbles.

At 16, I was accepted into a state-funded apprenticeship program in the banking industry, which required that I attend high school and college simultaneously. Once I finished this two-year apprenticeship I earned an occupational proficiency in finance, a high school diploma, and completed two years of





**"The patches can be used to teach children their alphabet, colors and numbers, among many other things; and they can be saved as memorabilia after the child has grown out of his or her onesie."** —TERESA SKREPENSKI

targeted financial services experience. Then I earned my associate degree in ethnic studies, followed by a bachelor's degree in international business and a master's degree in public administration.

While earning my bachelor's degree, I studied and worked in England, Sweden, Japan and Jamaica. During my stay in Jamaica, I met with students from a local underprivileged elementary school and quickly realized I could help them. Upon my return to the United States, I contacted a local bookstore to ask if they would donate books to the school in Jamaica if I paid the shipping. I felt so much gratitude that I purchased school supplies in bulk and added them to the box. The school was overjoyed, and I felt like I had made a difference.

**EGT:** Please share your experience with prototyping.

**TS:** I think this is the process I enjoyed most. Initially, I created a onesie with snaps that were designed to hold the interchangeable patches in place. Unfortunately, the snaps were so strong that they ripped holes in the onesies. Then I tried creating a clear plastic pocket that was sewn onto the onesie. The idea was to put cute expressions, animals, characters and other cute cutouts in the pocket. This didn't work because the plastic pocket melted in the dryer and the cute cutouts were too small for babies. Finally, we discovered a soft Velcro that was strong enough to hold the patch in place and soft enough for babies.

**EGT:** Any patents?

**TS:** We have a provisional patent filed for the patches.

**EGT:** Is your manufacturing in the USA, or overseas?

**TS:** We have spent a lot of time looking at manufacturing a product that is soft on a baby's skin, as well as chemical-free. We are working with some wonderful manufacturers who understand our mission and care about the safety of the babies. Currently, we are manufacturing the onesies in the U.S. and the patches are made in Thailand.

As we respond to interest in foreign markets, we know that we will have to go through extensive product testing. We are excited for this next phase and have

seen some interest in both the Japanese and Russian markets.

**EGT:** Tell us about your experience with Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act testing.

**TS:** We have a consultant working through the product testing right now.

**EGT:** How are your products packaged?

**TS:** I have worked with a graphic designer on my logo, packaging and website. Since the business is mainly online, we spend a lot of time and effort on social media and our website. All onesies are packaged in a clear plastic bag and then in a padded envelope.

**EGT:** Any new products planned? Do you have a PR campaign?

**TS:** We will be adding new products in the near future. We are creating organic onesies with playful and inspiring messages.

Our public relations campaign is twofold. We want to educate people about what it means to be a preemie and ways to promote healthy pregnancies via social media.

**EGT:** What obstacles have you overcome?

**TS:** Some of the challenges I experienced were in finding a great website builder, locating and securing a top-of-the-line manufacturer with good price points and a great product—and the most important piece, which can be the most difficult is marketing: essentially, getting the word out.

My advice is never to give up and keep moving forward. There are so many great resources out there to help new inventors. 📞

Edie Tolchin has contributed to *Inventors Digest* since 2000. She is the author of *Secrets of Successful Inventing* and owner of EGT Global Trading, which for more than 25 years has helped inventors with product safety issues, sourcing and China manufacturing. Contact Edie at [egt@egtglobaltrading.com](mailto:egt@egtglobaltrading.com).

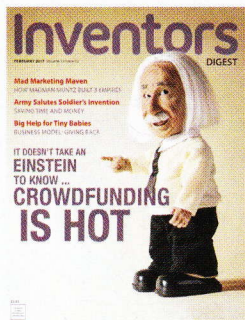
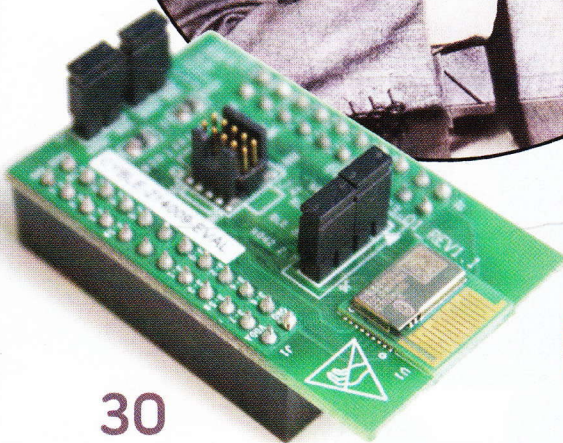


The removable and interchangeable Velcro patches have messages with childlike appeal.



# Contents

February 2017 Volume 33 Issue 2



ON THE COVER  
Hanson Robotics'  
Professor Einstein  
photo by Frick Photo



## Features

### 22 **Crowdfunding Is Hot**

The Power of Promise for Inventors

## American Inventors

### 16 **The Smell of Success**

Cyrano, the Digital Scent Speaker

### 18 **Army Salutes Soldier's Invention**

Device Expected to Save Time, Money

### 20 **Big Help for Tiny Babies**

Baby Bubbles Stands for Giving Back

## Departments

### 6 **Bright Ideas**

Spotlight on Innovation

### 8 **Time Tested**

Madman Muntz Was  
a Marketing Maven

### 12 **Lander Zone**

Angel Investors May  
Be Looking for You

### 14 **Inventing 101**

Getting Help but Keeping Control

### 30 **Prototyping**

What Makes an IoT Device Tick?

### 32 **Marketing Tips**

A Jolly Good Marketer

### 34 **Eye on Washington**

Another Low for the PTAB;  
High Stakes in Patent Venue Case;  
Apple Verdict Has Key Impacts

### 46 **Inventiveness**

Focus on the Fun and Fascinating



# Inventors

FEBRUARY 2017 Volume 33 Issue 02

DIGEST

## Mad Marketing Maven

HOW MADMAN MUNTZ BUILT 3 EMPIRES

## Army Salutes Soldier's Invention

SAVING TIME AND MONEY

## Big Help for Tiny Babies

BUSINESS MODEL: GIVING BACK

IT DOESN'T TAKE AN  
EINSTEIN  
TO KNOW ...

CROWDFUNDING  
IS HOT



\$5.95

PSNBT STANDARD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT 38  
FULTON, MO