



Crowd Funding

BY EDIE TOLCHIN WITH DAWN SOLE

Dawn

Pluck N' File™ Crowdfunding Quicksand

Our contributing editor, Edie Tolchin, recently spoke with Dawn M. Sole, inventor of Pluck N' File™, who was kind enough to share her insight and experience in inventing and developing her new personal care product. The campaign was due to run from November 2, 2014 through January 2, 2015. However in early December 2014, Sole encountered a huge obstacle she is currently working to overcome.

Edie G. Tolchin (EGT): Please tell us a bit about yourself and your background...for example, have you ever invented anything before Pluck N' File?

Dawn M. Sole (DMS): I'm very creative and I'm always looking for solutions to everything, and always trying to figure out a better way to do things. My mind never shuts off and I'm always tinkering with things by taking them apart and putting them back together or researching things on the internet. It's the mere idea that the product(s) I create can somehow solve problems and fill needs for people who are searching for solutions that really make me happy. I find that I want to push myself to that point where I can truly see what I am capable of doing and just how far I can take something. My background is sales and sales management. I have thought of other inventions prior to Pluck N' File.

EGT: What exactly is Pluck N' File? What are its many uses?

DMS: Pluck N' File is a patented multifunctional beauty tool that makes the everyday beauty regimen that much more seamless. It combines tweezers, an eyebrow comb, replaceable nail file, and nail buffer. You want to carry one in your makeup bag, car, travel case, and purse just to name a few places. It's the go to beauty tool for your eyebrows and nails. It is like the beauty Swiss Army Knife for us gals.

EGT: How did the "aha!" moment come about for this product?

DMS: Pluck N' File was born out of pure necessity. I thought of Pluck N' File™ when I was grocery shopping and carrying several grocery bags to my car. When I opened my car door, I chipped my nail. It was a small

problem, to be sure; but it's one that is experienced by millions of women. I had to look through my large purse to find a nail file. Once I filed my nail, I had to go back into my purse a second time to find my nail buffer. Because I was outside in the bright sunlight, I wanted to pluck my eyebrows, which meant going back into my large purse a THIRD time. That is when the "aha!" moment came...I wanted all these items in one simple tool. So instead of ignoring the problem I created a solution, which is how Pluck N' File was born.

EGT: Which came first: patent application or product development? Or did you do both simultaneously?

DMS: I started with product development. The initial prototypes were put together by me, and then I reached out to my patent attorney to do research and get clearance for us to move forward with a patent because nothing like my product existed. Then we applied for the patent. Once I completed my handmade prototype, I then had professional 3-D CAD drawings made by my design engineer. When applying for a patent you need to get your product as close as possible to what it is going to look like and how it is going to function.

EGT: Did you create a prototype? Was that a difficult process?

DMS: I created my own prototype first, and then after I had created my own I started reaching out to other companies to assist me in making a professional prototype. I had to work with a design engineer to do this.

EGT: Please share with us your manufacturing process. Is your product made domestically or overseas?

DMS: Sourcing for manufacturing was by far the most difficult for me. Unless you have a background in this, or know of people & companies, it is extremely difficult. Not knowing the right questions to ask or what to compare things to can allow you to make mistakes which are costly and time consuming. It took me a very long time to get my manufacturers in place. It is not just one manufacturer that

does everything, it is multiple. Certain factories make certain parts and then it goes to the next factory and so on. Each factory has certain things that it specializes in. I researched everything myself and reached out to companies one by one and learned a lot through trial and error. I'm proud to say my product is assembled in the USA.

EGT: You began a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo, for the period from November 2, 2014 through January 2, 2015. As of the time this article was written, you were close to 70 percent of your goal to raise \$25,000. Tell us about your campaign and the various rewards levels. Also, assuming you reach your goal, what's next?

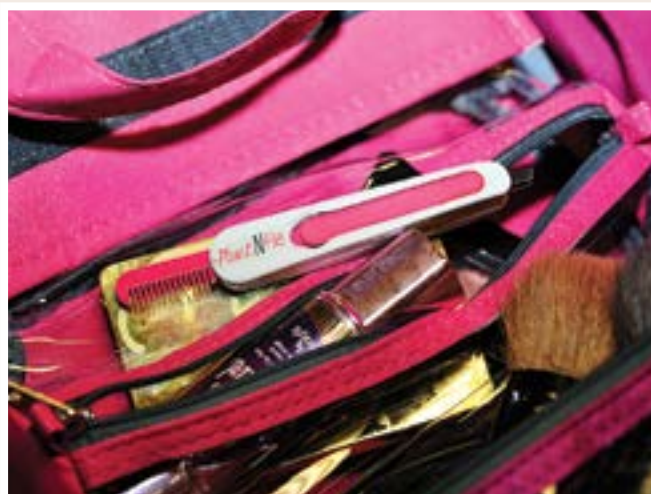
DMS: The reason I launched my Indiegogo campaign is so I could pre-sell Pluck N' File units, and then I will be applying my funds raised to my manufacturing and tooling costs. This will allow me to go into my first production run and get the product out on the market. Manufacturers require large order quantities and expensive tooling and there are multiple parts that go into making just one Pluck N' File. Each reward level includes receiving Pluck N' File. My product is the type where you need more than one, so with higher level rewards you can receive more than one, plus additional perks. The benefit to people purchasing the product through my Indiegogo campaign is they get the product at a huge discount which they will not be able to receive once it

hits retail. Once my funding goal is met I will then roll into production and begin my manufacturing process which will take approximately sixty days. Then, once that is complete I can start my shipping and people will receive the product and I will also be selling online to individuals as well as to retailers

EGT: Have you considered a licensing agreement?

DMS: Right now I am focusing on manufacturing the product myself, however, I always remain open to different possibilities.

EGT: What type of packaging will Pluck N' File have?



Pluck N' File fits in any makeup bag.

Did you work with a graphic designer for the packaging?

DMS: The packaging is still being worked on with different designers. It will be very clean and creative for sure.

EGT: What are your plans for sales? To boutiques and salons? To big box stores? Big chain beauty supplies stores? Online via your website?

DMS: My plan is to first work with the South Florida market, with boutiques, salons, spas and beauty stores and also to sell online through my website. This way it will allow me to work closely with my customers, and at the same time I can work with my manufacturers to make sure we have the proper procedures in place. As I continue to grow the business, I will then be working with larger retailers throughout the U.S. and eventually throughout the world. I will also be doing private labeling with different companies. There are many different sales channels for Pluck N' File which is a great benefit. There will also be additional products that I will be launching that go under the Pluck N' File™ brand.

EGT: Are you considering any celebrity endorsements? It seems like this product would make for a perfect infomercial.

DMS: It's so important to have the right fit when it comes to celebrity endorsements. I don't want just anyone representing my brand just for the sake of an endorsement. I would love the opportunity to work with Lori Greiner, as I know this product would do excellent on QVC.

EGT: Will you be working with a PR or marketing firm to get the word out?

DMS: No, I will be using social media and out doing shows and visiting customers. When you're a self-funded startup you cannot afford a PR person or team. You are your own PR and need to get out and hustle and make things happen.

EGT: Have you encountered any obstacles or difficulties along the various stages of developing your product?

DMS: YES! Just because the way your products looks is appealing does not mean you can manufacture it that way. You need to be able to design it in a way that is appealing, yet also can be manufactured on a large scale. Also, sourcing the right factories was very difficult because you don't know where to start. But the key is to start somewhere! It was very time consuming

EGT: Did you learn anything particularly significant about the marketing aspect of your product you might want to share with our readers?

DMS: Get out there with your prototype and show it to people who are not your friends and family. When people see your product, be silent, watch their facial expressions and listen to their feedback. This is such great market research because these people are your future customers. Make sure you have the right price point also. Just because you think you have a great product doesn't mean that you can make money and turn it into a business. Know your numbers inside out, down to every penny. Once you know your numbers only then will you know if you can turn it into a business

EGT: Do you have any final advice or words of encouragement for our readers? Many are inventors who have not yet pursued their ideas, or may be in the midst of product development but may have encountered complications.

DMS: Seek out mentors and do your research. LinkedIn and SCORE were a huge help for me. You will learn



Pluck N' File with additional emery boards.

through trial and error, however, the biggest thing is perseverance. Don't quit when things get tough, and don't have a backup plan. If you have a backup plan then in my opinion, you're setting yourself up for failure, and if this is something you really want then you should go all in, because failure is not an option. People don't realize how difficult it is to bring an invention to life and that's why most people don't make it all the way through. You have to breathe, sleep, eat, and drink your business day in and day out and you're trading in your 9-5 for a 24/7. Anyone who tells you differently is lying. Try your best to save your money because you will need a lot of it once you really get going. You can barter services or find people who are willing to work with you on prices. SCORE is great for that because they are professionals who are willing to help and do not charge. Bootstrap as much as you can.

EGT: What's the anticipated selling price of Pluck N' File? How can our readers contact you and order your product? Do you have a website?

DMS: \$24.99. Readers can contact me at dawn@plucknfile.com. My website www.plucknfile.com

Note from Edie Tolchin: As of the time this article was written, Dawn Sole had some unfortunate news... Apparently someone in the UK hacked her account and copied her campaign 100% accurately on Kickstarter, raising 17,000 (British) pounds for "her" Pluck N' File product.

EGT: How do you think this happened? Can you show our readers a link to this bogus campaign?

DMS: A scammer copied and pasted my entire Indiegogo campaign and launched a separate campaign on Kickstarter. So there were two campaigns going at the same time. I own all of the IP and my attorney and I sent documentation to Kickstarter showing proof that I am the owner. It appears to have been people trying to do a scam. They were using my IP (Intellectual Property) to scam consumers out of money with my products and they were using Kickstarter and the internet as the platform in which to do this and that is a crime. Here is a link to the fake campaign that was launched on Kickstarter:

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/203564162/pluck-n-file-more-than-a-tweezer?ref=nav_search

EGT: How does this affect the progress of your campaign on Indiegogo? Will you still be able to proceed?

DMS: It has affected my progress in many ways. People are confused because they see there are two campaigns. They ask me which one they should donate to because they are confused. Plus, it is extremely stressful because instead of having all of my focus on driving results for my Indiegogo campaign, I had to then stop and take a lot of time to try and fix this issue with my lawyer. It still is not resolved. I am still able to proceed with Indiegogo, however, I cannot recoup the time I lost due to the fake Kickstarter campaign. And lost time equals loss in funds raised.

EGT: Have you retained legal counsel, and if so, would the action be taken against Kickstarter (the impostor's campaign), Indiegogo (your campaign) or directly against the impostor?

DMS: I have retained legal counsel and I am moving forward with a suit. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Attorney General, New York State Attorney General, FINRA and SEC are all being contacted in regards to what happened.

EGT: How does this affect your company and brand?



DMS: It's damaging because when people go to Kickstarter they see the account is "suspended." It makes my company look bad when in fact it isn't Pluck N' File. However, the people do not know that it really isn't Pluck N' File. Kickstarter should have removed the campaign completely, knowing and having proof that it was a fake, but it is still up and showing as "suspended." Also, is Kickstarter going to return the funds that were raised back to the supporters? Kickstarter should turn the account over to me and allow me to fulfill those orders to the people who backed the campaign. If I cannot fulfill those orders because Kickstarter will not turn that information over to me, that makes my company look bad because now people will be upset because they never received the product.

EGT: How has Kickstarter handled this situation? What have they done or haven't done?

DMS: They have been unresponsive. Multiple emails were sent to them both by me and my attorney and the only response that was received was a generic "Thank you for sending your email." There is no address for them and no one gets back to you. Since Kickstarter was the platform that was used for this scam, but with my IP, they have a duty and responsibility but they are failing to respond and get back to us regarding this important matter. By the scammers using Kickstarter as their platform it has damaged my company and brand in multiple ways and is very unfortunate.

EGT: What have you learned from this experience?

DMS: That anything is possible. I never would have thought something like this could happen. I thought that Kickstarter would have done their due diligence by checking the campaign that was submitted and they did not do that. Had they checked, they would have seen that one already existed with Indiegogo and that the IP was owned by me and we therefore would not be in this situation. I've learned that there need to be more policies and procedures in place when it comes to crowdfunding. There seems to be a lot of scams that take place



where people can post fake accounts, get the funds raised, take the money and run and never fulfill the orders. What type of protection do people have? Crowdfunding platforms act as a "broker" because they allow transactions to be made and they take a percentage of the amount raised, so they need to be responsible. Make sure to always do your research. I Google my product every couple of days and that is how I came across this fake account. Make sure you stay on top of everything.

EGT: What advice do you have for our readers regarding crowdfunding campaigns?

DMS: Again, do your research. There is a ton of information that is not disclosed on the crowdfunding platforms and you need to know what you are responsible for and what they are responsible for. There are not enough rules in place to protect people from fraud and scams and that is scary. Know what your rights are and make sure you are 100% comfortable before you launch.

Dawn's Pluck N' File is available for pre-order at www.plucknfile.com

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DHANA COHEN Co-founder of The Women Inventorz Network and the newly created Inventorz(VIRTUAL)Network. Dhana knows a thing or two about great innovation, as an inventor herself she struggled with who to contact, and who truly had her best interest in mind. Luckily she stopped inventing after several products and took her background in marketing and partnered with Melinda Knight, together they have developed the right connections, education and marketing for the inventor community. The new (VIRTUAL) InventorzNetwork.com is the only platform out there in the inventor industry, think Match.com meets Angie's List for the inventor industry.



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