

# learn



## SMART IDEAS REST EASY

**WHAT:** Sleepwear and undergarments made from moisture-wicking fabric  
**WHO:** Lesley Hatfield of NiteSweatz  
**WHERE:** Atlanta  
**WHEN:** Started in 2004  
**STARTUP COSTS:** \$50,000

While working as a personal trainer in 2003, Lesley Hatfield, 37, came across her big idea when she noticed a female client struggling to keep up during a routine

run. The woman complained she was tired because, suffering from menopausal night sweats, she had woken up three times the night before to change clothes.

“Off the cuff, I said, ‘Why don’t you try sleeping in your running clothes?’” recalls Hatfield. “That was the ‘aha’ moment.”

Hatfield soon realized there were no sleepwear companies making pajamas with the same moisture-wicking technology used in workout clothes—and she

Lesley Hatfield got her idea for moisture-wicking sleep garments after talking to a client.

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decided to take advantage of the idea herself. “I knew how technology had revolutionized exercise—no one works out in plain old cotton T-shirts anymore—and I felt this type of fabrication would be ideal for women suffering from night sweats,” explains Hatfield, an exercise physiologist for 11 years.

Striving to make her products functional yet fashionable, Hatfield looked to the closets of trendy relatives and clients for her research. “I asked every woman I knew what she liked and disliked about her pajamas and began to create styles that would appeal to these ladies,” she says.

NiteSweatz hit stores in 2004, and although it was originally intended for menopausal baby boomers, the line of soft and feminine lace camisoles, tank tops and sleeping gowns soon became attractive to women of all ages.

With last year's sales closing in on \$1 million, Hatfield envisions the company becoming a household name and an international brand in the next five years—and encourages entrepreneurial hopefuls to take risks to find success. “So many great ideas [are] never acted on because of fear,” she says. “If you have an idea, if it wakes you up at night, then you have a responsibility to yourself to act on it.” —CELESTE HOANG



**Even as an engineer, Alan Regala wasn't ready to say goodbye to his paper and pen—so he made them even handier to use.**

While on vacation in 2004, Regala decided to test a prototype he'd developed by inserting sticky notes and a tiny ballpoint pen into a small credit card-size case. Regala found plenty of opportunities to leave a note—for example, when he noticed a car leaking radiator fluid, he left a friendly message on the windshield. He returned home inspired and decided to leave his job in early 2005 to further develop his prototype, the PicoPad—which is cleverly named after a picometer, a unit of measurement smaller than a nanometer. “I was so zoned in and so pumped up about the product, I really didn't have any doubts,” Regala says. He started selling the PicoPad in September 2005 as the first product for his company, Everyday Innovations.

Last year, Regala began selling in nationwide retailer The Container Store. Customers can also find the \$3.99 PicoPad at Amazon.com or in independent office supply stores and bookstores. It includes 15 sheets of refillable sticky notes and comes in six colors with additional fashion and holiday designs. For companies or those looking to get creative, custom designs and imprinting are also available.

With sales of \$500,000 last year, Regala is still the company's only full-time employee, and he's planning to release new designs targeted at the tween market later this year. —KRISTEN HENNING

**OH SO SIMPLE**

**WHAT:** Portable notebook and pen that fit in your wallet

**WHO:** Alan Regala of Everyday Innovations

**WHERE:** Mountain View, California

**WHEN:** Started in 2005

**STARTUP COSTS:** \$100,000

Alan Regala, 30, was tired of forgetting to bring his lunch to work. While working as a mechanical engineer, Regala decided to put a sticky note with the word *lunch* on his wallet. The simple solution convinced Regala that even with the constant use of cell phones and BlackBerrys, paper still comes in handy. “There are just some instances when you're out and want to hand someone a note,” Regala says.

Photo Courtesy: Alan Regala