

# More Support Needed, Inventor Says

*Canadian Pizza Wholesalers Not Stacking Up*

BY STACY BRADSHAW

Innovator Brian Smith has developed a product that adds value and marketing potential to an otherwise single-purpose invention, and leaves you thinking, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Everyday, billions of conventional white pizza box lid supports are delivered directly into consumer's homes and trashed.

Can you say "missed marketing opportunity?"

Smith has created pizza box lid supports that are stackable and with huge potential to leap into the collectables market. For the same price as the industry standards, FUNstax offers lid supports made of three golf tees and a ball marker, or a hockey net and stick. The inventor believes there's a real Canadian angle to the latter, if used in conjunction with a playing rink printed on the box.

He also said the lid supports have introduced something that is rare in the pizza industry – the kids' meal concept. Inexpensive plastic toys are selling thousands of more kids' meals in the fast food industry and pizza is missing out, he said in a recent interview.

Failing to target children – the real decision makers in family menu planning – has a limited effect in terms of growing sales and repeat customers. Value add-ons remedy the "nag-factor" with children and give pizzerias a point of differentiation other than just, say, price point, Smith said.

The product can also be customized – molded with a company logo, built-in spice shaker or sauce cup, or pizza coins to be used in conjunction with special

promotions or contests, thereby creating repeat sales.

When he realized approximately one-billion pizza box lid supports are sold in the USA, he never dreamed he'd have trouble finding a distributor in Canada to start stacking up on the idea.

Interest was gained last year when FUNstax were featured on The Food Network.

"There were a hundred different people trying to order," said Smith. But major Canadian wholesale distributors have been reluctant to pick them up.

Canadian Pizza Magazine also learned the company would like to manufacture in Canada, making it the official launch market.

Jokingly, Smith suggested last year's NHL strike may have hampered consumer interest in the FUNstax hockey concept. He may have underestimated just how seriously we Canadians take our hockey. Perhaps this year's season will prove more victorious for the innovator.

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