



Friday, February 29, 2008

MAX Finalist

Spray pen innovation provides convenience

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by **Tonya Layman** Contributing Writer

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Aerosol Specialties LLC/

Morningside Marketing Group Inc.

Spray Pen

A patent-pending invention from Aerosol Specialties LLC allows users on the go to sanitize a doorknob, remove a stain, get static out of clothing, lubricate a lock or freshen the air of a meeting room, hotel room or rental car.

It is the Spray Pen, a packaging innovation that provides aerosolized materials to consumers in a convenient, easy-to-use process. The slim container is similar to a large fountain pen, making it easy to carry in a handbag, school bag, carry-on or briefcase. With a patent pending, this is a first of its kind providing aerosolized products through something this small.

Leigh Fragnoli, president and CEO of Aerosol Specialties, said the idea came after listening to customers.

"We were consistently hearing 'I wish I had some way to deliver products in something that can just be thrown into a pocket, purse or briefcase so when it is needed it is easily accessible,' " he said. "So we started the thought process of how to develop this."

He adds even the smallest of aerosol cans, usually measuring about 1.25 inches in diameter, are too bulky to conveniently carry around.

The development of the pen took two years, including testing and market research. They took the product to their customers and asked for feedback. Once all of the feedback was positive, they knew they had their product.

"It is such a consumer-oriented package, we wanted feedback from our customers to make it a successful product. We eventually found a pen that does everything we want," he said. "Every customer we show it to says they will buy it."

Projected volume for 2008 is at least 5 million units. Pens are already on the market that contain odor eliminator Gone Smoke, K2r Spot Lifter and K2r Static Stopper. They are currently working

to put other products in the pens, including hair spray, disinfectants and sanitizers, eyeglass cleaner, lubricant and body spray.

The company will soon launch Pen Scents, a line of room fresheners that include six fragrances, such as Garden Blossom and Dreamy Lavender.

Many of Aerosol Specialties' industrial clients are using the pen as a way to send samples of their products to potential clients.

"The uses are endless," Fragnoli said. "Everybody you show it to has ideas on how to use it."

While the target market is mostly women, the pen is also perfect for business travelers. The pens can be taken on board as a carry-on and many of the applications are good for those who frequently stay in hotel rooms.

"I travel with them 100 percent of the time," Fragnoli said. "They are convenient, they are safe and they are easy to use."

Its brushed-steel cylinder can be labeled with shrink or adhesive labels, screen printing or spray-on art. Individual product can be blister-packed, carton-packed or as needed by the client and the retailer.

The tip allows a wide variety of product densities to be dispersed through the pen while preventing leakage and more control in a continuous-spray scenario.

In 2006, Aerosol Specialties exhibited prototypes of the pen at the Private Label Manufacturers Association.

"We really just wanted to use the opportunity to get feedback and we had people lined up ready to talk with us," he said.

A year later they presented the final version at the Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo, where they won an award in the New Packaging Showcase competition.

The company plans to take the product international at a tradeshow in Vietnam in April.

"It is exciting. It is the buzz around here," he said.

They are marketing the pen through various tradeshows, mailers and by dropping them off at retailers to allow them to do market studies with their retail market.

"The usual response is 'Can I get more?' and 'How fast?' " Fragnoli said.

Aerosol Specialties is a 32-year-old, Canton-based manufacturing company, specializing in the private label and contract manufacture of liquids, gels, creams and solutions to be aerosolized for use.

The pen is not intended to take the place of the company's standard aerosol cans.

"We want to control the market and control how the pen applications are released. We don't want to get spread too thin," he said. "It is a hit no matter what product goes in it and what market it goes to, but we are being selective who we give this to."

GSU Marketing RoundTable

Judges' comments:

This is a great example of a packaging innovation, enabling a private label manufacturer to enter a number of new markets. The company's award-winning new patented tip has resulted in orders for over 1 million spray pens for uses as diverse as de-icing car doors, polishing shoes, lubricating hinges and locks, and eliminating odors.

