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Lunchology - Why Didn't We Think of That?

 Posted by [Cate O'Malley](#)  September 26, 2007



It never ceases to amaze me what becomes a big business these days. Things that have certainly crossed our minds more than once... more often than not, it's a question of actually following through when an idea is hatched, and that's just what Kristi Thomas, 39, did back in March of 2002. She

launched [Lunchology](#), to sell paper lunch bags that are decorated with trivia, brain twisters and inspirational sayings. How's she doing with it? Sales were \$195,000 in 2006, so I'd say she's doing more than ok.

In a recent issue of [Family Circle magazine](#), she gave a little insight on how it all got started.

Inspiration. "When my daughter, Madison, had separation anxiety in first grade, I doodled jokes and cartoons on her lunch bags to cheer her up. When other parents asked me to make bags for their kids, I knew I was onto something."

Start-Up Strategies. "To be sure there was nothing similar on the market, I typed phrases like "lunch bags" and "brown bags" into Internet search engines, then did a preliminary patent search at the US Patent and Trademark Office ([uspto.gov](#)). When nothing came up, I filed a provisional patent for patent-pending status - around \$200, plus attorney fees - which protects your idea for a year. I showed samples to fellow entrepreneurs and gourmet store owners for input but also had them sign a confidentiality agreement to further protect my idea."

Money Making Moves. "My first break was when the owner of a local upscale grocery store agreed to carry the bags. Initially, I manufactured from my basement with the help of friends, but when space got tight, I partnered with Weaver Industries, which employs people with mental and physical disabilities. We moved into their warehouse and trained their staff to do our packaging. I have met some of my finest workers there. Thanks to them, we're now in about 1,000 specialty stores. Also, I'm negotiating with [Target](#) and am on track to triple sales!"

Photo from [Lunchology.com](#).



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