



## HOW TO CREATE A PRODUCT LINE

At this time of year (Christmas is around the corner) I think an appropriate subject such as creating a product line is worth reiterating, such as, possible creations that could have local or nationwide potential and how we come up with them. How can we create product ideas that are bought annually, once in a lifetime, or just to commemorate a time in ones life, such as a vacation or a special event? Christmas time is a great way to test the market with your new product.

Some get so flustered trying to come up with ideas for what people will buy. This process can be made so much easier if we just look inward. Think about our immediate families. Think about life, your parents, and your grandparents from their early years to retirement. What personalized meaningful gifts are needed each and every day of our lives? Have fun with this and you will be surprised at how many product ideas can be created when someone thinks about a gift to recognized a moment in the time of ones life.

Your parents got married (gifts), they bought their first house (gifts), house decorations, you were born, birthdays, vacations, pets, hobbies, sports, high school or college graduation, grandpa retired, you joined the military, graduated from boot camp, served at such and such base, got out of the military, you joined an organization, career promotion, you just caught a prize fish, you just bagged your first deer, you got married, you bought your first house, you just had a child. This is the cycle of life that repeats itself "time and time again" for millions of families across the nation. I am leaving out 100's of other times in our lives when you want to purchase something to commemorate a moment or to give to someone you love. 1000's of products are needed. What unique item can you create to fill some of those needs?

The fun part is to take each topic and break it down to see what ideas we might like to create (products) for customers to buy. First topic is getting married. This is a very emotional time. Many weddings today are looking for something special. I recently saw the most unique laser cut invitations for graduation. Weddings need invitations. Can the same concept be used? The bride and groom usually give gifts to the bridal party. What can we create? We all have seen the personalized champagne glasses and cake carving knives. How about table top center pieces? Can you create unique products using colored acrylic? The point of this exercise is to try to think of 6 to 10 different areas in each category that needs a product, and then have fun creating or dreaming up the actual product. For instance, I might even make 6 to 10 different laser cut invitations to choose

from. My wife always likes choices when she shops. This makes your product line look bigger by having slightly different options, such as colors, wording, etc. For your information, those graduation invitations sold for \$5.00 each and the laser entrepreneur said she had to cut off orders, so she could produce them all in time. She expects next year to be real BIG! She already has customers contacting her.

Many of the topics we have listed are not just family orientated. Take pets, hobbies, sports, and belonging to an organization. There are many times in ones life that allows for more spending and more product ideas. For instance; our kids have grown up and left home. I have found we have new interests and more residual cash. If we had grandchildren we would be spoiling them. Right now we have settled on a pet dog. Our dog's name is Mercedes (OK, I told my wife I would get her a Mercedes!). This dog has more control over us than any of our children ever had. If I didn't own a laser we would be constantly buying personalized items. I have made a dog collar, dog tag, personalized dog bowl, leash, personalized picture frame, and also an engraved black marble picture. He even has a personalized name plate on his sleeping quarters. I think my wife would buy personalized dog treats if she could find them. My wife now says she wants to buy me a Porsche. I think she wants a cat. ☺

Think about this. At every income level you have buyers with pets. Whether the people are single, married, or just lonely like us, what products are needed? What unique product could I make that a crazy person like Buzz's wife would buy? Have you ever been to a dog show and seen how insane these people are for pet products? (I only use insane as a loving way to describe my wife's spending habits. ☺ Our local Wal-Mart is now selling pet clothing! Pets are big business.

So you ask. Who would sell these pet products you are going to make? How about kennels, veterinarians, pet hospitals, groomers, pet stores, dog shows, crematories, and in our area they have pet boutiques and wash basin rental locations to give your dog a bath. I could go on and on.

If this newsletter could be interactive, I would ask you to throw out an emotional time in your life and we could brainstorm for products. It is fun to dream up ideas. What would you buy? What would grandma buy? What would Dad buy? Just think new born baby. Could you make up 6 different products that announced the newborn? A Wall Tribute that goes on the front door saying "It's a Girl", "It's a Boy" that shows the date, weight, and length of the baby. How about a picture frame product using this information that allows the baby's foot prints to be inserted? Cigars laser very well. How about baby's first rattle? Suppliers have wooden rattles that can be engraved. Leather engraves very nicely. This allows Dad to get that first baseball glove or football and have it personalized. Have you checked out the nice wooden photo albums offered from distributors that are great for engraving? What parent wouldn't love one of those!?!

Let's take this a bit further. Let's challenge ourselves and try to think of ideas out of the norm. How about product ideas that do not cost a lot for the substrate, maybe nothing?

What if your son was into karate and broke his first board? Would that board be a good

product to engrave to commemorate that memorable moment? Would all karate students like to have their broken boards engraved?

I once ran a factory that had 16 mechanics. Each mechanic owned their own tools and they had 100's of them. They paid a lot of money for these tools and some use a punch to try to personalize them. If someone had offered a bulk rate for personalizing these tools I think the company would pay for it. What if you could work a deal with the person who is selling these tools? He must call on 100's of accounts. Could this be an added sales incentive to help him sell tools? One company comes to mind, "Snap-On". I know there must be other companies. No inventory, no substrate supplies, just you and your laser. Once you have your foot in the door of a factory (especially through the maintenance dept.) what other services could you provide? So many electrical panels, machine dials, signs...a constant possibility of \$\$\$ if you show them what your capable of doing.

We haven't touched on the many fundraising needs such as schools, churches, and organizations, just to name a few. Schools probably have 10 organizations within them that need to raise funds. Band, sports, cheerleaders, senior graduation, etc.. When we really start to look at all the possibilities for your laser, the overwhelming part is the knowledge that it is infinite! Where do we start first? I would look at what we are interested in and who we know. If you are into camping, how about campground souvenirs for location throughout the country or camping products that have different wording? For example, "Born to Camp – Forced to Work", "Welcome to my Getaway", or "Enjoying Life-Retired" come to mind. Each time you change the wording it has a different emotional meaning for the purchaser. If your husband is in the military those type of products sell well right now. Motorcycle and car enthusiast are usually emotional about their hobby. What can you create for them? If you are dealing in an area you already understand, then coming up with a product idea will be easier. You already have some idea of what they might want or will buy.

You know, when you start making a product line, this may lead you to a new customer who will inspire you to create the product that will become your best seller. You never know where your laser will lead you, but the most important part is to start making something and show it to everyone you can. Exposure equals sales! Exposure equals more opportunities to grow! So go expose yourself! ☺

Thanks,  
Buzz