

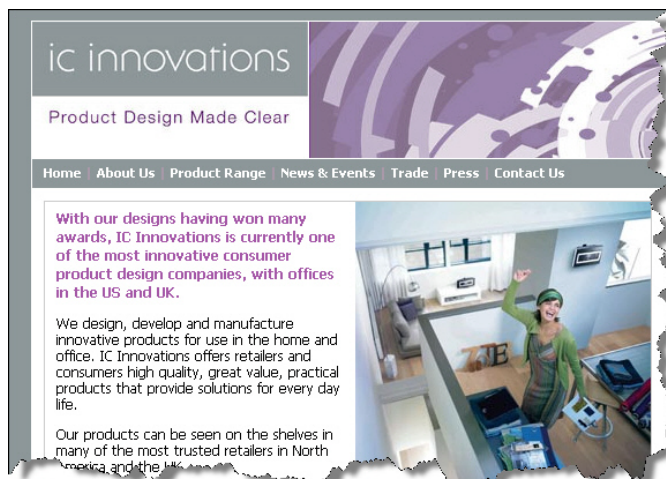
IC Innovations is perhaps best described as an "ideas factory". The business was started two years ago by Tristan Cowell, then a geography graduate from University of Nottingham.

The business idea was born when Cowell's mother was looking for a way to display her Christmas cards. Tristan noticed a strip of Velcro sticking out of her sewing basket. His Eureka moment, as Cowell calls it, was the idea of sticking the cards to a strip of Velcro hanging from the wall.

After incorporation in 2004 and exhibiting at trade shows in the UK, Cowell had his big break thanks to a 100,000 unit order from Asda. Unfortunately his local suppliers couldn't possibly produce that volume in time for the 2005 holiday season, so Cowell hopped on a plane to Shanghai, lined up manufacturing and made the deadline. Since then he has expanded the produce range to include photo hangups, fridge hang-ups and three other novelties for displaying cards and photos. Annual turnover has already reached £130,000 and Cowell expects this to grow four-fold.

Cowell won £3,000 when he was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year for Yorkshire and Humberside. He then reached the regional finals of the 2007 HSBC Start Up Stars Award. IC Innovations, which started with the quick and easy card display product named Card Hang ups, now has employees in both the UK and the USA.

www.ic-innovations.com



Source: Daily Telegraph

Little Ironies

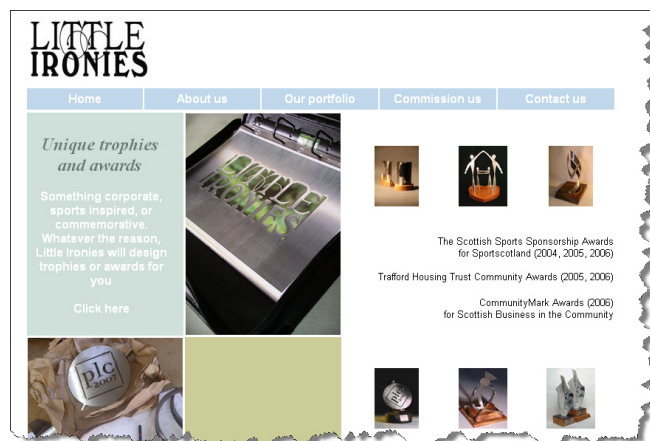
When Joanne Moody, a graduate of interior architecture, moved to Dundee with her husband she noticed a lack of work in her field of design. With time on her hands, she decided to do a course in welding and fabrication. Having a background in architecture, she became interested in designing garden furniture, as it brought together her practical and design skills.

Keen to take this idea further, she applied to go on a postgraduate entrepreneurship course at Abertay University. In addition to the study of the academic side of business, accounting and law, it also offered an incubator facility, known as Embreonix, which gave her an office, computer, fax – everything needed to get a new business started.

Financial support was provided through match funding from Scottish Enterprise and Tayside of £1,045 and £425 business start up award towards her IT equipment. Soon she was developing her first commercial pieces which, being reusable, also satisfied Moody's wish to "do a little bit more for the environment."

With little initial knowledge of metal work she has had to learn quickly and makes use of experienced fabricators to outsource larger projects. Building a sophisticated website has proved to be an effective marketing tool, attracting clients from as far away as Dubai and Malta.

www.littleironies.co.uk



Source: The Times