

InnovateHER 2016 Nomination Package

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

UCI Applied Innovation (formerly, “Innovation Institute”) has, after review and deliberation of all applicants, chosen to support and nominate Gengirl Media, LLC, (d/b/a “iBesties”) for the InnovateHER 2016 Competition (“the Competition”). As outlined below, iBesties presented the strongest business plan under the The Competition’s judging criteria.

Has a Measurable Impact on the Lives of Women and Families

iBesties seeks to empower young girls by providing toys and resources that encourage curiosity and interest in STEM related fields, which directly addresses the current shortfall of qualified applicants for STEM careers.¹ In addition to encouraging “aspirational play,” iBesties provides a positive influence on each child’s self-esteem and self-image. Combined, these factors create an opportunity to empower future generations of women in their professional and family lives by investing in how they play, as children, today.

Has the Potential for Commercialization

This category is where iBesties truly out performed its competitors. While all applicants to the competition provided ideas with varying degrees of substance, iBesties was the only submission which has no significant barriers to commercialization. Moreover, iBesties provided substantive, demonstrable solutions for all elements related to supply chain management, distribution, and manufacturing. Further, where other applicants failed to assess financials,

¹ See https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/research/generation_stem_full_report.pdf

liabilities, or strategies for scaling their company, iBesties provided thorough financials to support their claims and goals.

Fills a Need in the Marketplace

UCI Applied Innovation received numerous ideas which, in some way, would fill a need in the marketplace. However, a common weakness among applicants was a failure to substantiate just how large a need was or, in some instances, a failure to articulate how the applicant's idea would address an identified need. iBesties, however, has—in addition to identifying a need in the marketplace—clearly, and realistically, identified how it plans to address such a need. Furthermore, iBesties displayed a sophisticated attention to detail by granulizing the marketplace into clearly identified market segments and addressing how to target the problems they face.

In conclusion, for the reasons described above, iBesties best satisfied the Challenge criteria and presents the greatest potential for success out of any applications received.



Carolyn Stephens, Ph.D.

Associate Director and Chief of Staff

University of California, Irvine, Applied Innovation