

InnovateHer Business Plan Competition
Statement of Support for
Bandbox™ LLC

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FOR SELECTED WINNER

Of the local submissions, Bandbox™ LLC clearly delivered the most outstanding business plan built upon a solid business concept. Bandbox™ LLC has a proven record of acceptance for its products while still in the prototyping and test marketing phase. During the final selection step (a presentation to the judging panel of 3 SBDC advisors), Bandbox™ LLC lucidly articulated how it met the Challenge criteria. Dr. Cheryl Allen-Munley, owner, also demonstrated an understanding of Bandbox's markets, the financial and operational challenges it faces moving into the full commercialization stage of its development.

It now is ready to move beyond its initial business concept stage with guidance from Northwest NJSBDC. It is the only candidate that adequately addressed the three Challenge criteria:

- **Measurable impact on the lives of women and their families (30%)**
The plan provides supporting documentation throughout on safety requirements, standards and documented evidence of performance. Here are a few points raised within the plan. While the plan does not list citations specifically, they have been provided to the reviewers and we verified their accuracy.
 - Non-competitive, often referred to as utility or transportation cyclists, comprise nearly two-thirds (2/3) of the total cyclist market. One half of these are women. (pp. 2, 4)
 - The number of women bicycle commuters rose 58% from 2006 to 2012. (p. 4)
 - Studies from major cycling associations (including the Bicycle Helmet Institute and the Snell Center) attest that cyclists who wear helmets sustain less serious head injuries if the helmet fit properly and meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards. (pp. 4-5)
 - Twenty-one states in the U.S. have adopted bicycle helmet laws, although primarily for children. Outside the U.S., Australia and New Zealand have adopted universal protective headgear laws. (pg. 4)
 - The majority of cyclists frequently fail to wear helmets because they find them ugly and uncomfortable. (pp. 4, 6, 7-8)
 - Recently, the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) has mandated that protective headgear must be worn at all dressage competitions. (p. 5) The vast majority of these competitors are women.
- **Potential for commercialization (40%)**
There has been a great reliance on hand-crafting the helmets and helmet-hats during the prototyping and test market phase for Bandbox™ LLC. While the helmet shell is made by independent manufacturer, the "comfort fit" is achieved by a trade secret protected "space-age" foam that is hand-tooled for sizing and comfort requirements.
 - Dr. Cheryl Allen-Munley has researched possible manufacturers for the entire production process. (pp. 11, 12, 13)
 - Northwest NJSBDC has introduced her to NJMEP (Manufacturer's Extension Program) which is working to streamline the production and locate appropriate U.S. manufacturers.

- Northwest NJSBDC has also introduced her to several assembly operations that employ the individuals with disabilities: Abilities of North Jersey and Employment Horizons.
- Currently the helmet is being redesigned based on feedback from the prototyping and test market phase. Efficiencies in redesign and mold creation are being realized by the use of 3D printers in a manufacturing lab. (pp. 10-11, 16)
- As an engineer by training, Dr. Munley is uniquely qualified to move to the next stage of production. (pp. 12-13)
- In the immediate next phase of moving toward commercialization Bandbox™ LLC has plans to improve their website to include an interactive resource for “trying on the hat”. Experience has shown that when prospective buyers actually try on a helmet-hat sales conversion exceeds 95%. This indicates that demand for direct consumer sales will be stimulated by the planned website upgrade. (p. 16)
- Historical data provided in the plan indicate that website activity directly correlates to sales. This further demonstrates that website improvements, including social media activity driving to the website and SEO will lead to increased consumer sales with the highest profit margin. (p. 10)
- **Fills a need in the marketplace (30%)**

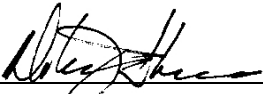
The data provided under the first criteria (Measurable Impact ...) also provides documentation that the helmet-hat as developed by Bandbox™ LLC meets a market need. Obviously the best designed helmet does not provide protection if it is not worn (p.4). Anecdotal evidence provided in the plan further underscore this premise. We have reviewed the results submitted by the independent testing lab.

 - Data on this premise is provided by the Copenhagen Cycle Chic Manifesto. (p. 2)
 - Testimonials are provided documenting customer satisfaction and their perception that a real need has been filled by the product. (pp. 8, 12)
 - The helmet meets CPSC standards for safety under normal operating conditions. (pg. 5, 8, 12)
 - The size of the potential market is substantial, 12 to 15 million, for cyclists’ helmets and another 7 million for equestrians. (pp. 6-7)

Overall the business plan submitted by Bandbox™ LLC was:

- Complete – addressing all the critical areas of business operations, marketing and financing;
- Reasonable – financial achievements based on current or near-term capital infusion;
- Substantiated claims – for market size/needs, costs and growth potential;
- Viable business model – as proven in the last 2 years of prototyping and test marketing;
- Compliance – with industry standards for product safety; and
- Flexibility – to address alternate means for commercialization and growth

Further, the management team exhibited a willingness to adopt sound business principles to expand its business by working with a team of advisors and/or resources that have been presented.


Dolores J. Stammer, Regional Director
Northwest NJSBDC

12/2/15
Date