

Phillips Plastics Corporation®

INTERFACE

Phillips pulls out all the stops for kickTrak™ inventor

According to the National Institutes of Health, stillbirth claims 70 lives a day in the United States. This statistic kept Dr. Diep Nguyen, a Southern California-based, board-certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist, awake at night.



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Mark Johnson, Director of Opportunity Development, Phillips Plastics

Dr. Nguyen founded the BabyKick Alliance to increase public awareness about the importance of monitoring kick counts during pregnancy to prevent the incidence of stillbirth. Still, she knew more could be done to provide pregnant women with a tangible, simple way to correctly and consistently track and monitor kick count.

She drafted ideas for what would become the babyKick™ kickTrak™ kick counter device and in April 2005, brought them to Omnica Corporation, a California-based medical device design, engineering, and product development firm.

bab**kick**™
kickTrak™

Developing the Concept

While Omnica normally works with corporations, they took Dr. Nguyen on as a client because she impressed them with her passion for both the product and the cause. “She has staying power, exuberance, and the business plan to get her project done,” says Earl Robinson, Vice President of Industrial Design, Omnica.

With consumers, rather than health care providers, as her target audience for the product, Dr. Nguyen challenged Robinson to create a device that is easy to use as well as affordable. The device would need to record and store kick count data over the course of a woman’s pregnancy, operate on batteries, and have a memory chip in the event of battery failure. She also required the device to perform multiple functions, yet have no more than two buttons for operating ease.

Within two months Robinson had successfully developed a three-dimensional computer-aided design (3D CAD) model of kickTrak™ with all of its functions in place, which was used to create a hand-held, working prototype. By October 2005, Dr. Nguyen was ready to take the design project into production.



Project Management Saves Time, Ensures Quality

Robinson advised Dr. Nguyen to work with Phillips Plastics Corporation®, a company he recognized for its injection molding manufacturing expertise. Dr. Nguyen evaluated several manufacturing companies and ultimately chose to work with Phillips Plastics.

“Phillips Plastics cost a little more, but their services were well worth my investment. Their project management expertise freed my time to focus on my career as a full-time OB/GYN, and their attention to detail ensured we would create the best product to help prevent still-birth,” says Dr. Nguyen.



Overseas Manufacturing Reduces Cost

To accommodate Dr. Nguyen's budget, Phillips Plastics sourced Illinois-based Eastek International for the manufacture of their device within their Dongguan, China facility. In addition, Phillips Plastics took full responsibility for the project, thereby eliminating Dr. Nguyen's need to supervise the manufacturing of the product.

Seamless Production Process

Meanwhile, Kurt Hudoba, Senior Project Engineer, Phillips Plastics, coordinated regularly scheduled meetings among Dr. Nguyen, Omnica, and Eastek via computer conferencing technology. Everyone involved in the meetings was able to see and evaluate 3D CAD images of the product on their computer screens in real time and discuss modifications that needed to be made to smooth out the device's functions, quality, and price.

"The advent of 3D CAD and computer conferencing technology sped up and streamlined the process of perfecting the product," says Robinson.

Nguyen adds, "Hudoba's success in getting all of the players involved in the project at the same time during our meetings made production in China as seamless as working with a local manufacturer, despite the distance."

In early 2007, less than a year after the project began, Eastek produced the first run of 5,000 kickTrak™ devices and packaging. "The kickTrak™ project demonstrates the strength of the alliance between Phillips

Plastics and Eastek. Each party brings unique capabilities to the table. Phillips Plastics has deep expertise in engineering and program management, while Eastek provides U.S. support and China manufacturing excellence in plastic injection molding and electronic product assemblies," says Bob Wiegand, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Eastek International. "The end result was a unique, high-quality product that accomplished Dr. Nguyen's goals."

Dr. Nguyen plans to market the kickTrak™ device directly to pregnant women via the Internet, doctors' offices, hospital prenatal programs, and eventually throughout retail outlets. A percentage of kickTrak™ sales will support the BabyKick Alliance and its mission to impact stillbirth statistics.

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"Throughout the entire project I set criteria and everyone at Omnica, Phillips, and Eastek bent over backwards to work with me and see the project through," says Dr. Nguyen. "They've done more than believe in the product, they all have become part of the solution to decrease stillbirth."

"Dr. Nguyen's high energy and passion for the product is contagious," says Mark Johnson, Director of Opportunity Development, Phillips Plastics. "We fell in love with kickTrak™ and believe the public will too."

Go to www.babykick.com for more information about the kickTrak™.

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