

Struggles of a British Inventor

East London based inventor, Aziz Patel, is overjoyed at the successful launch of his new invention *Freshorize 3 in 1*, a multi-function handwash, air freshener, and fragrance gel. *Freshorize 3 in 1* simultaneously releases a burst of air freshener whenever liquid soap is dispensed. The unique concept of the invention rolled out in **Tesco** who helped in the creation of *Freshorize 3 in 1*. Being branded as a must-have household item for every bathroom and kitchen, the company slogan, *Cleanse and Refresh*, has set the trend for consumers to automatically invigorate their homes with refreshing scents *just by washing their hands!*

Cleanse and Refresh with *Freshorize*

The idea of automatically triggering a burst of air freshener whilst simply washing one's hands came to Aziz 3 years ago during a long haul flight where he had the misfortune to be seated next to an aeroplane lavatory.

He said: "I couldn't help but notice that the air fresheners were not working fast enough when needed the most. What was needed was a burst of fragrance that could be dispensed without any extra effort. I started to figure out ways of solving the problem and I guess the unpleasant environment in this flight must have got me thinking because the solution that came to me turned out to be so simple and elegant, I was surprised that no one had thought of it before."

An Uphill Struggle

Aziz recognized the business potential of his idea, left his job and spent the following 2 years obtaining patents, developing prototypes of the product and trying to convince leading

manufacturers of its merits, all the while overcoming difficult struggles to see it through. Most industries did not give his invention serious thought, a few outright gave a thumbs down saying it was not viable, or required a large advertising budget. Other companies stated that they simply did not have the time to see the inventor. He adds: "I struggled a lot, and having too many negative comments about my invention was not helpful." Compounded with financial woes, things were getting desperate for Aziz.

Aziz says: "I could not understand why the industry did not want to see potential in my idea. To begin with, they were unwilling to sign confidential agreements. A few alleged they may already have my invention in their files and this may lead me to sue them in the future. One multi-national condescendingly asserted, "our R&D is so well funded there is nothing a member of the public can teach us." A few companies listened with initial interest and took their sweet time in replying. I would wonder on occasions if I were being ripped off. Some companies looked at costs and came up with ludicrous figures of investment required to make the product.

Poor Management Decisions

Aziz continues: "At times I thought these managers were in a powerful position, they could determine the fate of innovation, yet they had little clue of what they were really talking about. Reasoned judgment was not at play, but the power to take you on or not was all too plain to see. These companies could decide the level of innovation that is to be adapted in our country. Britain is one the most innovative countries in the world but our negative managers in industry are stifling the potential of our innovators. A shameful and serious loss to our country, that our ideas eventually end up abroad."

Aziz was advised he was wasting his time in England and that he ought to

go to USA or Canada.



Aziz showing his invention

A Trip to North America

Despondent with the lack of support from our industry, Aziz went to USA and Canada to see if he could get some backing. He says, "I could see a different attitude in the US. Back home, calling myself an inventor was problematic, it conjured images of a mad scientist, and I could not convince anyone. In contrast, in North America they wanted to know more and the enthusiasm was all too apparent." Aziz, already in dire financial straights could not afford to stay in the US so had to come back to England. To overcome his financial hardships, Aziz approached many banks and he says "they were even worse, not a penny unless I had security." Government grants were refused because he did not quite meet their criteria.

Optimism Shared

All that hard work finally paid off when UK's leading supermarket chain **Tesco**, having seen his prototypes, shared his optimism for the concept and decided to support his endeavors in bringing a finished product to the marketplace. All it took to make a world of difference was someone in

Tesco to see innovation and a future in a product. Today, Freshorize Ltd works with and supports 8 British companies in making components for the product.

Aziz advises our inventors: "Getting British industry to take us seriously is a problem, but I would encourage other would-be inventors to persevere and stay determined. I've worked hard in getting this idea off the ground but I have been fortunate in having a supportive family."

Aziz welcomes your comments and you can access more information on www.freshorize.com or by e-mail at aziz@freshorize.com

Freshorize 3-in-1 is currently available nationwide in selected **Tesco** stores.