



A Determined Mom

After years of marketing her patented kiddie-size shoehorns, Tina Bagon found the right fit with Amazon and Zappos.

Back in 2005, Tina Bagon struggled with the same nagging problem as other moms: how to get their kids' tiny feet into tiny shoes. "It took so much time and was frustrating for everyone," says Bagon, an Albuquerque native. "I would sit on the floor, (and) my older son would lean against my back to put his shoes on."

But between son Brandon's lean-to approach, and her younger son Evan's process (which required sitting in mom's lap), Bagon hit on the solution. "I realized my kids were trying to put shoes on, (but) they weren't engaging their own core muscles to push their foot into a shoe," she says. "They used me as leverage, instead."

And that need for leverage led to the invention of the Little Piggie Kids Shoehorn in 2005, using only viral marketing on Facebook. The product, a small blue shoehorn, was a hit, eventually selling 5,000 units. "But then I got too busy with the boys," says Bagon. "They were playing sports and I didn't have the time." About 10 years later, friends started asking if she was ever going to revive her product, and that's when Bagon got serious, sketching out designs with crayons and colored pencils on her kitchen table.

The resulting product went on sale on her BrightKidsLLC.com site in 2018, and after pulling in an impressive amount of

sales, caught the attention of Amazon. The behemoth online retailer signed a contract with Bagon to place the horns on their site, as well as on their subsidiary, Zappos.com, a leader in online shoe sales.

Little Piggie Kids Shoehorns are sold in five different colors, with fun, kid-friendly designs that include a green frog, red owl, yellow monkey and pink butterfly. There's also a nod to Bagon's original design, a blue model that is molded from Brandon's foot (with Evan's foot imprinted on the back)—mom's way of giving 'props' to her tykes for providing inspiration. A three-pack is \$19.99 on Amazon and Zappos. The Bright Kids site offers the same deal, but also carries a two-pack (\$13.99) and a five-pack (\$24.99).

During the years it took to develop the product, Bagon cleaned houses to finance her business while avoiding any significant debt. She also created a product prototype and educated herself on different manufacturing processes. One critical element to the entire plan was incorporating the right materials to remain compliant

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