

Turtle Pack

Support for swimming aid entrepreneur navigating the choppy waters of early product development

Background

Devised by former swim instructor Michael Harkins while at university, Turtle Pack is a unique swimming aid for children, designed to make learning to swim more fun and efficient.

Customer challenge

Michael first approached the AFRC in 2016 when he was starting out in business and seeking advice on the best design and most efficient manufacturing route for Turtle Pack.

How did the AFRC help?

The early days of development are among the most critical when bringing a new product to market. During this period, many young businesses do not survive, but finding the necessary support can help avoid common pitfalls and ensure success.

Our experienced business development team worked closely with Michael to understand Turtle Pack and then provide him with product advice, technical expertise and business support.

Key areas covered included manufacturing capability in the UK, Intellectual Property (IP) strategy, early seed investment options, market research, business planning, and detailed information on a range of funding mechanisms.

The team quickly identified that key to building future success for Turtle Pack was integrating innovation into the design, fast progression to pre-production prototype, and securing the right IP protection throughout. This would also help attract funding and strategic partnerships further down the line.

As a research centre focused on advanced manufacturing, we also provided support on product prototyping, material selection and structural integrity modelling.

Business impact

After working with the AFRC, Michael went on to create and successfully launch Turtle Pack in January 2019, securing 1000 initial sales.

Turtle Pack has received significant funding through Scottish EDGE and Baldwin's Kickstart Competition and Michael was also crowned Young Entrepreneur of the Year at the Great British Entrepreneurial Awards.

Along with receiving a personal endorsement from Sir Richard Branson, who used Turtle Pack with his grandchildren on Necker Island, Michael has pitched his product to HRH the Duke of Cambridge at the Royal Society of Edinburgh and reached the final of Pitch@Palace, a national competition founded by HRH The Duke of York.

The innovative swimming aid has generated significant global interest, securing customers from parents, swim schools, leisure providers and retailers in 23 countries worldwide.

Customer quote

"The support I've received from the AFRC has been fantastic. The business development team has been a huge help to me and we have forged a strong working relationship. They understand me on a personal level and fully support the success of Turtle Pack, going above and beyond to help entrepreneurs succeed."

Michael Harkins, Founder, Turtle Pack



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