

## **SURVIVAL KIT ITEM SEVEN**

### **Post It Three Function Pen**

These teaching notes were prepared by Lau Geok Theng.

#### **Item Description and Preparation**

- Three-in-one product from 3 M consisting of highlighter, pen and post-it strip.
- Preparation:
  - The product can be brought into the classroom and pass around for students to have a look and feel.
  - Students should be asked to examine the website ([http://www.3m.com/us/office/postit/students/?WT.mc\\_id=www.post-it.com/flagplus](http://www.3m.com/us/office/postit/students/?WT.mc_id=www.post-it.com/flagplus)).
  - The instructor should make sure access to internet can be shown on screen to cover Part III of this exercise.

#### **Some Possible Topics for Discussions**

##### *Product Development Process*

- Ask students to take a look at the product and consider how the idea for this product came about? What processes or steps are taken for this product to be introduced into the world?
- 3M's David Windorski's marketing problem: Designing a useful product to help students improve their studying.
- His solution: Offer a product useful to students, that uses 3M's technology and be manufactured and marketed by 3M.
- It took Windorski several years to move the idea gleaned from marketing research on students to an actual Post-it<sup>®</sup> brand product.
- 25 years ago, 3M's Art Fry created an adhesive that would stick and unstick without leaving a mark. His marketing problem:
  - a. Who might use the restickable slips?
  - b. How, when, and where might they be used?

- The solution. 3M mailed some of these slips to secretaries of CEOs from the 500 largest corporations in the U.S. to see if they wanted and could use them.
- The result. Secretaries loved them, and the adhesive became today's 3M Post-it® Notes—and the 3M division that generates the largest revenues and profits in the company.
- In late 2001, as a Post-it® brand products inventor, Windorski was seeking ways to design new products for college students.
- Working with a team of four college students, Windorski and the team observed and questioned dozens of students about how they used their textbooks, wrote and used their lecture notes, did research and wrote papers, and reviewed for exams.
- Students often highlighted a passage on a page in their book or notes and then marked the page with a Post-it® Note or Post-it® Flag of some kind. So it was reasonable to put Post-it® products together with a highlighter to have two functions in one product.
- Windorski attached a pad of Post-it® Notes to the top of a highlighter. This design combined the two products but was awkward and would probably tear off in students' backpacks.
- Windorski then used wood blocks and modeling clay to create a prototype, which showed how the 2-in-1 product would feel. The product used small Post-it® Flags rather than the larger Post-it® Notes and were put inside the barrel of the highlighter.
- There were more breakthroughs and dead ends in Windorski's search for the 2-in-1 highlighter plus Post-it® Flags before he had a 3M product that students could actually use in studying.
- Later, a pen was added to make it a 3-in-one product.
- Ask students what they think of the steps Windorski took. How do they think the process can be improved?

### *New Product Success*

- Ask the students what they consider to be the advantages of the 3-in-1 product? Will they still carry the post-it strips, a pen and a highlighter separately with this product?

- What do they consider to be the disadvantages of this 3-in-1 product? What if the highlighter ran out while the post-it strips and pen are still functioning? How can the design of the product be improved?
- Consider how the 3-in-1 product performs in the five attributes for new product success: relative advantages, compatibility, complexity, observability, and triability. What can 3M do to improve on the product's scoring for these five areas?

### *Online Product Education*

- Students can be asked to explore the 'Try it out' and 'Product in use' areas of the product website ([http://www.3m.com/us/office/postit/students/?WT.mc\\_id=www.post-it.com/flagplus](http://www.3m.com/us/office/postit/students/?WT.mc_id=www.post-it.com/flagplus)).
- How helpful are these features in educating the target group (students) about the usefulness of the product? How can these features be improved?
- What other features can be introduced in the website to encourage students to purchase the product?

### *Target Customers*

- Will college students from all Asian countries react positively to the 3-in-1 products? Students from which countries will react more positively and who will react more negatively to the product?
- Will secondary students and primary students benefit from the 3-in-1 product as much as college students? If not, what features in the product can be modified to make the product more appropriate to these lower level students?
- What other target customers can 3M select for the 3-in-1 product? What product modifications should be carried out for these groups? What marketing activities are suitable for these groups?

NOTE: The suggestions for the use of the item above are only guidelines. I have deliberately written this note in outline form, so you can vary some of the ideas or try other ideas. I have not provided detailed descriptions or suggestions as I do not wish to bog you down with reading of unnecessary details. You can provide your feedback on the use of the above item for classroom discussion to McGraw Hill or myself ([laugeoktheng@hotmail.com](mailto:laugeoktheng@hotmail.com)) so we can decide whether to include this item for future editions of the book and if yes, how to modify the suggestions for its use in the classroom.