

CRAIG JOHNSTON'S PIG



Enterprise

The idea

Craig Johnston, a Liverpool footballer from 1980 to 1988, has a reputation for being something of an ideas man. He created the TV game show "The Main Event"; he wrote The Butler software which tracks the drinks taken out of minibar fridges in hotel rooms; he invented Traxion sole, used on most football boots; he designed The Predator® adidas® football boot used by David Beckham and Johnny Wilkinson.

Craig's latest venture is THE PIG®, which is available in two versions: a 'skin' to fit over the toe of any football boot, which allows players to give the ball greater swerve and spin, and a complete football boot. 'Pig' stands for **Patented** Interactive Grip. By choosing this name Craig has illustrated his awareness of **intellectual property (IP)** and the importance of protecting his **innovation** by getting it **patented**. Craig now has to go about turning his idea into reality.

Issues

Keeping the idea secure

The first thing that Craig had to think about was the security of his **innovation**. He had designed The Predator® while he was working at adidas® and had a reputation in the industry for his talent. He was convinced he had a multi-million pound idea but he needed to develop it and test it. Who might be watching? Could his idea be stolen? Yes it could – so what did he do?



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Development

Materials

The first thing in Craig's product development plan was to decide on the materials. He knew he needed something that would grip and could be moulded. Years earlier he had developed the rubber used on The Predator® boot and once again, for THE PIG® he followed the innovative route. He started to develop a material made of rubber and carbon-fibre, gave it spikes and ridges and moulded it into the shape of a boot. Craig had found a new way of using an existing material in his **innovation**, which enabled him to apply for a **patent**. A new **enterprise** took off.

Research, testing and prototypes

Then began years of development and testing. Designing the materials, making a **prototype**, testing it, refining it and then discovering it wasn't quite right and having to start all over again. Did he get there?

Yes, he did! He had THE PIG® ready to fly.

Manufacture

Now the decision-making started all over again. Craig's target markets are amateur and professional footballers and young people. He hopes to sell millions of pairs of THE PIG®. He could hardly make those sort of quantities in his garden shed! How would he promote and advertise them?

Does Craig manufacture THE PIG® himself for work with big sports brands?

Craig's next decision is to decide whether to manage the production and promotion of THE PIG® himself by working with a manufacturer and a marketing company or to sell his product to a big sports brand, such as adidas® or Nike® and let them take the strain.



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Protection

Non-disclosure Agreement

Craig would have had **Non-disclosure Agreements** (NDAs) drawn up to be signed by his employees and anyone else who was going to be involved. An NDA is a legal document, which imposes an obligation to keep Craig's work secret and not disclose it to anyone else. Until he had his idea developed in enough detail for a patent application, he needed to make sure everyone involved kept it secret.

Registering a patent

Craig went to the UK Intellectual Property Office to file a **patent** application for THE PIG®. The UK Intellectual Property Office is the government agency responsible for the administration of **intellectual property** in the UK. They provide a service, which allows owners to register and protect their creations from being used by others. Patents are for inventions and products that include new functional or technical aspects. Once Craig had applied for his **patent**, he had exclusive rights over his plans and ideas, and could manufacture and market THE PIG®. He could even get a famous footballer to try out THE PIG® in a football match without worrying that someone might copy the idea and beat him to the market.



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Outcome

As an **entrepreneur** Craig saw an opportunity with THE PIG® to create and develop a new product. THE PIG® case study has demonstrated how Craig's knowledge of **intellectual property** has assisted him and enabled him to develop his product successfully. By applying for a **patent** for THE PIG®, he has protected his invention from being copied by other manufacturers and it has given him exclusive rights over his plans and ideas in developing it.



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Additional learning

The Predator®

The Predator® was THE PIG's® predecessor. THE PIG® is available in two versions: a 'skin' that slips over any football boot and retails at around £20, and as a complete football boot. The Predator® is a complete boot, aimed at professional and amateur footballers, with features to help players grip and swerve the ball. This special feature makes it much more expensive, priced at around £120.

How The Predator® was developed.

When Craig Johnston was heading up **innovation** at adidas® soccer, he was also a football coach in his spare time. While he was coaching young football players he told them that they had to grip and bite into the ball like a table tennis bat to swerve it. This gave him the inspiration to see how the rubber on a table tennis bat could be adapted for football. He tore the rubber off a table tennis bat, glued it to his boots and The Predator® football boot was born.

The worldwide market in football boots is a multi-million pound industry, so any new concept in this very lucrative field has to be protected. Craig was the inventor and designer of The Predator®, and he was also the owner of the **patents**. This meant adidas® could not have sold the product without a licence agreement with Craig. **Patents** on The Predator's® functionality and **trade marks** over the name of Predator® would have protected adidas'® rights to market this product exclusively.



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How The Predator® was improved?

Thousands of **prototypes** were produced and tested. The key to The Predator's® success was Craig's ability as an ex-player to work with professional football players and understand their feedback on this revolutionary product.

When was The Predator® launched

The Predator® was launched at the FIFA World Cup in 1994 and by 1996 adidas® had sold 1 million pairs. The **patent** and the right to be the only manufacturer using the name Predator® not only enabled adidas® to enjoy the financial return from Craig's invention, but also reinforced their reputation as manufacturers of innovative and specialist products. Craig then sold adidas® the **patents** to The Predator® and moved on to develop THE PIG®.

How does **intellectual property** support people like Craig to chase his dreams? Being granted a **patent** or registering a **trade mark** or **design** gives people like Craig: the exclusive right to make, use or sell or import any product to which the **design** or **patent** has been applied the use of **trade marks** which protect his brand the right to take legal action against anyone who is trying to copy or exploit it 'breathing space' to develop his **design** through to the market.

Intellectual property gives protection to our designers and inventors and encourages **enterprise**.

