

Local inventors are two-for-two on CBC's Dragon's Den



By Brock Weir

Stepping in front of CBC's Dragons seems like a daunting task for anyone, but when you've already tangled with the business titans once and emerged with a deal, the second-time-around is a lot more comfortable.

At least, that was the case for Aurora inventor Adam Pauze and his son-in-law, former Major League Baseball player Cliff Floyd.

The duo, who struck pay dirt initially during the 2014-2015 season of the hit CBC series after forging a tentative deal with former Dragon Arlene Dickinson over Mr. Pauze's innovative dry wall axe, were back this time with an invention of Mr. Floyd's: a baseball cap liner to protect the heads of players.

'Cliff came to me just after a couple of pitchers were being hit by balls in Major League Baseball,' says Mr. Pauze. 'Cliff noticed it and said, 'Hey, you know what, Pops? We need to come up with something that is going to protect our youth.' He was thinking about the kids who play travel baseball right now. We went to our product developer, Bob Dickie at Spark Innovation in King, and between me, Bob and Cliff, we came up with the concept and took it from there.'

Spark Innovation was also a significant partner in the development of the drywall axe.

Although they struck a deal with Ms. Dickinson the first time around, she later backed out of the deal.

The axe is still 'plugging along', sold nation-wide at Canadian Tire, and experienced a significant bump in sales following their first television appearance, but the duo still have yet to 'hit the American money machine,' according to the inventor.

The new baseball cap liner, however, is a different story.

Friends and family gathered at Aurora's Boston Pizza on Wednesday night for a viewing party to watch the pitch unfold.

They were not disappointed.

The men emerged from the Dragon's Den, deals in hand from Joe Mimran, Michele Romanow and Michael Wekerle for a \$150,000 investment in the product in exchange for a shared \$2.50 on each unit sold over the next 15 years.

'This influx of cash just makes everything move a lot faster,' says Mr. Pauze, noting their latest appearance was taped six months

ago. You don't have to wait around, you can order products, and you can do some marketing. Over the last six months, we signed a deal with the two largest baseball associations in the U.S. ? the Babe Ruth League and the Cal Ripken League. Now, we are the official fielders' head protection for both leagues and we start selling it through their facilities come April when we're invited to go to their camps and all their tournaments to start selling our product.?

The product also recently received the green light to be sold to high schools across Canada and the United States.

Despite this success, however, they are not keen to rest on their laurels. Given the warm reception received by this invention, they are already hard at work brainstorming how it can be used in other sports, including soccer, racquetball and curling, as well as entirely different applications.

?We are in the process of developing a few new products and once the ball cap liner starts moving on, we're going to expand it into the medical field for people with self-injury behaviour, autism and things like that,? he says.