

Faveo

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“Most private investors are men. Trying to pitch a female-oriented product was like facing *Dragons’ Den* on a weekly basis”

Joanne Morgan with six-month-old Felix and a poster for Faveo, her unique take on the strapless bra



Joanne Morgan, 32, created a brilliantly simple strapless bra for larger cup sizes

“They say, ‘Necessity is the mother of invention’ – and it couldn’t have been truer in my case. I’d bought a gorgeous black, backless dress to wear on a first date with Martin. He was taking me to a ball and I wanted to make a great impression.

The only problem was getting a strapless bra in my generous size to wear underneath it! They were all uncomfortably tight and still needed hoiking up regularly – and toupe tape needs the strength of Super Glue to support a big bust.

With the ball just three days away, I racked my brains for a solution. Surely there had to be an alternative to the traditional strapless bra? After raiding my lingerie drawer, I worked well into the

night, chopping up bits of fabric and elastic. After several efforts, I finally fashioned two soft ‘cups’ from lace-top stockings to individually encircle each breast. Then I sewed on hook-and-eye fastenings from old bras to fasten over the top. They cupped my breasts like hands, ‘lifting’ them into a rounded shape. It was a very crude design, but did the job.

On the night of the ball, I fastened each one into place, stepped into my dress and examined myself in the mirror. Perfect. My date went swimmingly. “Wow,” Martin said when he saw me. Dancing across the floor, I felt really comfortable, and secure enough not to worry about ‘falling out’ of my dress.

My home-made bra seemed too good to hide away in my underwear drawer so I showed it to a lingerie retailer. “What a great shape,” she said when she saw it on. And that was when I knew I was onto a winner. Martin and I were getting on pretty well too!

At the time, my job involved helping to get NHS health products into production, so I had some idea of how to go about getting my invention into the marketplace. I also knew it would probably be a long, tedious slog, taking time, money and endurance. But after a week searching patent databases, I knew that my invention was unique.

I enlisted the help of one of my oldest friends, Megan, and together we saw designers, experimented with fabrics, carried out market research and then set up our own company while still working full-time. Working 70 to 80-hour weeks, it’s a miracle Martin and I had time to see each other – let alone have a serious relationship. But he even came up with our company name – Faveo, which means ‘I support’ in Latin.

One of the main problems was finance. Banks are too cautious to lend money for something unproven, and most private investors are men. Trying to pitch a female-oriented product was like facing *Dragons’ Den* on a weekly basis. Women, on the other hand, understood the concept straight away.

Made from a special sticky silicone, Faveo works by becoming a ‘second skin’, cupping each breast individually and moulding and uplifting it into a rounded shape. An adjustable hook-and-eye fastening secures the cup across the top of the breast, but it doesn’t work for smaller busts because there isn’t enough breast tissue to mould. The biggest sceptics were amazed at the support it provides to even the heaviest breasts.

Although I was convinced my invention would be a success, I knew it could take several years. In an ideal world, I wouldn’t have chosen to have a baby until Faveo was successfully launched, but I had fertility tests and the doctors told me to do it sooner rather than later, so I got on with it. Felix was born in January this year, Faveo was launched to the public in April and Martin and I tied the knot in May.

Astonishingly, even before the launch, we were

receiving 2,000 hits a day on the website, simply from online searches for 'backless bra' and 'big sizes'. But with 80 per cent of women wearing the wrong size 'normal' bra, they need to be taught how to wear it. Although there is a fitting guide on the website, I'd advise getting fitted professionally at one of our stockists.

It looks like becoming a big success, but I still can't believe how much my life has changed because of a bra."

Faveo Freedom Bra costs £35. Visit www.faveo.co.uk for details and stockists.