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Fifty Sharp Ideas and the Visionaries Who Saw Them Through



SIGG

ROBERT RHEAUME

Photo: Tony Pettinato

It's hard to get cool, but it's harder to stay cool. Just ask Robert Rheume. The Sigg USA VP-sales and marketing, along with Steve Wasik, president-general manager, had been peddling a \$20 reusable metal bottle, but consumers didn't get it.

This fall, after a summer packed with headlines about the millions of tons of plastic water bottles flowing into city landfills, those same buyers are calling back wanting bottles -- yesterday.

In addition to brisk online sales, the number of outlets selling the bottles has grown to more than 1,300 from 400 in two years. While privately held Sigg declines to give more specific figures, it says sales are up 250% from last year. "Someone told me recently that it's so cool the product isn't everywhere," says Mr. Rheume, 40, adding that most of the company's sales spike was built on blogs and working with outdoor enthusiasts. He started posting comments on the blogs, and now bloggers are sharing news about Sigg bottles. "They do it for us," he says.

A contest for a new design drew 30,000 votes, Mr. Wasik says, adding that the design will be for sale at Patagonia stores in time for the holidays.

-- Emily Bryson York