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Who should I contact when I have an idea to do with design?



James Caan

Dear James,
I HAVE had ideas and I always fall short in taking them further. The times I did pursue them I was eventually beaten by those who offered assistance with the design process. I see things around me, items I use every day, which are tatty. Items which can be a hazard in their design that need improving yet when I research the equipment I cannot see alternatives to alleviate the problems. Could you let me know the first steps on who to contact, or how to approach product designers who wouldn't want me to remortgage my house?
Paul Wallace

FIRST I want to say how much I appreciate your letter. It's because of people like you all over the country that I am so passionate about giving advice and inspiring people to start their own business.

The thing is, success is not just built around ideas – the execution is where you will realise success.

Please don't waste precious time and money creating prototypes. There are lots of different ways you can explore a new product. One of the quickest and easiest ways is to produce digital graphics. If you can't do this yourself, you could get a graphic designer to do this quite cheaply. It's a good idea to go to a buyer and ask for their advice. Explain what your product will be including its USP.

He or she will then tell you valuable

information such as if it there could be a market for it, what it could be sold for, whether it is too big, too small or too heavy. And guess what? It won't cost you so much.

So remember, this is an important part of the process. Good luck.

■ JAMES Caan's new book *Start Your Business in 7 Days* is published on March 1.

If you have any burning issues you would like advice on please email askjames@standard.co.uk