



Consumer Product Design of the Year

Just the tops



(From left) Shaun Williamson, Christopher Mallows, director at William J Inventions, and Sean Wade, technical director at Plastech Solutions

The Plastics Industry Awards trophy for the Best Consumer Product Design of the Year was awarded to William J Inventions for its ToPo product. Essentially, ToPo is a modified screw top closure; they can be collected and joined together to create patterns and models.

Speaking to PRW after the awards presentation, Dr. William 'Willy' Johnson had this to say about how he came up with the idea. "I dropped a plastic top [from another product] on the floor and noticed the vertical lines on the side wall. It was a 'Eureka!' moment! I suddenly realised the possibility of joining one top to another and what a wonderful construction toy it could make."

The tops, which can be round or square, are joined together using an interlocking mechanism. They further feature words, numbers and messages printed into the plastic, which means they could also serve as game pieces.

The ToPo name refers to the longer message: Stop pollution. Like other popular building bricks, the plastic tops are fully recyclable, but as Johnson says: "Who will ever wish to!"

He added: "I feel that ToPo is such a game changer in the beverage industry, but there is perhaps a nervousness in becoming the first to put a foot in the water. I feel that the industry is very closed [to new ideas] and that a 'not invented here' syndrome is prevalent."



On winning the award, Johnson said that he was "very surprised and grateful". He is hoping that exposure of the ToPo product will help get an interested manufacturer onboard with the project.

"Promotion and publicity is the best tonic that ToPo could have in its quest for commercial success. Winning the award will be a great help with this. Indeed, it may be life giving!"

He continued: "ToPo success would be a wonderful end – the final invention – for an old inventor looking to innovate. My dream is that one day every beverage container will have a ToPo on the top."

Dr. Johnson holds more than 150 patents, including the world's first trainer/training shoe with an integrated pedometer and film coatings for visual displays.

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