

Jamye Hickman

Pet Product Ergonomist

Jamye Hickman designs products for pets that are engineered for people.

As CEO of PupCentric, Hickman, MS Psy 04, markets her Everything But the Dog Carry-all to pet parents on the go. Her Web site, www.pupcentric.com, describes the E.B.D. Carry-all thusly: "Think of it as a doggy diaper bag ergonomically designed with functionality and style."

Available in a variety of fash-

ionable colors with optional embroidery, the bag contains collapsible — and matching — food and water bowls, a freezable gel pack and blanket and has pockets for everything from waste bags to vet papers. Earlier this year, PupCentric released CwickUps, canine waste pick-up bags that are available in patterns that coordinate with the carry-alls. The slogan: "Why does poop have to be drab?"

"PupCentric does not factor specifically into my doctoral research. However, I use principles of ergonomics when designing my line of pet products," says the 29-year-old Hickman, who expects to receive her doctorate in psychology from Tech in December.

The idea for the carry-all came to Hickman during a trip to visit her parents in North Carolina with her dog, Zoe-Joe, in tow.

"I had to pack her bags just like my own. I couldn't keep her toys, food and other necessities organized or at reach when in the car. I couldn't find a product on the market so I decided to make one in April 2006," she says. "I grew up sewing as a hobby so this wasn't a far stretch for me."

Hickman found a pattern maker in Canada, refined her design and sought funding. "I had difficulty securing funding through traditional sources so my parents became the first financial backers of my company," she says.

"The finished product debuted at the H.H. Backer Pet Industry Trade Show in October 2006 and in December 2006 my products were featured in a pet industry trade magazine."

In 2007, the E.B.D. Carry-all was awarded the Editor's Choice Award by *Pet Product News International* for its innovative design.

Now with distribution warehouses in Atlanta and Nevada, PupCentric products can be found at retailers across the country, from Paws & Claws in Trussville, Ala., to A Bone to Pick in Davidsonville, Md., to Barkz in Kirkland, Wash. Catalog and online retailers include YourBreed Clothing Co. and The Pawhaus.

After receiving her doctorate, Hickman plans to remain in Atlanta as the PupCentric CEO while working as an adjunct university instructor.

"My goal is to have my company running itself by 2011," she says.

"I'd like to move back to North Carolina to become an assistant professor, work with my father designing ergonomically correct independent living facilities for older adults and, in my spare time, write children's books with my mother." — KLV

