

## They're in the booger business

*A pair of moms from Beaverton and Tigard have turned one of those lightbulb-over-the-head ideas into a going concern*

BY STOVER E HARGER III

*The Beaverton Valley Times, Aug 27, 2009*

**Mindee Doney and Julie Pickens are in the business of boogers.**

In two years, the "mompreneurs" and current finalists for Oregon Entrepreneur of the Year, have catapulted their Beaverton-based Little Busy Bodies business into a powerhouse.

Their personally developed line of soothing saline "Boogie Wipes," designed to combat pesky

dried nasal mucus, are now in more than 30,000 stores. These wipes have helped the moms not only grow a successful business from scratch, but have given them the opportunity to spread the word around the country that being a mom doesn't mean you can't flourish in the business world.

Quite the contrary.

For Beaverton resident Doney, 34, and Tigard resident Pickens, 41, it was their experiences as moms that helped them reach their towering accomplishments. Growing and operating a successful business is similar to raising a child, the close friends agree. Both require patience, persistence and care.

These attitudes have helped Little Busy Bodies achieve \$1.1 million in sales in 2008 – their first full year in business. Now, this year, the company and its 13 employees are on track to triple that.

It's a far cry from the uncertain beginnings, when the idea of Boogie Wipes came to Doney while caring for her daughter's runny nose.

"We've definitely come a long, long way," said Pickens.

In November of 2006, Doney found herself struggling to treat her daughter's runny nose with saline drops. Her squirming child had no intention of letting her mom put the cold, wet liquid in her nostril. But then, inspiration struck for Doney.

What if she found a way to mix saline – which can treat and moisten the nasal cavity – with regular old tissues. After a run to the store to see if anything like that existed, Doney discovered that it didn't.

The idea bounced around in her head until she found herself in her kitchen, mixing different levels of saline with brand after brand of tissues. She hung them with clothespins throughout the room to dry – a one woman research and development team.

"I felt like a mad scientist," Doney said.

She realized she might have something special in the saline wipe idea. So she asked Pickens, her former boss and friend, to get on board.

After hiring a real chemist and making contacts, Boogie Wipes – now in three different scents – was born. The two formed Little Busy Bodies Inc. in May 2007 and made their first order of 10,000 packages that summer.

Branding themselves "The Boogie Moms," their mother-based marketing strategy paid off and the orders came rolling in.

Then came the retailers. First Fred Meyer – then soon, like dominoes, more and more stores starting carrying the wipes – Rite Aid, Safeway, Walgreens and the big one, Wal-Mart.

The tone of the office at 7874 S.W. Nimbus Ave. is a mix of play and hard work. While Doney and Pickens crunch numbers, plan new promotions and work the phones across from each other in their brightly colored Beaverton office, young children run around and play.

Although they are careful to make sure that business gets done, they do allow their employees' kids to come to work. A corner of the warehouse is a makeshift play area, complete with scattered toys, a television and plenty of other things to occupy the smiling and laughing "Boogie Kids."

At one time this summer there were as many as 15 children around the office. Some even have sleepovers in the conference room.

"We joked we were going to open up a summer camp this summer," Doney said after 4-year-old Ava Wright paid a visit to the office and reluctantly let her nose be used for a "Great Grape" wipe demonstration.

But it's not all fun and games. Doney and Pickens take a "divide and conquer" approach to business. Doney, with a background in marketing for companies like Procter & Gamble and McDonald's, handles promotion, while Pickens, with years of entrepreneurial knowledge from owning and operating six Cold Stone Creamery and Wetzel's Pretzels franchises, works the sales and distribution.

As mom entrepreneurs (both have three children), Doney and Pickens are respected across the country as business experts. Their knowledge has given them a platform to promote themselves – and working moms in general – on television (on numerous morning shows and "The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch" on CNBC) talk radio and in print (business and industry magazines).

On Sept. 16 the pair will be the keynote speakers at the Moms In Business Unite conference at the University of San Diego.

The future is wide open for Doney and Pickens. A shelf in their office shows the beginnings of new lines of Boogie Wipes and new packages. There have been ideas floating around as to what fresh products they could create, but the two moms have now decided they should stick with what they know best – beating boogers.

"We really decided we wanted to do one thing really well," Doney said.



JAIME VALDEZ / TIMES NEWSPAPERS  
ALL CLEAN — Mindee Doney, co-founder of Little Busy Bodies, demonstrates how to use a Boogie Wipe on 4-year-old Ava Wright. Doney and Julie Pickens (below), two local moms, began selling and marketing their successful Boogie Wipes product from Beaverton two years ago.