



## Zipadeedoodah - Leander

Written by Amy Stansbury Friday, 07 July 2006

### Steady demand for American-made products

Brian Prothro began in 1988 making oil-filled wands. After 10 years, he began creating a wide variety of high-end contemporary novelty items, such as picture frames, kaleidoscopes and candle holders, but realized that they were not profitable.

"When something takes up 10 percent of your profit and 90 percent of your time, you pretty much realize it's not worth it," Prothro said.

So Prothro returned to making and selling only the novelty oil-filled magic wands and key chains. In 1998, Prothro moved his office from Jonestown to Leander after purchasing a 9,000 sq. ft. building off FM 2243.

Today, Zipadeedoodah has four employees and is a wholesaler to more than 500 "mom and pop" novelty shops across the United States.

"I am very proud to sell a product that is made right here in America," Prothro said. "I really think it's important to try to promote and support locally-grown concepts."

But Prothro says that it is hard to compete with China which sells these products cheaper. However, Prothro believes that he has more to offer.

"China may sell some items at half my price but they're obviously not the quality of my products and cannot compete with my custom work." Prothro said. "I am the last American manufacturer of these things."



Zipadeedoodah customizes orders and can deliver with a very quick turnaround, which Chinese manufacturers usually cannot do.

"I can offer quality and a fast-turn even for custom items," Prothro said. "For example, I can turn a custom order in 3 to 10 days instead of two months."

These custom orders have been placed by customers from a variety of industries. Several business customers from the medical industry have approached Zipadeedoodah with some interesting custom requests.

"One company from the medical industry wanted our wands for marketing give-aways to show examples of their products, which were surgical stints that support collapsed arteries."

Another medical company used custom wands as a training tool to show blood platelet flow for people with high or low cholesterol. Prothro's wands demonstrated high cholesterol using thicker oil so the ingredients moved slower.

"People find us... and they say, 'you're the only one doing this in the country.'"

#### **Custom Fillers for Key Chains or Wands Include:**

- Actual Tiny Seashells
- Coffee Beans
- Colored Sand
- Dog Bones
- Gemstones
- Handmade Patterned Dots
- Miniature Dice
- Rainbow Confetti
- Seahorse and Starfish Glitter
- Stars and Moons
- Waving Hands Glitter



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