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Trading in the Boardroom for the Beach

After 20 years working in a corporate environment, starting and building high tech companies for other people, this New Milford executive is downsized and takes it to the beach.

New Milford, NJ: March 25, 2011 - John Supino spent his high school and college years working in beach resort towns in Long Beach Island, NJ, mostly as a life guard for Surf City and Long Beach Township - often watching umbrellas dangerously blowing down the sand.

As life went on, John continued to spend his summers at the family beach house on Long Beach Island, but now with kids and the responsibility of making sure his own family's umbrella didn't blow away. Each day he took them to beach, he'd spend the first 15 minutes making sure the umbrella was in the ground for the day – unless, of course, it had to be relocated to compensate for the movement of the sun, which required ANOTHER 15 minutes of planning and digging to keep the umbrella where he put it.

The summer of 2010 was very windy on the East Coast – the Atlantic was pummeled by 12 hurricanes that year. John spent many hours on the beach, watching people struggle with their umbrellas as he did. He noticed people leaving screw devices, uninstalled, littering the beach in frustration. He saw older people struggling to make their umbrellas secure; younger people digging holes up to their shoulders to bury their umbrellas in; and people just giving up, holding their umbrella with one hand all day long, unable to let it go and relax.

The last straw was when he witnessed his 70-year-old father struggling with a sand screw. It had a rusted tip, stuck thumb screw, and his father looked like he was wrestling an alligator when he tried to get it into the ground. It was insult on injury when one day the umbrella – with screw attached! - went sailing down the beach, making for a truly dangerous condition and breaking a \$40 umbrella.

After seeing all this, John had an epiphany about ballast. He believed putting weight on the bottom of the umbrella, and anchoring it from the top, was the best way to make sure the umbrella stayed in place.

That's when the Shade Anchor was born.

John designed and developed prototypes of his idea and gave them away along beaches from Holgate, NJ to Westerly, RI, while friends and family handed them out in Florida, California and Aruba. The result of this "market research": People loved the Shade Anchor.



What did people love most? Some liked the variety of bright colors; others were pleased that it could double as a beach bag; and some were delighted it worked with any beach umbrella, in any type of sand. But the thing everyone cited was it was EASY TO SET UP, taking about 60 seconds, and anyone who can reach their umbrella riser can do it, even kids. Best of all, once in place, it keeps an umbrella where it was put all day long.

Based on user feedback, John refined his design to include a zippered pocket, provisions for carrying water bottles, and a hole in the bottom of the bag to offer additional set up options.

He began a campaign of contacting retailers, and within a month got an email from QVC requesting a sample. Upon receipt, they invited him to their Vendor training program and placed an order. The Shade Anchor passed the rigorous QVC quality control checks, and will be seen on the retailing giant's show in early May 2011.

Emboldened by the QVC interest, John decided to manufacture over 10,000 Shade Anchors, investing his personal savings, borrowed money from relatives, and all his free time into his invention.

John took a week vacation from his job and officially launched the Shade Anchor at the Orlando Surf Expo in January 2011 where it was met with great success.

Within two weeks of returning from Surf Expo, John found out that his employer eliminated his management position by re-allocating their expenditures from the USA to India and China.

Jobless, broke- having spent his last penny on Shade Anchor – and now without health insurance, John decided he was tired of having his future dictated by conditions outside his control. He is determined to use his experience in running businesses for other people to control his own destiny.

John formed the company, Buoy Beach LLC, to market the Shade Anchor, and has other innovations on the drawing board.

Stay tuned for the end of the story, to find out if John can succeed, and look for Shade Anchor at beach stores near you.

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If you'd like more information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with John Supino, please call Joanna Cali at 201-258-5600 or email Joanna@buoybeach.com