

# Giving Off<sup>1</sup> Good Vibrations<sup>2</sup>

Vibrators and sex toys might not be on everybody's list of things to talk about at the dinner table but, as Jess Trindle discovers, the topic isn't always off the menu...

**P**icture the scene: A business dinner, white collars<sup>3</sup> and power suits surrounding a fine oak<sup>4</sup> table, succulent<sup>5</sup> fresh lobster<sup>6</sup> and Chardonnay in abundance<sup>7</sup>, silver service cutlery<sup>8</sup> softly tapping<sup>9</sup> at fine

vibrators off the ground<sup>15</sup>. Buzzing sex toys did not meet their approval and so Crave went elsewhere.

Michael Topolovac and Ti Chang, the men behind Crave, were staggered<sup>18</sup> by the response, and at the same time felt vindicated<sup>19</sup>. "It really indicated that people are ready and really wanting this," Chang said at the time.



Now Crave boasts a four-strong team and is steadily bringing a range of sau-  
cy<sup>20</sup>, yet charming new products to the online market and into boutiques up and down the country.

bone china<sup>10</sup> and the gentle hum<sup>11</sup> of polite conversation. The debate concerning cost-benefit analysis<sup>12</sup> comes to a natural end and then... "I want to get into the vibrator business".

Eyebrows raise, cheeks blush and the topic is swiftly exchanged for something more palat-  
able<sup>13</sup>, dooming<sup>14</sup> the un-mentionable to obscurity.

This may seem like an amusing scenario, but it's more or less what Kickstarter did when San Francisco-based jewellery firm Crave started looking for funding to get their new line of

CKIE, a similar but rather more obscure<sup>16</sup> version of Kickstarter, welcomed Crave with open arms (and legs, too) and before long a figure of USD 100,000 had been raised, smashing their expectations sixfold<sup>17</sup>.

## A New Hope

## Arousing<sup>21</sup> Interest

The vibrating sex aid industry is said to have become rather languid<sup>22</sup> of late, and it's start-ups<sup>23</sup> like Crave and Screaming O that are starting to create the buzz<sup>24</sup> once again.

Crave's Wink (designed to look like a mascara tube) and Duet (a dual-tipped<sup>25</sup> vibro

engineered to “offer an unprecedented<sup>26</sup> range of possibilities”), are just a couple of the new toys available for pleasure-seeking punters<sup>27</sup> while Screaming O’s not so subtle branding and advertising campaigns were specifically geared to<sup>28</sup> break through the taboo of buying such products.

“When people see our brand, the barriers go down and we melt their defences” says Keith Caggiano, Screaming O’s marketing mastermind<sup>29</sup>.

Standard Innovation, a Canadian firm dealing in the same field of pleasure technology, had a massive USD 35 mln in revenue<sup>30</sup> last year, which they expect to rise to as much as USD 50 mln this year. Danny Oscada, the Chief Exec at Standard, puts their success down to<sup>31</sup> keeping things fresh (as much as 6 percent of annual revenue goes into research and development). Version 4 of Standard’s flagship<sup>32</sup> We-Vibe, a c-shaped vibro for stimulating both sexes, is probably being tested as we speak.

## Don’t Forget the Dildos<sup>33</sup>...

While the vibrator industry needed to dive before coming back up for air<sup>34</sup>, the dildo industry has managed to keep its head up<sup>35</sup>. Indeed, anyone who witnessed the Jackass 3D movie would have noticed



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that there were literally<sup>36</sup> hundreds of them flying around the screen, and in all shapes and sizes too.

One of the most notable<sup>37</sup> recent dildo business gimmicks<sup>38</sup>, though, involves rock music. With bands forced to become ever more creative in order to shift virtual and physical units of their records, the tricks they use get more and more bizarre<sup>39</sup>.

German industrial metal outfit<sup>40</sup> Rammstein released a limited edition of their 2009 album *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da* in a metal case which included six transparent pink dildos (supposedly) modelled on the members on the band. The case also came with a pair of handcuffs and some lubrication. There was a CD in the box too.

Their idea to flog<sup>41</sup> their album along with a set of dildos was met with feravour<sup>42</sup> and ►

<sup>1</sup> to give off /tə ɡɪv ɒf/ | wydawać, wydzielać

<sup>2</sup> good vibrations /ɡʊd vɑːˈbreɪʒnz/ | pozytywne wibracje

<sup>3</sup> white collar /waɪt ˈkɒlə(r)/ | pracownik biurowy

<sup>4</sup> oak /əʊk/ | dębowy

<sup>5</sup> succulent /ˈsʌkjələnt/ | soczysty

<sup>6</sup> lobster /ˈlɒbstə(r)/ | homar

<sup>7</sup> abundance /əˈbʌndəns/ | obfitość

<sup>8</sup> cutlery /ˈkʌtləri/ | sztućce

<sup>9</sup> to tap /tə tæp/ | stuknąć

<sup>10</sup> bone china /bəʊn ˈtʃaɪnə/ | porcelana kostna

<sup>11</sup> hum /hʌm/ | pomruk, szum, gwar

<sup>12</sup> cost-benefit analysis /kɒst ˈbenɪfɪt əˈnæləsɪs/ | analiza opłacalności produktu/projektu (poprzez porównanie kosztów względem korzyści lub zysków)

<sup>13</sup> palatable /ˈpælətəbl/ | smaczny, do przyjęcia

<sup>14</sup> to doom /tə duːm/ | skazywać (np. na zagładę)

<sup>15</sup> to get off the ground /tə ɡet ɒf ðə ɡraʊnd/ | ruszyć z miejsca, wystartować (np. o spółce)

<sup>16</sup> obscure /əbˈskjuə(r)/ | nieznany, niejasny

<sup>17</sup> sixfold /ˈsɪksfəʊld/ | sześciokrotnie

<sup>18</sup> to stagger /tə ˈstæɡə(r)/ | zdumiewać (się) kogoś), wprawić w osłupienie

<sup>19</sup> to vindicate /tə ˈvɪndɪkeɪt/ | oczyszczać z zarzutów

<sup>20</sup> saucy /ˈsoːsɪ/ | pikantny, frywolny

<sup>21</sup> to arouse /tu əˈraʊz/ | wzbudzać, rozbudzać, wzniecać

<sup>22</sup> languid /ˈlæŋɡwɪd/ | powolny, ospały

<sup>23</sup> start-up /staːt ʌp/ | nowe przedsięwzięcie, młoda spółka

<sup>24</sup> buzz /bʌz/ | wrzenie, szum (np. medialny)

<sup>25</sup> tipped /tɪpt/ | zakończony, wykończony

<sup>26</sup> unprecedented /ʌnˈpresɪdəntɪd/ | niespotykany, bezprecedensowy

<sup>27</sup> punter /ˈpʌntə(r)/ | klient

<sup>28</sup> to be geared to/towards something /tə bi ɡɪəd tə təˈwɔːdʒ ˈsʌmθɪŋ/ | być nastawionym na coś, być przystosowanym do czegoś

<sup>29</sup> to mastermind /tə ˈmɑːstəmaɪnd/ | organizować, przewodzić

<sup>30</sup> revenue /ˈrevənjuː/ | dochód, przychód

<sup>31</sup> to put something down to something /tə pʊt ˈsʌmθɪŋ daʊn tə ˈsʌmθɪŋ/ | przypisywać coś czemuś

<sup>32</sup> flagship /ˈflæɡʃɪp/ | flagowy (np. o produkcie), sztandarowy

<sup>33</sup> dildo /ˈdɪldəʊ/ | sztuczny penis

<sup>34</sup> to come back up for air /tə kʌm bæk ʌp fə(r) eə(r)/ | wynurzać się na powietrze

<sup>35</sup> to keep one’s head up /tə kiːp wʌnz hed ʌp/ | trzymać poziom (o kimś)

<sup>36</sup> literally /ˈlɪtərəli/ | dosłownie

<sup>37</sup> notable /ˈnəʊtəbl/ | wybitny, godny uwagi

<sup>38</sup> gimmick /ˈɡɪmɪk/ | sztuczka marketingowa

<sup>39</sup> bizarre /bɪˈzɑː(r)/ | dziwaczny

<sup>40</sup> outfit /ˈaʊftɪt/ | ekipa, zespół

<sup>41</sup> to flog /tə flog/ | opchnąć, opylić

<sup>42</sup> fervour /ˈfɜːvə(r)/ | ferwor, zapal



## The vibrating sex aid industry is said to have become rather languid of late, and it's start-ups like Crave and Screaming O that are starting to create the buzz once again.

disapproval from their fans. Here's a mixed bag<sup>43</sup> of comments from various websites:

"lol... The Ram rocks! Always something dirty up the sleeve<sup>44</sup>, right?"

"What the \*\*\*\* is this? Metal went from killing each other to selling dildos?"

"You ought to mention that 'Liebe is für alle da' means 'Love is here for everybody'..."

Other promotional materials for this album were more taboo. The Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons in Germany censored the videos for 'Pussy' and 'Ich tu dir weh' for the scenes involving explicit<sup>45</sup> nudity and sexual activity.

### Fancy a Go<sup>46</sup>?

So, with money being made in the sex toy business, aided by gimmicks or otherwise, some might be wondering just how difficult can it be to make

a vibrator anyway? Surely it's got to be easy. Well, not that easy, according to the thrill<sup>47</sup> specialists over at Standard Innovation. Here's a list of five key elements to consider when building a vibrator:

### Safety

The materials used have to be 100 percent body safe and hypoallergenic<sup>48</sup>. Procuring<sup>49</sup> materials from medical manufacturers should eliminate any doubt here.

### Functionality

The vibrator has got to work properly, and to make sure it does, you'll need to do a lot of research, theoretical and practical.

### Perception

It has to look like it's going to work. Colour and shape are important, but don't make it too big or too small either. Apparently<sup>50</sup> four inches is enough.

### Emotion

The aesthetics of your design will play a major role in its success. Both partners may want some of the action, so the design shouldn't scare, intimidate<sup>51</sup> or distract<sup>52</sup>. If it looks "too lifelike<sup>53</sup>" then you've already shut the door on 50 percent of your customers.

### Appreciation of experts

Get the help of a few people who know better. Sexologists and sexuality researchers will help you better understand the user experience. ■

<sup>43</sup> **mixed bag** /mɪkst bæɡ/ | przypadkowy dobór, mieszanka

<sup>44</sup> **to have something up your sleeve** /tə həv 'sʌmθɪŋ ʌp jɔː(r) sliːv/ | mieć coś w zanadrzu (o kimś)

<sup>45</sup> **explicit** /ɪk'splɪsɪt/ | odważny, śmiały, jawny

<sup>46</sup> **to fancy a go** /tə 'fænsɪ ə ɡəʊ/ | mieć ochotę spróbować (coś/czegoś)

<sup>47</sup> **thrill** /θrɪl/ | dreszczyk

<sup>48</sup> **hypoallergenic** /haɪpəʊ.ælə'dʒenɪk/ | hipoalergiczny

<sup>49</sup> **to procure** /tə prə'kjʊə(r)/ | zyskiwać, zdobywać

<sup>50</sup> **apparently** /ə'pærentli/ | rzekomo, podobno

<sup>51</sup> **to intimidate** /tə ɪn'tɪmɪdeɪt/ | onieśmiać

<sup>52</sup> **to distract** /tə dɪ'strækt/ | rozpraszać

<sup>53</sup> **lifelike** /'laɪflaɪk/ | jak prawdziwy, realistyczny