

Inventor Creates Convertible Design for Child Carrier Bike

BY MEGAN TOMPKINS

SOUTH ORANGE, NJ—Like many product inventors, Michael Ehrenreich has studied in a number of fields. He holds a finance degree and a master's in molecular biology. While earning a medical degree, he started a business based on a bike design that integrates a child carrier.

"After selling my investment banking business, I went back to school and got an M.D. I finished in 2006 and am now in the middle of a dermatology residence.

In my spare time I run various other business, and Zigo is one of those businesses," Ehrenreich said.

Ehrenreich hatched the concept behind Zigo a few months after his first son was born.

"About three and a half years ago, my wife was using a B.O.B. stroller with my oldest son," Ehrenreich said. "She was using the jogging stroller and complaining that her feet hurt."

Ehrenreich was bicycling a lot that summer, and thought cycling might offer an alternative. He de-

vised a bike with a detachable child carrier that could convert to a stroller. Ehrenreich hired an engineer on Craig's List who designed a polished version of the product.

"A lot of time later and much more money than I ever thought it would take, it became the Zigo Leader," Ehrenreich said.

The Zigo Leader has four distinct operating modes. Its primary mode is as a three-wheeled carrier bike, with an adult cyclist turning the pedals and one or two children in the forward-located Child Pod. The Child Pod easily converts to a jogging stroller suitable for use on multiple surfaces or a standard stroller with caster wheels. The urban-style bicycle can also be ridden without the detachable Child Pod.

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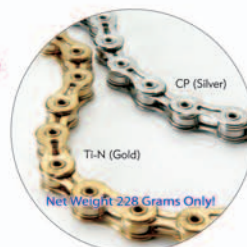
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Michael Ehrenreich demonstrates how the Leader places a child in front instead of behind a bike.

Zigo has filed for patent protection covering certain aspects including the LeaderLink technology and the folding mechanism of the Child Pod. But its most unique approach is placing the child in front instead of behind the bike, as would a traditional trailer.

Ehrenreich said his front-of-bike carrier design alleviates anxiety for mothers in particular. "If you look at who uses a trailer, it's almost invariably dads and the research bears that out. Mom's not comfortable," he said.

Because of its appeal to mothers, the Zigo Leader could pull women into the independent bicycle channel who wouldn't otherwise shop there.

"We did focus groups for men and for women, and generally speaking women would use this product. When we asked where they would buy it, most women wouldn't mention the IBD because they had never set foot in a bike shop in their life," Ehrenreich said. "This is a product that will get them into the bike dealer."

Zigo is also selling the Leader through specialty baby stores, but Ehrenreich feels the independent bike retailer is the best home for the product. Since introducing the product at Interbike, Zigo has signed up about 20 bike retailers.

Zigo's first container of 200 units will arrive from Taiwan this spring. Ehrenreich expects to have presold the initial units by the time it lands the first container.

Ehrenreich wants to see how the Leader sells through before introducing additional products, but said Zigo has some other designs in development. **BRAIN**