

Affable Entrepreneur fired-up by Dragons!

Dragons' Den's "affable entrepreneur's" fabric maps have doubled sales and increased profits since filming. The business took advice from the Dragons to grow the UK base and broaden the appeal to new markets before advancing to more export markets.

Outdoor adventurers love ultra-practical fabric maps already, but the widespread media attention and a focus on "gifts" has led to a whole new market for great map designs on fabric.

David Overton, founder of fabric map business, SplashMaps, shared his plans with Dragons' Den (airing Sunday, May 28th on BBC2 at 7pm). The explosive results are thanks to tapping a whole new market for gifts and major events.

"Orders from retailers and collaborations with the biggest in the travel industry are taking SplashMaps to the next level" says Overton.

Natural cosmetics retailer Lush recognised the potential early – they now use fabric city maps as attractive, practical and ever-lasting wrapping for their products. Tokyo and Amsterdam stores now join the chain's London shops with dedicated SplashMap "knot-wrap" designs and there are plans to adopt a new style of map for all new stores that Lush open around the world.

What's the fuss about? Well, fabric maps are the most reliable, practical form of map - no need for batteries, signal or folding and they're happy being dropped! They're scrunchable (to stuff into pockets, tie around necks etc.), and so weatherproof that Southampton Sailing Week have commissioned the world's first sea-proof fabric event maps from the company.

You can centre them anywhere worldwide(!), choose a scale to suit your activity and customise them with your own titles, logos etc. So they're popular for sporting or other events, weddings, corporate gifts and more.

Overton, also known as the "affable entrepreneur" (as the BBC labelled him), comments, "It's a phenomenal time for us. Orders are flying in, not just from individuals buying for themselves or as gifts, but bulk orders of custom maps for all kinds of uses. People are getting creative with our maps; Lush's knot wraps are a great example."

Is this all due to the Dragons? You'll need to tune-in to find out!

Photo: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/g5zf2bxiav9ud6k/AABkOPOE4LKmLoroN-E_S8J7a?dl=0

Find SplashMaps at www.splash-maps.com along with all the latest map news and design tips. Follow /splashmaps on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram.

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¹ Wallis award for Excellence in Cartography from the Society of Cartographers ² Source: Broadcast

RECENT QUOTES FROM SPLASHMAP USERS:

Keith Bontrager -pioneer in the development of the modern mountain bike - SplashMaps are a "Great Idea!"

John Blashford-Snell, expedition leader and founder of Operation Raleigh (Raleigh International) "SplashMaps are highly innovative and of real value to navigation in the field"

Steve Chilton, Chair of the Society of Cartographers "SplashMaps was commended by the judging panel for its very effective use of a novel medium, while retaining graphic clarity and displaying an excellent user-focused design." (On SplashMaps winning 'Excellence in Cartography' award 2014)

Active Traveller Magazine, May 2017 "Washable, tough and easy to use on the trail, the SplashMap concept is a great innovation in outdoors mapping in itself. Adding the fun and function of the self-customised Make-a-Map feature simply opens up the fascinating world of wearable cartography to everyone, everywhere."

Kenneth Field, International Cartographic Association Commission on Map Design "Its design sits at the perfect confluence of form and function, delivering modern mapping to the outdoor enthusiast in a way that supports their activities 100%."

Scott Forbes, Ultra Marathon champion 2014 "A serious challenge needs serious kit; I'm definitely a SplashMaps convert."

RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE & QUOTES:

BBC TV's South Today - interview with David Overton, SplashMaps' MD and Mark Constantine, Lush's founder
<http://ow.ly/4Wsd303nIRi> (skip to 11mins 55secs)

MBR - Hot Stuff "Fashion Guide...The SplashMap is a waterproof, washable and even wearable (use as a buff perhaps) ...map."

Trail - Gadget of the Month "Maps are great, but they can be a hassle to carry. If they aren't flapping about in a map case, they're squashed into a jacket pocket. Cue SplashMaps - a new range of washable wearable all-weather fabric maps. Using OS and OpenStreetMap data, you can create a bespoke walking map at www.splash-maps.com..." (The photos are very amusing - Rambo style head band and man blowing nose!)

Cyclist "Luckily the clever chaps at SplashMaps have concocted this range of scrunchable, washable, virtually indestructible cloth maps. Perfect for mopping-up those Strava segments".

Outdoor Fitness "Fed up with your maps disintegrating in the rain or else the sharp laminated edges digging in through your pockets? SplashMaps could be the solution."

Bike Biz "...maps printed on washable fabric so they don't tear, run out of battery or fall prey to other disadvantages of paper maps or new-fangled electronic ones."

Mountain Biking UK "I loved being able to draw routes on it...it's easy to use in any weather and is pretty indestructible."

COMPANY BACKGROUND:



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SplashMaps™ is a Limited company based in Hampshire and incorporated in November 2012. SplashMaps™ is one of the first start-up businesses in the UK to have been 'crowd-funded' using the Kickstarter platform to raise funds.