

## Daily Grommet's Jules Pieri on Creative Innovation, COOKOO Watch

Monday Jan 14, 2013 by [Susan Johnston](#) - Contributor, [VentureFizz](#)



At the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) last week, some 3,000 vendors gathered to unveil the latest and greatest TVs, computers, and other gadgets. Among those new products was the [COOKOO watch](#), which works with a smartphone to alert the user about emails, texts, calls, and other activity. The connected watch is available for \$129.95 through [Daily Grommet](#), which features one new product (called a "grommet") per day using a storytelling video filmed in their [Lexington offices](#).



Jules Pieri, Daily Grommet's cofounder and CEO, says the COOKOO watch appealed to her team because it solves the problem of wanting to check a smartphone during a meeting or social gathering but not wanting to appear rude or inattentive. "You can get alerts that you care about and in a socially acceptable way," she explains.



The screenshot shows the Daily Grommet website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Welcome', 'My Account', 'Login/ Register', 'Cart', and 'Invite Friends - Get \$10'. Below this is a search bar and a 'SUGGEST A GROMMET' button. A main menu lists categories: 'For Me', 'For Home', 'Food & Drink', 'Gifts & Occasions', 'Health & Wellness', 'Personal Values', and 'Seasonal Collections'. The featured product is the 'COOKOO CONNECTED WATCH'. The product card includes a video player showing a person wearing the watch, a price tag of '\$129.95', and promotional text: '\*Free Shipping on all COOKOO orders' and 'Orders Shipping Jan 14th'. There are also 'Add to Cart' and 'Add to Favorites' buttons. A 'Related Grommets' section is visible at the bottom of the product card.

Daily Grommet has launched over a thousand products since its own launch in 2008. Several of those products have received media attention and now appear on the shelves of major retailers. The 32-person company now gets between 100 and 150 ideas submitted per week through sources including referrals from partners, a [special Pinterest board](#), and the [Citizens' Gallery](#), where consumers can suggest grommets.

In choosing which grommets to feature, "we think hard about being relevant and useful to people," says Pieri. "Most of the time we hope you haven't heard about the stories we're telling you. Second, when we do discover an interesting story, we have to go further in deciding if it's true. We talk to the company extensively. We want to make sure that if they say it's a green product, it really is green."

Daily Grommet's return rate hovers around three percent—compared to eight to 25 percent for other ecommerce companies—and Pieri attributes this fact to the site's appeal to consumer's environmental or social conscience. "They're engaging around different values, not just getting things cheaply," she adds.

The COOKOO watch got its start last year on [Kickstarter](#), where inventor Peter Hauser raised more than twice his original goal of \$150,000. Several other grommets also have their Genesis on crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter or [IndieGoGo](#). Among those is the [MaKey MaKey invention kit](#) for which two MIT grad students [raised over half a million dollars](#), becoming one of Kickstarter's most funded tech projects of 2012.

"[Crowdfunding platforms] get you through about kindergarten in the lifecycle of a product," says Pieri. "That's the initial market proof. You're getting there, but then the hard work begins because taking a product to scale is really different. If you want to get your product into Target or Williams-Sonoma, those retailers need to know that you have meaningful market traction and your company is ready to scale."

The combination of crowdfunding platforms and access to technology like 3D printers has created a surge in product innovation, according to Pieri. She attributes these factors to a record number of patents in the United States in 2011. "When you're betting on human creativity and combine it with access to technology, you've got an explosion [of innovative products] that's happening around us," she says. "There are really interesting business platforms that are developing to respond to that, not just making the products but selling them." Ultimately, she hopes that Daily Grommet will become for products what Oprah's book club did for books.

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