

James Fay

Jim did his grade school years in Waterloo, Iowa, and his high school years in Des Moines. He grew up in a restaurant family and worked in the restaurant. In school, he was active in track, wrestling and swimming. Outside school, his early interests were biking, backpacking canoeing, kayaking and climbing. He did not have the money to buy equipment, so he made his own. An early interest was established in figuring out how things worked, solving problems, inventing and developing products. Between high school and college, he hitchhiked from Des Moines to Tierra del Fuego, paying his way by stopping at hotels and volunteering to “fix anything” for grub and a place to sleep.

He graduated from Iowa State University with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering in 1974. His other course work focused on economics, business and English. While at ISU, he was president of Triangle Fraternity during his junior year, worked as a baker and participated in the CO-OP program at Monsanto. In his free time, he hitchhiked through South America, climbed and canoed in the Boundary Waters. Post-graduation, his continuing education has been in polymer chemistry, marketing, English, finance, accounting, communication, machine design, micro and macro economics, patent and contract law, strategy, statistics, market research, philosophy, psychology, sociology and metallurgy. He has lectured in the MBA programs at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Colorado, in the Sociology Department at the University of Colorado, and in the Economics Department at Colorado College.

His professional career has been about product development and business startup, though it was without plan.

After graduation from ISU, he worked for Procter & Gamble in production management making Puffs® facial tissue, Charmin® toilet tissue and Bounty® paper towels. Then R&D for American Can where he invented and brought to market ovenable and microwaveable paper trays, metallized papers and films, wax- and plastic foam-coated paper and plastic cups, boil-in bags and other food packaging products. From there he went to Kimberly-Clark where he was part of the Huggies® disposable diapers and Depends® disposable undergarments teams, and invented and brought to market Pull-ups® disposable training pants and Starfire® charcoal.

And then, at 36, he quit and began starting his own companies. His first company was and is Delta Research, a consulting company specializing in product development, marketing, market research and innovation. He was a founder of the company that invented the Diaper Genie®, which became the #1 non-disposable baby product in the U.S. The company was sold to Playtex in 1998. He was a founder of ByteSize Systems, a company that made software to enable reading and annotating of intensely read books on computers and tablets. He was the founder of DEUS Rescue, a company that makes high-angle rescue equipment for professionals. His current venture, besides consulting, is Spidescape, a company that makes shelter-in-place and self-rescue equipment for the consumer market.

Jim and his wife, Julie, live on top of a mountain outside Boulder, Colorado, where they bike, climb and run ultramarathons... and they sail, but not in Colorado.