

CANDY WRAPPER

Not everyone is born into confections. Take Eddy Rubin, actor/entrepreneur living in Los Angeles, who's the mastermind of Wrench Mints, a company making a name for itself through targeted marketing.

Born in Detroit in 1968 – a surprise to his mother who wasn't expecting twins – Rubin felt compelled to let everyone know of his existence as a result of arriving second.

"I've always been quirky, outgoing, loud, innovative and funny," he explained. "School was a tough one for me because if I didn't like something, I just didn't do it...Having tutors was the norm and detention was a second home for me."

In 1985, the family moved to Los Angeles where Rubin eventually turned to acting.

"I still wasn't making the big money so I had to take a job working retail," he recalled. "While at the job, somebody came into the store handing out samples of a breath mint called Hint Mint. I thought it was cool and the packaging and presentation was the nicest I'd seen. And the mints tasted really good. So I kept the tin after I finished the mints because it was so nice."

A year and a half later, Rubin found himself opening a drawer and finding that same tin. It was an epiphany.

"I got in my car and thought to myself, 'What breath mint could I come up with that rhymed and could be successful?' I wasn't thinking about starting a breath mint company, but just kind of challenging myself."

During the next two years, Rubin pressed on, researching various sources on ways to produce the product he had in mind.

"After four years of development and limited resources I had made the product look very attractive to possible investors," he continued. In May 2006, Rubin's best friend, Johnny Alper, decided to invest \$100,000 to come up with a finished product and packaging. "With Johnny's money and my design, we formed Wrench Mints Inc.," Rubin said. "In February 2007 we received our first shipment of 100,000 pieces."

It wasn't until the two attended their first trade show in May that year, The National Hardware Show, that it became clear that Wrench Mints had a following.



Eddy Rubin (right), ceo, Wrench Mints, Inc., Los Angeles, with partner Johnny Alper at the All Candy Expo.

By December the fledging company completely sold out its product.

"We are poised to hit our \$1,000,000 sales goal," Rubin said. "Our chain store list is Harbor Freight Tools, Northern Tool and Equipment, Ace Hardware, Woodcraft, ACO Hardware, Duluth Trading Company and many others."

No doubt Rubin has found a unique path into the confectionery

industry; it was just a matter of finding a way to fix bad breath with the right tool.

What did you think you would be when you grew up?

I thought at first that I would be a doctor and then I thought, too much school. Then I started playing the drums and thought I'd be a drummer. We then moved to California. After the urging of many, I decided to be an actor. So I am an actor, entrepreneur.

Name one or some of your favorite movies.

"The Original Nutty Professor," "Star Wars," "Selena," "Sin City," "Pulp Fiction," "Happiness," and "The Tao of Steve."

Describe your perfect dream vacation.

Going to Italy, Hawaii, Egypt, England and anywhere else that I haven't been. Oh, and no cap on spending.

What book are you currently reading?

I don't read books. I look at magazines (*People, Star, Car and Driver*).

Aside from a family member, whom would you most want to be stranded with on a deserted island?

Natalie Portman.

What's your pet peeve?

Littering, second-hand smoke, graffiti.

I'd give anything to meet: God

The best piece of advice that I've gotten:

Never be afraid to ask.

What excites you most about your job?

Peoples' satisfaction of our product. ☺

