



Investment round for Hard Candy Cases

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Hard Candy Cases, a new manufacturer of protective gear for electronic devices, has taken in a round of funding from a host of Silicon Valley investors.

The San Francisco-based company did not disclose the total amount of financial backing, but said that the round will help position the company as a leader in the computer accessories industry.

"We captured the attention of key investors in a very short amount of time due to the data supporting the future of netbook sales. With \$150,000 in revenue in our first month, we see a huge consumer and retailer demand for fashion-forward protective netbook and MacBook product," Chief Executive Officer Tim Hickman said in a company release.

Hard Candy Cases received backing from angels and investors including executives with experience at companies including Facebook, Google, Yahoo, Netscape, Perkins Coie, Meebo, Spinner and several others.

Hard Candy Cases was founded in late 2009 and manufactures and markets fashionable yet functional hardcover cases for netbooks and laptops.

Hickman spoke with DailyVista and outlined the plans for [Hard Candy Cases](#) as it moves into a new year.

"Our immediate priority is to develop and launch products for both netbooks and Macbooks and secure appropriate retail distribution," he said.

Working with the Hard Candy Cases' internal design staff and its manufacturer in Southern China, the company intends to get the right products built and then find the right space on the shelves at retailers, Hickman said.

"Where we're having success is with retailers looking to make more margin and be price competitive," he added.

According to Hickman, Hard Candy recently picked up limited retail distribution in Apple stores in the United States, and also has a presence on Amazon.com and J&R Electronics. The company wants to increase its retail presence in the near future.

"For a company that's been in existence for two months, getting into the Apple store and having the 'Apple blessing' is huge," he said. "We're a fashion and design company, so having them recognize that is very exciting."

Looking to 2010, Hickman said that there is a big focus on international growth at Hard Candy Cases. Currently the company has distribution relationships in South Africa, Australia and Italy.

"Our biggest target is Europe, and another goal is to develop deeper relationships with core computer makers so we can accessorize and get our product lifestyle in sync with what they're doing," Hickman said.

Hard Candy Cases are geared toward consumers looking to both personalize and protect their mobile device with a product that doesn't need to be taken on and off each time, Hickman said.

"I think personalization is where we see a lot of the attraction - especially in the netbook space," he said. "The netbook space is reminiscent of the iPod accessories space. At one time there were 3.1 iPod cases sold for every iPod sold. Once the consumer got beyond 'I need a cool iPod,' they needed something to make it their own. In the netbook space people are a little less brand conscious, so we have to work a little harder to differentiate these personalization aspects."

Hickman said that Hard Candy Cases is doing a lot of online advertising and work with targeted blogs and microsites to build brand awareness.

"We're also spending a lot of time getting in front of retailers at CES (tradeshow)," he said, adding that large scale, national print and television campaigns haven't happened yet, but are not out of the question for future marketing efforts.