



## **New Ventures - The 2015 Open University Entrepreneurship Competition**

*Bikeroo*

### **Caroline Hearne:**

My product is a foldable bag that's designed to fit on the front of a bicycle. So, much as you would go to the shops with a small bag in your pocket, the idea is that you can do that but this bag fixes to the front of a bicycle.

The Bikeroo bag can be used on the bicycle or it can just be used as a normal shopping bag. I guess I'd like to see the product in shops like Halfords or in some of the supermarket chains; I'd like to see it in vending machines, bi-city bike schemes and also I'd like to sell it to the corporates, to give as corporate gifts to their clients as it's made from recycled plastic bottles and it gives the green credentials a lot of firms are looking for.

Originally I was a project monitor in the IT industry and then when we had a family I stopped work and once they were in school I worked two days a week. I've also used that time to study for an engineering degree with the OU. Our tutor set us the task of constructive discontent where we had to look at a product and see how we would improve it or what irritated us about the way it worked. And the Bikeroo bag came out of that because it was my irritation that week.

The design of it has changed quite a long, it almost looked like a pair of trousers that went either side of the front fork of a bicycle. As the product developed you start seeing that it would be better if the prototype worked this way.

The skills and the knowledge I needed to produce the product were things that I learnt on the module and it showed me how to develop a product, and also the project management and IT skills that I had in industry.

I decided to take part in this competition because I took part in a competition last year which was a competition for women with bright ideas, and I was a finalist in that competition but I didn't have my product registered at the time. So when this competition came up, I felt I was ready and I was able to put my product forward at that stage.

I guess an entrepreneur for me is somebody who has an idea and runs with it. There's been a lot of challenges. I think time has been one of them and I think also confidence; I think you're

sometimes not sure you're on the right track and you sometimes need to just look at it and think actually yes I can move forward with this.