



LIVE LUGGAGE

PRESS RELEASE

Chinese \$9 luggage – in the UK for up to £700?

Why a small British company decided to invent a better product



APRIL 2010: There's little doubt about it, China is a world power and has the manufacturing base and low labour costs to lay claim to the title of “manufacturing hub of the world”. A mass-market product like a piece of luggage can cost as little as \$9* to make in China, but it can end up on the British high street as a branded product for as much as £700. So what made Live Luggage, a small British company, take on the might of the Chinese to design and market a product that costs fifteen times more to manufacture here in the UK? This David and Goliath story illustrates a triumph of British design, superior engineering and ingenuity over China's ability to churn out products at a low price.

Winner of several design awards, featured on TV shows and in the press, Live Luggage is a small British company which employed British ingenuity and engineers to take a fresh look at moving personal belongings from A to B. After nearly six years research into how pulling a heavy case along vast concourses and up steps and slopes can affect the user's body, it now markets the world's first powered suitcase and a non-powered “anti-gravity” range, featuring a patented and unique handle design. Manufactured in Britain and designed for a long product life, two of its designs are multi-bag systems, meaning the consumer buys one product which then serves as their everyday luggage (laptop bag, rucksack, etc.) and zips onto a larger bag to take away on holiday.

Both the Live Luggage PA (power assisted) range and the AG (anti-gravity) non-powered range have large flat wheels and a patented "Anti-Gravity" handle which make them so much more stable and easier to pull compared to conventional luggage, so strain and effort are minimal and a fully-packed Live Luggage case can be moved with ease. The PA ranges power up automatically when sensors detect gradients and kerbs. The AG ranges offer the advantages of the patented handle's wishbone design which pivots from the base of the case and puts 85% of the weight on the wheels, not on the user's arm. The combination of the special and unique wheel design and the anti-gravity handle makes it essential that the wheels themselves are robust and durable.

Live Luggage's power-assisted range obviously contains more components than a normal suitcase; these additional components could have been heavy and taken up valuable space in the case. However, the company's clever design minimized both these problems by placing all the power-assist components into large, flat wheels. During the product development phase, Live Luggage found it needed a bearing component which would adhere to strict weight and space parameters and yet be very strong, as most of the total bulk and weight of the case is over the wheels. The answer lay in thermoplastic bearings, which are typically 20% of the density of steel and a lightweight alternative to steel bearings, so Live Luggage approached market leaders in moulded thermoplastic bearing design and manufacture at the design stage. One UK company demonstrated how injection moulding techniques could integrate components and custom-shape the final assembly to fit Live Luggage's exacting requirements. An acetal bearing design uses a double row of balls to maximize load-carrying ability and the raceways are integrated into the assembly by moulding them onto other components, thereby eliminating some original parts which secured the bearing onto the wheels and motor. The non-magnetic SS316 steel balls used within the plastic bearing solution do not distort magnetic fields or interfere with the effective operation of the motor. The wheels are therefore extremely quiet, due to the sound-deadening properties of the thermoplastic material. The real breakthrough in the Live Luggage design is the fact that the hub of the wheel is bolted directly onto the luggage injection moulding and is fixed. The only moving part is the acetal race bearings, ensuring smooth, strong, long-lasting product life and performance. There is a life-long seal to the wheels, ensuring miles of use, and the cases have been rigorously tested to withstand baggage handling.

Founder and MD of Live Luggage, Clive Hemsley said: "Cheaply made cases with very low-cost caster wheels and flimsy telescopic handles are a recipe for a virtually disposable product and a poor use of precious resources. We felt it was better to offer the consumer a choice: real engineering - an injection moulded, not vacuum formed, chassis with electronic technology onboard and our patented "anti-gravity" handle system on both powered and non-powered versions. If the consumer really starts to compare product functionality, then Live Luggage

products win hands down. If people knew the real cost of some Chinese-manufactured cases verses the retail price, they would be shocked.”

Live Luggage cases cost from £250.

Note to editors: * Manufacturing costs obtained by Clive Hemsley on a factory visit to Shenzhen

Another interesting insight into pricing structure can be found at:

<http://www.slideshare.net/JapanRetailNews/luggage-market-europe-2009>

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Please go to www.liveluggage.com to Media Centre to download hi-res images. For further information or for editors in London wanting to test-drive the 2012 Sports Bag, please contact:

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Live Luggage cases have been voted into Time Magazine's Top Ten Best Travel Gadgets of 2009: [click here](#)

See Live Luggage bags on the Gadget Show: [click here](#)

Also featured on the Discovery Channel: [click here](#)