

Vermont teddy bear brief



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Vermont Teddy Bear Company From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia Jump to: navigation, search Vermont Teddy Bear Company Type Privately held company Industry Manufacturing, retail Founded 1981

Headquarters Shelburne, Vermont Products Teddy bears Owner(s) The Mustang Group Subsidiaries Calyx & Corolla Gift Bag Boutique PajamaGram TastyGram Website Vermont Teddy Bear Company The Vermont Teddy Bear Company is one of the largest producers of teddy bears and the largest seller of teddy bears by mail order and Internet. The company handcrafts each of its teddy bears and produces almost 500, 000 teddy bears each year.

The company was formerly traded on the NASDAQ stock exchange under the ticker symbol BEAR, but was taken private by The Mustang Group, a Boston-based private equity firm, on September 30, 2005, partially to avoid the reporting requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. The company was founded in 1981 by John Sortino, who sold handcrafted teddy bears in an open-air market in Burlington, Vermont. Sortino happened upon the idea of packaging and selling bears through the mail when a tourist visiting Burlington wanted a bear mailed to her home.

The concept was called the " Bear-Gram", which features the customized teddy bear placed in a box (complete with an " air hole") and stuffed with other goodies. By 1995, the company moved into its new headquarters in Vermont's Champlain Valley. The company has two factories: one in Shelburne and one in Newport. The Shelburne factory is an especially popular tourist destination, and also served as a concert site for the annual Vermont Mozart Festival. The company also maintained two retail locations in Vermont - Shelburne and on the main road between Waterbury and Stowe.

VTB acquired Calyx & Corolla, an upscale flower company headquartered in Vero Beach, Florida in 2003. Ironically, one of Vermont Teddy Bear's marketing slogans claimed that sending a teddy bear is " a creative alternative to sending flowers. " In 2005, the company launched a new sister company, Gift Bag Boutique, which offered handbags and purses along with many make-up accessories. Along with PajamaGram, which sold gift pajamas, and TastyGram, which offered gourmetfoodgifts, the creation of this sister company brought the total number of companies under the Vermont Teddy Bear umbrella to five.

Gift Bag Boutique and TastyGram stopped accepting orders as of June 26, 2008. [1] " Crazy" Controversy For Valentine's Day of 2005, Vermont Teddy Bear caused widespread controversy by offering a " Crazy for You" Bear. The bear was offered dressed in a white strait jacket with a red heart embroidered onto the front of the jacket. A tag entitled " Commitment Papers" came with the bear. The tag read " Can't eat, can't sleep, my heart's racing. Diagnosis - crazy for you. "[2] Mentalhealthgroups from all over the U. S. sked for the bear to be pulled out of production and removed from VTB's website. Many groups called for a boycott of the company. They claimed that the bear made light of the suffering caused by severe mental illness and contributed to the stigma that people with mental illness often encounter. The company's response was that there was no offense intended and it was merely a play on the phrase " I'm crazy about you. " The company claimed that the bear was intended to be a light-hearted depiction of the sentiment of love.

When asked to remove the bear from their inventory, VTB responded by keeping their existing stock up for sale although they stated that they would not make any more in the future. The price of the bears from VTB was US\$69.95. After the company sold out, which happened within just a few days of the story hitting the news, the eBay bids reached several hundred dollars. Elizabeth Robert, the CEO and CFO of VTB was serving as a member of Vermont's largest hospital, Fletcher Allen Health Care, at the time of this incident.

In response to the significant controversy she resigned from the board. [3] Advertising VTB was listed amongst "a broad range of direct marketers' pitched by the show's hosts themselves" who were taking out more ads on talk radio in 2010, according to Dan Metter, director of talk-radio sales of Premiere Radio Networks. Conservative radio hosts were seeing an uptick in listener numbers and advertising in the lead-up to the year's midterm elections. Premiere is the syndicator of the top three talk-radio shows -- hosted respectively by Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Glenn Beck. [4]