

Play-Doh & FF&E



Play-Doh, the soft playful molding clay we have all come to know and love, has its roots in textiles and wallpaper.

Originally created by Noah McVicker and Joseph McVicker in 1933, Play-Doh is one of the most successful children's toys in world. To date, over 18 billion cans of Play-Doh have been sold worldwide.

Yes, Play-Doh is fun, colorful, provides endless hours of entertainment and the odor is distinct. It's very interesting how this product came to be and how it has its roots in our industry.

Joseph McVicker worked as a salesman for the Kutol Company, a textile supplier in Cincinnati Ohio, during the early economic depression. The depression had forced Kutol to close its doors, and McVicker was instructed by ownership to sell off all the remaining fabric. McVicker, unnerved about the closing of the company, committed himself to coming up with a way to keep Kutol in business.

While brainstorming creative ideas to keep the business afloat, McVicker realized that homes had an ongoing problem of cleaning soot that covered the walls from residential oil and wood-burning heating systems.

McVicker solicited the help of his brother Noah to develop a concoction that would clean soot off wallpaper. After numerous trials and errors, the McVicker brothers came up with a putty-type of product that could be kneaded and rolled onto walls to remove the soot. McVicker took the putty wallpaper cleaner to a local grocery retailer and presented the concept. The retailer was completely enamored with the product and agreed to buy 15,000 cans of this miracle cleaner. The McVicker brothers soon became multi-millionaires and business was soaring.

The success of the Kutsol wallpaper cleaner was eventually stalled due to efficient and clean-burning kerosene heating systems being installed in homes. Working diligently, the McVicker brothers tried to come up with an alternative product or concept to keep the business alive. Having an overstock of the Kutol wallpaper cleaner, they shipped cans of the putty to their sister, a kindergarten teacher in New Jersey, for her students to play with.



To the McVicker's surprise, the children were using the putty to mold into shapes, animals and anything they could imagine. The McVicker brothers reformulated the product, omitting harsh cleaning agents and making the product safe for children. They introduced and marketed the product in 1955 as Play-Doh, and today Play-Doh is the most recognized children's toy globally.

In 1955 Kutsol was renamed Rainbow Crafts and since 1991 Play-Doh has been owned by Hasbro.

It's amazing that this original wallpaper cleaner captured the imagination of children and that its roots were born out of our industry.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this article as much as we enjoyed researching the history of this childhood favorite.

Play-Doh has captured our imagination and will continue to do so for generations to come.



AD613/4