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5. Cosmetic Technologies LLC (IMX Cosmetics LLC), New Hudson

Cosmetics: Just what the doctor ordered

By [Dustin Walsh](#)



GLENN TRIEST

Julie Bartholomew with her cosmetics machine.

Julie Bartholomew is a doctor. Her specialty isn't oncology or cardiology or even osteopathy. With an inclination for invention, the **Wayne State University School of Medicine** graduate traded the infirmary for the beauty counter more than a decade ago to make cosmetics with a personal touch.

What began as a hunch, by placing nail polish into a household paint mixer, is turning into a valuable startup.

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Bartholomew founded **IMX Cosmetics LLC**, patents filed under **Cosmetic Technologies LLC**, after working with engineers to create her own on-site, automated cosmetics customization process for department stores.

The IMX (pronounced "I mix") machine allows users to create their own "mix" of lip gloss — including color, finish and flavor — with more than 40,000 possibilities.

"Although my direction began in medicine, I always knew that I was an inventor," Bartholomew said. "I love cosmetics, but it is in the designing of an experience, combined with unique technology, that intrigues me most."



GLENN TRIEST

IMX cosmetics machine

IMX's proof-of-concept machines were tested in 2002 through 2005 at **Nordstrom** in Las Vegas; **Fred Segal** in Santa Monica, Calif.; and **Barneys New York**. The cosmetics were featured in fashion magazines *Glamour*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *InStyle* and others.

The company is fully funded by Bartholomew and her family.

In 2004, Bartholomew stepped back from the startup to raise her children before reigniting the concept last year.

IMX's new iterations of the machine feature an open design so shoppers can see the process of mixing their own cosmetics concoction. The redesign also reduced the mix time to less than four minutes.

Bartholomew said the IMX concept is targeted at the millennial generation — with 45 million females and \$200 billion of spending power, who demand customization, immediate gratification, creativity and entertainment.

Millennials "feel the need to be connected in all channels, to go deeper and to feel like part of the process," Bartholomew said. "The IMX technology and brand successfully provide innovation, newness, personalization, a one-to-one connection and immediate gratification — all key drivers with this generation."

Meredith Stedman, director of education for Be Pro Cosmetics at New Hudson-based cosmetics manufacturer **TNG Worldwide Inc.**, said the \$55 billion U.S. cosmetics industry is continually evolving. Customers are always looking for new trends, like new color options, which are steadily available because cosmetics are relatively low-cost to produce.

Last year, IMX was granted two patents to bring smartphone integration and personalization to the machines. The company holds 61 patents in 18 countries.

Customers will be able to order their mix of lip gloss from their smartphones while shopping and pick it up at the IMX machine at a later time. IMX also created a radio frequency identification key chain, called an "MX stick," which will identify a user to the machine as well as save personal preferences of cosmetics.

Bartholomew, the only employee of IMX, is negotiating with a global department store to place IMX machines in as many as 20 stores in 2015. She expects the machines to be in nearly 300 stores by 2016.



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Julie Bartholomew

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Novi-based **Michigan Custom Machines Inc.** made IMX's prototype and will make additional machines, she said. Bartholomew also plans to expand IMX's product line to nail polish, lipstick and other beauty products.

The Eureka Index: Most innovative companies

Crain's and Ocean Tomo analyzed patents issued by companies in Southeast Michigan in 2013 to identify the most innovative. This is the list of rankings by patent quality. Click on the company names for more about that company.

Rank	Company	Primary Industry Classification	
1	CytoPherx Inc.	Biotechnology	178.16
2	Cybernet Systems Corp.	Manufacturing equipment	149.83
3	Innovative Surgical Solutions LLC (Sentio LLC)	Biotechnology	144.90
4	Magna Electronics Inc.	Autmotove/electrical components	140.15
5	Cosmetic Technologies LLC (IMX Cosmetics LLC)	Household products	138.80
6	Ovonix Inc.	IT	137.79
7	Henry Ford Health System	Biotechnology	136.97
8	Sakti3 Inc.	Energy	135.08
9	Imra America Inc.	Manufacturing equipment	133.96
10	A123 Systems LLC	Energy	133.31
11	Immunolight LLC	Biotechnology	131.18
12	Adaptive Materials Inc.	Energy	129.27
13	Grindstone Capital LLC	Other (automotive, radio clocks)	125.18
14	Cobasys (Bosch Battery Systems LLC)	Energy	125.13
15	Saturn Electronics & Engineering Inc.	Automotive/electrical	123.05
16	JAC Products Inc.	Automotive/parts and equipment	122.40
17	Gentherm Inc.	Auto	122.32
18	Rubicon Genomics Inc.	Biotechnology	117.70
19	Stirling Biopower Inc.	Energy	116.57
20	Durr Systems Inc.	Manufacturing equipment	116.30
21	Service Solutions U.S. LLC	Metalworking machinery	116.14
22	Hygieia Inc.	Biotechnology	115.73
23	Oakland University	Manufacturing innovations	114.70
24	Bosch Automotive Service Solutions LLC	Auto	114.38
25	L.VAD Technology Inc.	Biotechnology	114.37

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