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# Start-up likes sound of MP3, CD-player deal

Business First of Buffalo - September 30, 2005 by [Tracey Drury](#) Business First

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A local technology start-up has scored a deal to supply 5,000 MP3 players and portable CD players to a national beauty products company.

**Xtatix LLC** will ship the customized units this week to Ulta Salon, **Cosmetics & Fragrance Inc.**, based in Romeoville, Ill., with 160 stores in 21 states. It is the company's largest sale to date, said Ben Dolgin-Gardner, founder and president of the Buffalo company.

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"Our products just started getting on the market at the beginning of the summer so it hasn't taken us long to come up with sales we're proud of," he said.

The digital electronics company was founded last December while Dolgin-Gardner was still an international business undergrad at the University at Buffalo. During his four years at UB, Dolgin-Gardner, 23, spent a semester abroad in China where he learned the language. He returned twice more to Beijing to scout out manufacturers and electronics factories before making a connection with a company that makes MP3 digital music players.

"It was an emerging product and the per-unit price was a bit cheaper," he said. "In the future, we're looking to get into other things."

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Xtatix now sells its MP3 players and related accessories online through a site designed by a company run by tech professionals Dolgin-Gardner met on another undergraduate trip through Brazil and Thailand. All sales and related functions will be handled through a new office on Kenmore Avenue. Total employment is four people; two or three more are expected to be hired by the end of this year.

Now armed with a fleet of independent sales representatives throughout the country, Dolgin-Gardner hopes to finish his first year in business with sales of \$250,000.

Xtatix landed the Ulta deal almost by accident: Dolgin-Gardner found a list of independent sales representatives on a competitor's Web site and began calling them to market his company. He found one who watched Xtatix's marketing PowerPoint presentation, and passed it on to another rep who represented a company that had just dropped their line of MP3 players.

Though Xtatix didn't carry CD players, he found a manufacturer in China to supply them to meet Ulta's needs, Dolgin-Gardner said.

"Our profits on this deal are going to be very low, but we really wanted to please Ulta and do the best we could to make sure they had the highest quality products at the quickest time possible," he said. "We're looking to continue supplying Ulta in the future."

All financing for the company has been out-of-pocket to date, except for a bank loan the company recently used to help finance the Ulta deal. The company is also working with **Noein Inc.**, another local technology firm, which will become a 5 percent owner next year.

Xtatix will participate next month in Digital Life, a consumer technology and entertainment show at the Javits Convention Center in New York City Oct. 14-16. Dolgin-Gardner is excited about the possibilities.

"In the future we're looking to get into other things," he said. "We're introducing some new products, including some MP4 players."

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