

MACHINE LEARNING

How equine-supplement founder, **LIZ EHRLICH**, built her products from the ground up.

BY **KARA PINATO SCRO**/JUMP MEDIA

LIZ EHRLICH, rider and founder of all-natural equine supplement brand Equine Elixirs, never envisioned herself in a career that would require building custom machinery from the ground up. In fact, she began her career as a Manhattan-based attorney working at an international law firm. After years in New York, Ehrlich relocated to Palm Beach, Florida, where she returned to riding, even purchasing a horse named Bella, while working full time as a lawyer. Unbeknownst to her, buying Bella would kickstart a new career journey for Ehrlich.

After she purchased Bella, Ehrlich found herself trying to figure out how to manage the mare's ulcers. When nothing seemed to be the right fit, she began researching the topic herself. She reviewed research pertaining to ulcers in horses and humans and spoke with veterinarians. Eventually, Ehrlich created what would become Equine Elixirs' first product, a gastric support supplement called Ulceraser. However, she didn't have the most conventional start to product development.

In the early days of Equine Elixirs, Ehrlich rented office space that was about the size of a New York City studio apartment—just large enough to mix ingredients and package small quantities of the product. "I was going to hardware stores to find materials that would mimic



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machinery on a smaller scale," said Ehrlich of finding more efficient ways to mix the product as demand for it began to increase. "I would customize equipment based on what I could find."

As the company grew, Ehrlich continued to expand the facility where her products were made, but quickly realized that if she wanted to meet the increasing demand of her customers and scale the business, small-batch mixing wouldn't be sustainable. Knowing that she would need a way to increase the volume produced, but unwilling to outsource production, Ehrlich sought the expertise of a machinery consultant. He helped

Ehrlich determine her needs based on volume, bulk density, rate of flow, and how many units she'd need to produce every day, week, and month. From there, the consultant identified the appropriate equipment specialists to build the machines and, after a year of development, Ehrlich installed a custom assembly line that would fully automate higher volume production of Ulceraser.

Though the process was laborious and lengthy, Ehrlich notes that learning about the machines and creating them from scratch is now one of her favorite parts of the job. "I get a tremendous amount of satisfaction from these machines," she shared. "We started our product development by experimenting on a small scale, so to have a specialized machine just for the purpose of creating a specific product is, to me, the culmination of what was once just an idea."

As the business grows, so does Ehrlich's knowledge of and appreciation for the machines. Equine Elixirs now has more than four custom machines churning out its growing product line in a 10,000-square-foot facility (with plans to expand to upwards of 15,000 square feet to accommodate three new machines that will be installed later this year). While her love for horses remains at the core of the brand, it's her enthusiasm for bringing an idea to life that keeps Ehrlich's machines ticking. **EQ** + INFO | PAGE 97