

# Biography – Dran Reese

During 1990, I took a year off to have my first child. I spent some time trying to come up with an idea for a product that would protect collectibles and other household possessions from breakage due to earthquakes and other accidents.

Actually, it was rowdy children that gave me the impetus to try and find something to fasten down fragile objects. Several years ago, some kids ran through my house in Monrovia, California, and knocked over and destroyed my collection of imported Swarovski crystal animals worth more than \$500.

I tried caulking, silly putty, even denture adhesive, but nothing worked. I finally found a putty-like substance and took it to a chemist to have it developed into a product that was stickier and non-staining.

The result was QuakeHOLD!, a soft, white putty that is non-toxic, will not dry out, freeze or melt and is easily applied and removed. Best of all, it holds any item up to 40 pounds, and the object won't budge unless it's twisted to break the vacuum seal.

In 1996, the company I had started four years earlier began to manufacture and distribute safety fasteners and related products to safeguard items in the home and office throughout the U.S. and Japan. I was trying to bridge the gap for people who say they plan to prepare for earthquakes, but actually do very little about it.

Prior to founding Ready America, I was an independent fashion consultant and model in Los Angeles for some of the most prestigious designers and garment manufacturers including Sassoon, Carole Little, Rumors and Jag.

By 1990, I looked for a different field in which to develop a business and career. I had since married Dean Reese, a commercial real estate broker, and we began to research the entire field of fasteners to protect collectibles and other breakables in the home.

That was just the first step. Dean and I tested more than 30 names and wrote a comprehensive marketing plan. QuakeHOLD! emerged as the preferred name and we were confident enough in the concept to invest \$40,000 to manufacture and package the first batch of product. Sav-On Drugs was the first retail chain to merchandise and sell the distinctive new fastening product.

In order to publicize and widen distribution, we created an earthquake shaking 'demo' table and began displaying QuakeHOLD! at home and antique shows. During the first year we participated in 33 shows throughout California, which helped us to establish a retail and wholesale presence.

However, it was the devastating 1994 Northridge earthquake in southern California that pushed our unique product to the forefront. Within a year, 'Earthquake Safety Centers' were introduced in large department stores and large home improvement centers.

In California, QuakeHOLD! products were being sold at Sears; Bed Bath & Beyond; Orchard Supply Hardware (OSH); and the Home Depot.

Within months, we expanded our line of earthquake safety fasteners to include a range of furniture and appliance straps to secure big ticket items in the home or office.

Another factor that stimulated domestic sales was the California Employee Safety Bill (Senate Bill 198), which requires every business to provide a safe working environment for its employees. Since companies could be held financially liable if employees were injured during quakes, it was an incentive for businesses to earthquake-proof office equipment and furniture.

In January 1995, foreign sales were stimulated by the earthquake in Kobe, Japan. Dean opened the Japanese market and major Japanese retailers and industrial customers are still using QuakeHOLD! products.

Sales increased by more than 100% during 1994/1995 and continued to grow at a rapid rate in 1996. Since then, we have grown even larger and in 1999 we relocated our business premises to San Marcos, near San Diego, in order to cope with the increased volume. However, by 2005 we had outgrown that location and moved into a larger office/warehouse complex in nearby Escondido.

The message that we constantly promote is that people who live in earthquake country should take the time to invest in inexpensive, easy-to-install fasteners that can prevent damage before it occurs.

If you keep putting it off, it could be too late.

I believe that the primary reasons for Ready America's success are high consumer demand for top quality earthquake safety fasteners, along with our commitment to ensure that people are prepared for any emergency.