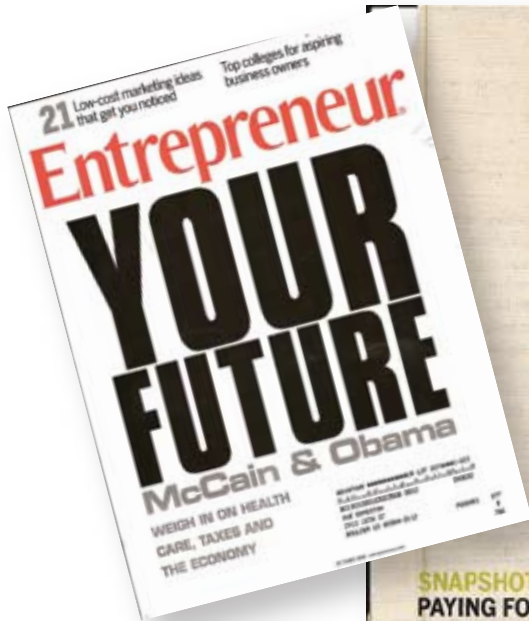




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Gentle Front-Support Baby Carrier

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SNAPSHOT
PAYING FOR QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

SOMETIMES SHELLING OUT MORE FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED GOODS CAN COST YOUR COMPANY A LOT LESS. BY DAVID WORRELL

As an avid rock climber, Seth Murray approaches business like he would a rock face: Plan each move and grab onto only what you can see, touch and test. So naturally, when he created Belle Baby Carriers to sell a modern but comfortable baby carrier, he sought out local suppliers who he could visit and test out.

"We have three sewing companies and an order-fulfillment house all within 30 miles," says Murray, 30, who projects sales of more than \$330,000 this year. "That made it a lot easier for us to develop both the product and the quality [control] program."

While most consumer goods companies are outsourcing production to China, Belle Baby Carriers spends the majority of its production dollars at home in Boulder, Colorado. On a per-piece basis, it may be more expensive, Murray says, but he has found a financial formula that makes it all worthwhile. While competitors are ordering by the container-load from Asia, Murray is taking delivery of very small batches locally, which minimizes his cash needs and keeps inventory low. "Financially, we have a 'just-in-time' mentality," he says. "So we have constant communication with our suppliers. And we don't have to worry about shipping costs and import duties."

Seth Murray knows he can trust his local manufacturers—and that's a big selling point when it comes to earning his company's business.