

# Sanitizer nets funds

By RICK MCGINNIS  
Metro Toronto

On last week's episode of *Dragon's Den*, the panel of five judges seemed to be in an unusually impatient mood as they reacted to most of the pitches presented to them as investment opportunities with guffaws and sarcasm.

There was a green box that would mysteriously save electricity and make home PCs work faster, and a blanket to keep bathwater warm, both of which were dismissed, the latter with incredulous laughter, the other with tearful dismay by a judge who pleaded with the would-be entrepreneur to stop wasting her time.

For a moment, a Vancouver man pitching a pair of binoculars that could cut through fog, sand and snowstorms looked like he might be the night's winner, but he neglected to bring his sole working prototype with him, and had to walk away empty handed. Then Gilad Shoham, a Toronto entrepreneur, walked in with a simple but brilliant idea that stood a chance of saving lives.

"I had a good feeling," Shoham recalls, "because I think there were something like ... 1,500 people who au-



gelFAST hand sanitizer, a winner on *Dragon's Den*, can clip on belts or lab coats.

ditioned, and from those a hundred people were invited to be on the show ... We knew that we had a product that helps people, and makes financial sense, and we had a very good business model, so that was a no-brainer."

Shoham was pitching gelFAST, a hand-sanitizing product the size of a pager, which clipped onto the coats or belts of doctors and nurses and let them clean their hands between every patient. It sold itself on the simple fact that most of the deaths that occur in hospitals happen because of secondary infections, and it caused a bidding war between three of the show's "dragons."

"Doctors and nurses have to work so hard, and they're being asked to do so much and work so quickly, so the

first thing to fall in a busy schedule is hand hygiene ... If a doctor or nurse washed their hands as often as they're supposed to, it would take an hour of their shift. It's just unreasonable to expect that in my opinion. We just had a very simple idea — if you put it on them, as they're walking to and fro, they can do hand hygiene, and it allows them to multi-task."

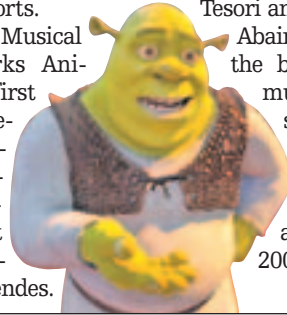
While Internet mogul Kevin O'Leary and La Senza founder Laurence Lewin offered Shoham and his brother only \$100,000 — half of what he needed to walk away the show's winner — tech investor Robert Herjavec stepped in with \$250,000, trumping his fellow judges. It was a truly dramatic moment, not only because it felt like the first really amazing idea the show's showcased so far. Shoham knows he probably would have gotten investors elsewhere, but insists that the *Dragon's Den* experience was worth it for the exposure alone.

"If we had to buy (that publicity), it would have cost us a lot more than the investment," Shoham says. **Dragon's Den** airs tonight on CBC at 8 p.m.

# Shrek heads to Broadway

Movie ogre Shrek is set to hit the Broadway stage as the star of his own musical, [imdb.com](http://imdb.com) reports.

*Shrek: The Musical* is DreamWorks Animation's first venture in legitimate theatre and follows an ambitious project helmed by director Sam Mendes.



The score and story for the new production have been penned by Jeanine Tesori and David Lindsay-Abaire. Jason Moore, the brains behind hit show *Avenue Q*, is slated to direct the musical, which is set for an opening in 2008.

METRO TORONTO NEWS SERVICES

## a wicked time

To celebrate its return to Toronto, the musical *Wicked* is spotlighting local talent. Fans are invited to participate in the *Be Wicked* singing contest and *Wicked Day* on Oct. 29, at the Toronto Eaton Centre — Trinity Way at 220 Yonge St. Unknown stars will have the opportunity to showcase their talent while singing *Wicked* songs and, of course, win prizes. For details, visit [www.wickedday.com](http://www.wickedday.com).

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