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# Life After Birth

Joining the ranks of high-styled industrial brands like Apple is up-and-coming Danish company iiamo. Founded by two fathers who just launched an innovative line of baby care products, iiamo is on brink of re-thinking the role of modern parenthood.

By Julie Ralphs

Three years ago, Rasmus Schmiegelow and Nikolaj Leonhard-Hjorth gave birth to the idea of producing baby care products that met the needs of busy parents. This led to the foundation of iiamo and their first line of products: a self-heating feeding bottle, "iiamo go", and a wireless, organic heating cartridge, "iiamo warm", that gives access to warm (body temperature) milk anytime, anywhere - in the park, in the car, in a café or out visiting friends. Portable, practical, around-the-clock solutions to going to the kitchen one hundred times in the wee hours of the morning.

Rasmus and Nikolaj initially met during law school, both become fathers and together created a company with a concept that challenges convention and unites function and design in an entirely new way. Their originality, enthusiasm and perseverance led to a unique collaboration with world-renown designer Karim Rashid and global marketing guru Adam Morgan.

"Working with Karim and Adam has defined an ambition that is just as much cultural as it is commercial. They also accelerated our thinking process, production and product promotion. When we first started out, we were two entrepreneurs with a great business opportunity and a great patent for a very clever invention. Then we were both hit by parenthood and that changed our perspective on a lot of things, which ultimately lead to our overall concept: "Life After Birth," says Rasmus.





"I guess "Life After Birth" can best be translated into a lifestyle. For a new generation of parents with a "let's go" attitude, reflecting the desire to be more engaged in family life, with more freedom and energy for involvement with your children. Of course, what that means for each parent is very personal. But it originates from a core belief that the single most important thing any parent can ever do for their children is not only to love them but also to inspire them," explains Nikolaj.

#### **Reality vs. Retouching**

In speaking to them both, they have a deep respect for parenthood, especially given the personal challenges they face as fathers. Rasmus has twins and Nikolaj has extensive experience with a colic baby.

"When we looked at magazines and watched TV, we were struck by the images they showed of the perfect mother and child bonded together, photographed in soft focus, retouched and frozen in time. From our own experience, the reality was and is very different. We also realized that it's not good for mothers and fathers to neglect their own needs, because what you really need in a stressful situation is inspiration. And a break. In our case in particular, with a colic baby and twins, we discovered that if we didn't allow for a bit of space and a break from the image of the perfect parent - we would burn out.

So it should come as no surprise that iiamo was launched with humanity, humility and tranquility in mind. The first product they introduced is the self-heating feeding bottle "iiamo go", specially designed to help parents be more mobile and feel less stressed. It lets you move around, go out with friends and relax while your family is filling in or even taking your baby for a spin, knowing that warm milk is only minutes away," adds Nikolaj. "iiamo go" is based on a patent that combines simple, well-proven technologies and a clever secret called "iiamo warm". A disposable heating cartridge that contains only salt and water, designed with an easy, place-push-and-play mechanism which warms up milk within minutes.

Without a doubt, iiamo's way of thinking and producing products is different from traditional baby care companies. Fortunately, Nikolaj and Rasmus have transformed the frustration they experienced with ordinary baby care products into a new way of living a more relaxed life as parents. Thanks to a line of products where design and functionality come together with a convenient feature missing from parenthood: freedom.





Photo: Mathew Zucker From left to right: Rasmus Schmiegelow, Karim Rashid, Nikolaj Leonhard-Hjorth

#### A ban on toxic baby bottles

In addition to their products and philosophical approach, iiamo has initiated an online petition to help ban the dangerous chemical Bisphenol-A (BPA) used in many baby bottles in Denmark, similar to the ban in Canada.

“How is it at all possible to sell baby bottles filled with toxic agents? I think that was one of the first questions we asked ourselves. Like all parents, we naturally pose critical questions about the products we buy: Is this safe? What’s in it? We were shocked to discover that most, if not all baby bottles were actually unsafe, because they are full of the toxic material BPA (Bisphenol-A). We realized that the baby care industry is taking a long time to wake up to the dangers of BPA. We simply could not understand why something so serious has been ignored for so long - almost 20 years. As parents, we didn’t want to wait any longer and we didn’t trust companies that sold toxic materials to babies. We wanted babies to be able to drink from safe bottles. And now they can,” adds Rasmus.

#### About iiamo

The founders of iiamo Nikolaj Leonhard-Hjorth and Rasmus Schmiegelow both have a law degree. Nikolaj has a daughter named Alma and Rasmus has three sons, Sebastian, Nor and Kristoffer. Rasmus has worked for the global shipping company Mærsk and Nikolaj has started several business ventures, including a communications agency. They established iiamo in 2006.

Adam Morgan is considered one of the most talented marketing professionals on the planet, is the creator of the “challenger philosophy” and the author of two international bestsellers. His EatBigFish consultancy firm works with some of the most innovative companies around the globe, including PepsiCo, eBay, Apple and Lexus.

Karim Rashid is also in a league of his own, often referred to as the ‘Poet of Plastic.’ He is a leading figure in product and interior design, furniture, lighting and art, having worked with an impressive array of clients, such as Alessi, Umbra, Prada, Issey Miyake, and Method. Karim has successfully infused consumer culture with his signature “Sensual Minimalism” and is the recipient of an impressive list of awards and acknowledgements, such as the Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award, I.D. Magazine’s Annual Design Review and the Red Dot Award, just to name a few. His work is in the permanent collections of 15 museums worldwide including MoMA and SFMoMA.

