

# Brand Building a “Premie” Care Product Line: Nurtured by Design

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**Abstract.** This case portrays the journey of Dr. Jackson, who after her own stressful experience of giving birth prematurely (“premie”), established the company Nurtured by Design (NBD) in 2001. The first brand was launched in 2004 followed by the launch of further brands in the coming years. The products were designed ergonomically and aimed at helping hospital staff, mothers and parents provide essential care and comfort for prematurely born babies. After a successful launch, NBD had to then decide on the next phase and manage growth carefully by meeting certain key targets. In 2018, NBD undertook a rebranding exercise for all the brands under its portfolio. It was crucial for the company to evaluate the growth opportunities and prepare a strategy to create further brand awareness. A priority was always to strike a balance between the social and business goals. However an extended focus on social outcomes could lead to losses, whereas focusing heavily on business outcomes would be a deviation from Dr. Jackson’s dream of creating a better world for prematurely born babies across the world. NBD had to overcome these and other challenges to further build and develop a successful brand while facing a complex business environment both domestically and internationally.

**Keywords:** brand portfolio, brand design, brand management, social business.

“Every baby born into the world is a finer one than the last” - Charles Dickens

## 1. Introduction

Dr. Yamile Jackson, CEO and Founder of Nurtured by Design (NBD), was sitting in her Sugarland office and was busy completing a customized order for a new born premature baby (“premie”) at Texas Medical Center before proceeding to attend a charity meeting at the Arlington Hotel. It was crucial for NBD to evaluate the growth opportunities and prepare a strategy to create brand awareness. Dr. Jackson conceptualized NBD in the year 2001, along with her husband, Larry.

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1. This case study is based on secondary data and has been written for classroom discussion. This case is not envisioned to illustrate effective or ineffective management..

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NBD’s conceptualization was triggered by the 12 weeks premature birth of their baby boy—Zachary. The tug-of-war between life and death where a determined mother emerged victorious in keeping her premie alive and well, was when the seeds of NBD were sown.

NBD was conceptualized as an innovative venture to aid and support premies. NBD products were designed ergonomically to help parents in providing care and comfort to premies. NBD started with a single brand—“The Zaky”—in 2003, which was a glove shaped pillow. Dr. Jackson not only laid the foundations for helping to improve the health conditions for premies through NBD but also led its global business growth. NBD’s expanded product portfolio comprised three brands in 2019: The Zaky Hug, The Zaky Zak, and The Zaky Zen. NBD’s product footprint can be found in more than 50 countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, OECD countries and Europe.

Dr. Jackson looked at a bright red circle on the calendar in her Sugar Land, Texas Office. Zachary was going to turn 20 on May, 15<sup>th</sup> 2019, which was a big personal milestone. However, she could not stop but ponder about how to grow her business and explore future opportunities to make the world of premies and their parents happier while striking a balance with her business goals. One of the top priorities was to decide on the next phase of growth and manage the growth within the given resources. A couple of questions that loomed big were: (a) How to build a strong brand for an innovative business like NBD? (b) How to strike a balance between the social and business goals?

## **2. Health and Mortality Issues of Premies**

There are around 15 million premies born each year only in the US and premie births constitute between 5-18 percent of total births across 184 nations (a baby qualifies as a premie when it is alive at birth and is born prior to the culmination of 37 weeks of pregnancy).<sup>2</sup> The “mother to be” is said to be “at term” if the baby is born between 37 - 42 weeks of pregnancy. One out of every ten child births was a premie (WHO, 2015). Also in 2015, one million babies under the age of 5 years died due to complications related to their premature birth e.g. inability to regulate body temperature, unavailability of mother’s milk, lack of infection free environment and respiratory issues.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the survival of premies depended on the type of families they had as parents and/or primary caretakers and also his/her birthplace. The neonatal mortality rate in developed countries such as United States and the United Kingdom has been reduced to under 15 per 1,000 live births

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2. World Health Organization (2018), “Premie Birth Fact sheet”, (19 February). Available at [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs363/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs363/en/)
  3. Painter K. (2013), “Full-term pregnancy gets a new, narrower definition”, *USA Today*, (22 October). Available at [www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/10/22/full-term-pregnancy-definition/3145107/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/10/22/full-term-pregnancy-definition/3145107/)