



# Interview of the Month

October 2019

**Martha Silcott**  
CEO and Inventor of  
Fab Little Bag



**SheCanHeCan: Can you please tell us more about yourself and Fab Little Bag?**

Martha Silcott: I am a solution-orientated person who likes to find better ways of doing things, using things, and making things. I am also pretty impatient and a positive optimistic person. I believe that curiosity is a crucial life asset. My background is mixed; ran my own 1 woman firm as an independent financial adviser out of University, worked within large corporates for 14 years, before jumping into the crazy bonkers world of entrepreneurship thanks to my patented invention; FabLittleBag. FabLittleBag was born out of personal frustration; round at a friends house, had to change my tampon in their downstairs loo, did the loo roll wrap (I'm a Binner) and went to put it in the bin and there was no bin – ended up having to do the Handbag Smuggle; it was awful. I hated that experience; there was no answer out there, and millions of women and girls were flushing their products causing pollution and blockages; so I invented FabLittleBag as an environmentally positive solution to period product disposal.

**When did you first see the need for Fab Little Bag in the market? Did you have a eureka moment in creating it?**

After my experience I spent approximately 18 months pondering what the disposal device needed to do and how it would work. It needed to be opened with one hand for tampons and this is also useful for pads, that was the tricky bit...I did have a Eureka moment – at home and I ran around the house grabbing a sandwich bag, sellotape, stapler and bits of a nappy...I made a “Blue Peter” version of what today is FabLittleBag. This upgraded to one made form a black bin. Liner which is what I had until the actual FabLittleBag as you see today which arrived in November 2015.

**"Gosh – well frankly that it [Fab Little Bag] exists at all is a huge success as only 9% of patents granted are owned by women."**

**What have been some of the biggest successes of Fab Little Bag so far? What barriers, if any, does it still face?**

Gosh – well frankly that it exists at all is a huge success as only 9% of patents granted are owned by women and I had no past experience or expertise in manufacturing, branding, marketing or materials. Becoming a staple item of women's handbags and bathrooms is what it is all about and the fact that we have achieved that even to a small extent compared to the whole market, feels great. In terms of barriers still to face – these are plentiful! Constantly assessing the most environmentally focused materials to make FLB, tweaking the brand to stay current, gaining traction in the B2B market place so we explode growth, cash flow is always a challenge for any business, and keeping my skin of two Rhinos intact to combat negativity and rejection – all challenges!

**Why is gender equality and ending period inequality so important to you as a company?**

Why would anyone not want equality of humans? In the workplace, women are not generally treated equally; there is often a gender pay gap, glass ceilings, you have to pay for period products or more often, they are absent completely. Men's needs in this regard are catered for with plenty of loo roll in the cubicles! As a company whose focus is on women and girls primarily it is extra important as we are combating prejudice and negative taboos around a subject which is a natural female phenomenon, so educating and ending the inequality around the availability and treatment of period products is key.

**If you had any advice for aspiring female entrepreneurs like yourself, what would it be?**

Think very hard about the journey, do research, as it can be lonely, unrelenting, pressured, demanding, and everything always takes longer and costs more than you think! That said, if you have a passion I believe you need to follow it, whether it ends in the fairytale dream or not. You will also meet amazing people along the way, learn huge amounts, experience amazing highs (as well as lots of lows!)

**What does the future hold for Fab Little Bag? And where can we buy them?**

I hope and intend that the future is incredible with a flourishing consumer market and a growing B2B market where it will be normal to see FabLittleBags in cubicles everywhere. Pollution of period product in our rivers, oceans and beaches will be a super rare occurrence and we will live in a world of happy Binners, otherwise known as Fabbers!

# About Martha Silcott

Martha started out as an IFA and built a successful portfolio of clients before moving into the world of financial services data; working at Experian, developing a new service, the Unclaimed Assets Register (reuniting people with their lost money held by Insurance companies); then headhunted to do a similar service for Capita, followed by relationship director and account manager roles at data companies. Inspiration for FabLittleBag was born out of frustration one day when sitting on the toilet at a friend's house. She was faced with every woman's dilemma - should know she shouldn't flush her tampon, causing blockages and pollution, so she did what all binners have to do, and wrapped it in toilet roll, went to put it in the bin – but – there was no bin, so she had to do “the Handbag Smuggle” There had to be a better way. There wasn't, so she invented one. She applied for the patent in 2006 and waited 7 years for it to be granted. Leaving the security of corporate land behind her she focused on making her idea into reality. 5m bags later, FabLittleBag is now available in Ocado, Amazon, FabLittleBag.com plus various on-line stores, and we have distributors in the USA, & Australia. They partner with phs Group the UK's largest washroom provider as our key B2B channel in the UK and a global hotel distributor. She has also developed other channels for similar bags to address the lack of dignity and ease of disposal in other areas such as condoms and various medical conditions.

**You can buy FabLittleBag on Amazon, @fablittlebag.com, other online stores and in the UK @Ocado.com**

