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SUCCESS STORIES DON'T HAVE TO BE THE STUFF OF BLOCKBUSTER MOVIES AND BEST-SELLING PAPERBACKS. OFTEN, IT'S THE SIMPLEST IDEAS THAT MAKE THE BIGGEST SPLASH AND MOST CASH!

'THE BRIGHT IDEA THAT MADE ME RICH'



WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

MARIANNE BROAD turned her teenage nightmare into a British success story. After suffering severe acne, she vowed to find a cure and went on to invent a machine that treats skin complaints. Now 32, Marianne runs O-LYS, a rapidly expanding business that aims to bring light therapy to skin clinics across the world.

'I have been driven by sheer belief in my product. I tried every pill and facial for my acne, but nothing worked until I saw a doctor who used light therapy, which strengthens the skin's connective tissues and prevents spots and scars forming. After three months my skin had started to heal and, a year later, my face was clear. 'I was so grateful that I began to help out at the doctor's surgery during the weekends and he taught me how to use the equipment. After he died, I felt passionately that I wanted to carry on his work. 'I applied for a grant from the Department of Trade and Industry to fund more research, then linked up with an aeronautical engineer to make a light therapy machine. We went through four prototypes before I was happy. 'Now, four years on, I can finally pay myself a decent salary – there have been times when I literally couldn't eat – but money has never been my motivation. I just didn't want anyone to suffer as I did. 'I tell other businesswomen to aim high. There will be people who will knock you, but you can make it if you believe in yourself. There are no certainties in business, but nothing could be as bad as getting to 80 and not having tried.'