

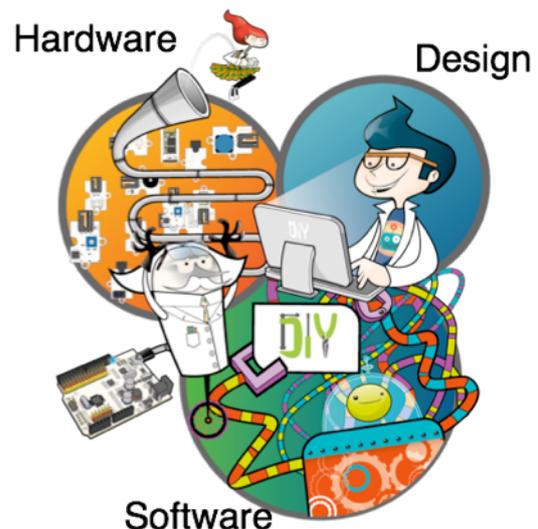
## BQ AND THE EDUCATION MARKET

# bq

In 2003, six telecom engineering students at the Polytechnic University of Madrid got together at ITEM Consulting, a small students association that, from a small room in one of the basements of the school, was managing tasks such as student scholarships, summer courses, computer maintenance, etc. They were between 20 and 23 years old, and shared a great entrepreneurial spirit. As one of the improvements for the computer lab, they proposed substituting the then outdated disk drives with USB ports, and as the update got approved, they decided to start importing branded USB drives.

In 2006, once they were very familiar with the product, they opened a factory in China with 30 employees to manufacture USB drives themselves, gathering in the process a lot of precious knowledge on production processes and quality control. Later, in 2009, they started manufacturing other lines of products, such as e-books, tablets and, finally, smartphones. They followed the same step-by-step approach: getting gradually integrated into the manufacturing process, until they managed to fully design and create the product from scratch. In 2013, **bq** became the second best-selling brand in unlocked smartphones in Spain, right behind Samsung.

In late 2013, anticipating the 3D printing revolution, **bq** started manufacturing Witbox. This time, the whole manufacturing process was done in Spain. Besides that, the company decided to enter another market, the PrintBots: printable robots that children can build and program themselves. Thanks to [educational robotics](#), the company feels closer to achieving one of their goals: to stimulate interest and curiosity about technology among children. Children are surrounded by technological objects and constantly interact with them, but they perceive them as “magical” elements. They know how to use them, but they cannot understand how they work. The company wants to remove the “mysticism” and teach them, demonstrate them that they can manage and create such objects. They want to train future artisans, future makers.



In 2014, things look pretty well for the company: they designed all of their products themselves, they were leaders in the Spanish consumer electronics industry selling

with both their own brand and as private label, they had their own 3D printers factory in Spain, and they had activity in more than 30 countries with almost 800 employees. The company had proven a solid track record in selling consumer electronics such as e-books, tablets and smartphones through traditional distribution channels (MediaMarkt, BEEP, PC Box, and more than 2000 small computer stores), but now they had two more “experimental” lines of products, and one of them was completely different from anything they had done before...



(Links: [bq page in English](#), [Kit de robótica](#), [Zum](#), [Prusa i3 Hephestos](#), [bitbloq](#))

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In the current scenario, the company would like your advice in the two following issues:

- Do you see the education market as a reasonable diversification for a company like **bq**? Does it make sense? Will it be profitable or sustainable, considering that all the materials they generate are distributed with an open, Creative Commons license?
- Which innovative strategies, commercial actions, channels, etc. would you advise for the go to market? Which platforms and tools would you recommend to target the education market and why? Would you pursue the Spanish market or be more ambitious and target an international one?

Please include any links you find relevant for your answer. As soon as you finish (max. 2 pages), please email a copy to [enrique.dans@ie.edu](mailto:enrique.dans@ie.edu) from a clearly identifiable email account, and wait until you see your name appearing in my inbox on the screen.