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Barbara Kantor, chief executive officer of Vedante Corp., shows off her company's reflective pop bands. Athletes training at night use the bands as a way to be seen by traffic. The company also makes reflective collars and leashes for pets.

Vedante pop bands help nighttime runners stay safe, visible to drivers

BY LAURA BISHOP
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BOULDER – Athletes, pedestrians and bikers are becoming more visible at night with new reflective pop bands developed by a Boulder woman.

Vedante Corp., founded by Barbara Kantor, is a startup selling reflective pop bands as well as pet collars and leashes. The reflective pop bands

fit on the arms and legs and are sold in a variety of colors.

The lime-yellow and white are reflective to 1,500 feet while tangerine is up to 1,000 feet. The bands that come in green, blue and pink are reflective to 500 feet. The bands automatically wrap around and fit on the arms and ankles after a tap.

Kantor said athletes wear the pop bands above each elbow and on each ankle.

“It gives you high visibility at night,” she said. “The headlights create the reflection.”

Kantor, who has worked as a professional fashion designer, was thinking about safety issues during her walks at dusk. She decided to develop the pop bands after witnessing a car hit a woman in a crosswalk near her home. Most of the reflective gear on the market is designed for industrial use.

VEDANTE

"I began to realize I wasn't safe," she said. "In the United States, every seven minutes someone is hit or killed – mostly from 6 p.m. to midnight. It's a visibility issue."

The pop bands went on sale last fall at the Vedante Web site, www.vedante.com, Amazon.com, McGuckin Hardware and Boulder Bike & Ski.

Full Cycle in Boulder started selling the bands in June.

Kantor, Vedante's chief executive officer, set her company up as a corporation in Delaware so the company could go public in the future. Vedante is registered in Colorado as a foreign entity operating out of Colorado.

There are 31 states that support companies with boards of directors promoting social responsibility and net profits. Neither Colorado nor Delaware supports that type of board structure. Kantor said she is interested in both responsibility and profits, and she will have to move the registration to one of the 31 states that support that type of structure.

She is in the process of creating a foundation for nonprofit educational and philanthropic programs. Kantor plans to donate a percentage of her gross profits to sustainability and safety charities.

Vedante is the fourth Colorado company to become a "B" Corp. The designation certifies the company is a socially responsible company.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
VEDANTE CORP.

said. "I am interested in leaving a good trail."

Vedante is collaborating with the 3M Company to manufacture its products. The medium pop bands cost \$11.98 per pair while the large are \$12.98 per pair. Pet collar sizes range from extra small to extra large and run from \$11.98 to \$21.98. The leashes are four to six feet and are priced from \$29 to \$52.

"The goal in everything I am doing is to make the products priced so that anyone can afford them," Kantor said.

Rik Isakson, a manager at McGuckin Hardware, said the pop bands have been a popular item. It's a product people are interested in when it gets dark early. "Fall and spring are when we see better sales on reflective items," he said. "It's easy to put it on and go."

Kantor, who has a graduate degree in textiles, plans to sell her products in more retail outlets. Her company isn't profitable yet, but she plans to go into her second round of fundraising by the end of this year. She expects to raise \$1 million through angel investors. Angel investors, who believe in Kantor's

mission, have already raised money for Vedante. There are currently two board members, but Kantor wants to increase that number to five.

Other products on the market are reflective to 200 to 600 feet. Kantor wanted to increase the distance with her products. She chose the name Vedante from the words vedere, which means "to see" in Italian and vedantic, which is an ancient Sanskrit teaching that means "living in a higher way."

Kantor subcontracts out work to five to seven people. She is the only full-time employee. Vedante has a warehouse in Gunbarrel. Kantor works from home and Office Evolution in Boulder.

While expanding her business, Kantor wants to continue her socially responsible work. Her goal is to reduce accidents by 80 percent in each market she enters. She believes people are becoming more aware of the need for safety.

"Part of my company is mission-based and part of it is profit-based," she said.