

High-profile flops fill gallery at CES gadget fest

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The Gallery of Flops at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas displays past product ideas that failed to become household items.

A Gallery of Flops including a handset just for tweeting and a failed Apple stereo system is warning entrepreneurs at CES that dreams of

market glory can crumble.

Iconic product failures were on display at this week's CES consumer electronics show included a skin-toning face mask reminiscent of a horror film; eyewear embedded with therapeutic magnets and a model of failed 80s sports car DeLorean.

"Many founders have this bias where they think they're geniuses and everything that they are doing is super right," the gallery of failures organizer, Prelaunch founder Narek Vardanyan told AFP.

"(But) you can burn a lot of money and lose a lot of years."

The annual CES consumer electronics extravaganza threw open its doors in Las Vegas on Thursday as the industry looks to the latest innovations to help cure the pain from an ailing global economy.

Failures on display in the cautionary Gallery of Flops also included Zune MP3 players launched by Microsoft and the defunct Pippin game console from Apple, which never became popular.

About 80 percent of new products launched every year fail, often because founders failed to assess whether people were really willing to spend money on what they were selling, according to Vardanyan.

While tech giants can afford to have products occasionally bomb, such an outcome can be the end of a young startup.



With close to 100,000 attendees expected, the Consumer Electronics Show runs through Sunday in Las Vegas.

"I think it's great to consider failures because failures are valuable learning experiences," said Brad Holliday of ID8 Innovation, which advises big companies launching startup projects.

"If you can speed your process of understanding when something is not going to be successful, you can save yourself money in the long run," he added.

'Waste money'

Flop show organizer Armenia-based Prelaunch specializes in checking potential demand for new products early in the creation process, according to its chief.

"For a starry-eyed entrepreneur, this type of idea could probably help them not waste a lot of money or time chasing something that isn't reasonable," said MH3 Collective founder Mark Harrison, whose group of ventures in Canada includes marketing agencies and nonprofit organizations.

"It's interesting; you could have a whole museum," Harrison added while surveying the flops on display.

Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanesi told AFP that gadget makers showing off innovations this year will be keen to get products to market quickly.

Given the tough global economy, startups don't have the five years they might have once expected to perfect their projects and avert failure, she said.

Startups today need to be "banking on money coming into their coffers in the near future," Milanesi said.

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