INVENTORS DIGEST

THE MAGAZINE FOR IDEA PEOPLE >

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The long career of David Fussell, inventor, author, and manufacturing expert.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Everyone Needs Change

In 1983 ID (Inventors Digest) was launched with the idea of promoting Inventions. We've never wavered from our task to help promote, educate and motivate the inventor community. When I mention "change", some will automatically assume we're changing our core beliefs or the original intent of ID. Not to worry ID readers, that couldn't be farther from the truth.

In 1983, iPhones didn't exist and Apple was 6 years old. Who had heard of the Internet? Websites? E-mail? I could go on, but you get the point. We've come a long way in 32 years and keeping up with the times is a must or we'll become an afterthought like every company does that refuses to keep up and modernize.

Over the next few months you will begin to notice some subtle and some not so subtle changes with ID. We'll be adding new columns, updating our website, design enhancements, etc.

NEW: IP Watchdog

ID is pleased to announce Gene Quinn will be writing a new column titled IP Watchdog (after his website IPWatchdog.com) which will start this month. For those that are not familiar with Gene's credentials, he is a leading Patent Attorney that has specialized in strategic patent consulting, patent application drafting and patent prosecution. Gene has taught at various law schools, lecture series, etc.

Gene started IP Watchdog in 1999 and it has grown to become a leading voice in the IP field with multiple millions of unique visitors to his website. Gene's credentials more than speak for themselves and he will be a valuable member of our contributors.

Keep watching for more changes and welcome Gene Quinn.

Happy Inventing and don't fear change!

Mark R. Cantey

VP & Associate Publisher

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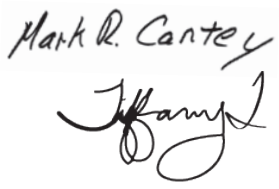

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AY HELLO TO INNOVATION

Get to know strategic branding

Shake hands with results

At enventys we breathe new life into existing products and brands,
as well as create new ones using an efficient, collaborative approach.
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DHANA COHEN Co-founder of The Women Inventorz Network and the newly created Inventorz(VIRTUAL)Network. Dhana knows a thing or two about great innovation, as an inventor herself she struggled with who to contact, and who truly had her best interest in mind. Luckily she stopped inventing after several products and took her background in marketing and partnered with Melinda Knight, together they have developed the right connections, education and marketing for the inventor community. The new (VIRTUAL) InventorzNetwork.com is the only platform out there in the inventor industry, think Match.com meets Angie's List for the inventor industry.

EDIE TOLCHIN, also known as The Sourcing Lady (SM), has worked with new products and inventors for over 25 years. Owner of EGT Global Trading (www.egtglobaltrading.com) since 1997, she has helped hundreds of inventors bring their products to market through China sourcing, manufacturing, product safety issues, importing, Customs, branding, packaging design arrangements and websites. Author and editor of numerous publications for inventors, her most recent is Secrets of Successful Inventing (www.secretsofsuccessfulinventing.com). Contact Edie at egt@edietolchin.com.

GENE QUINN, is a Patent Attorney and the founder of IPWatchdog.com. He is also a principal lecturer in the top patent bar review course in the nation, which helps aspiring patent attorneys and patent agents prepare themselves to pass the patent bar exam. Gene's particular specialty as a patent attorney is in the area of strategic patent consulting, patent application drafting and patent prosecution. He has worked with independent inventors and start-up businesses in a variety of different technology fields.

JOHN RAU, president/CEO of Ultra-Research Inc., an Anaheim, CA-based market research firm, has over 25 years of experience conducting market research for ideas, inventions and other forms of intellectual property. In addition, he is a member of the Board of Directors of Inventors Forum, based in Orange County, CA, which is one of the largest inventor organizations in the nation. He has been a contributor to Inventors Digest magazine since 1998. Mr. Rau can be reached at (714) 281-0150, or ultraresch@cs.com.

Market Research *tip of the* Month

by John Rau

If you have an idea for a new consumer product, then you need to identify the problem your invention solves and conduct an investigation as to how that problem is being solved (if at all) today. In this regard, you would normally "look around" to see if something like that exists. In this situation, "look around" means going to trade shows, local stores such as Wal-Mart, Target, Sears, Home Depot, etc. to see what you can find. You should also consider some type of Internet or Google search and a review of applicable trade literature as part of this effort in conjunction with your store visits. For obvious reasons, I call this the "look around and see what you can find" phase. You need to keep in mind that this is just the beginning of your search and you can't necessarily expect any conclusive results as to how to proceed further, if at all, as this is just your "top level", first step and "cursory review" of the potential marketplace. The fact of the matter is that you need to start someplace in investigating your new product idea further.

Three possible outcomes of your initial search in the marketplace include: (1) you found nothing like your idea-nothing in the marketplace does what your new product will do and it looks like your new product idea may be unique; (2) you found one or more products that look similar in terms of the function(s) they perform and, even though they aren't identical in appearance and/or form, either solve or could be modified to solve the same problem(s) that your idea addresses; (3) you found a product that for all practical purposes is identical to what you have in mind. Now what? Well in the case of (3), it's easy. Someone has beaten you to the marketplace; hence move on and find some other new product idea(s). In the other two possible outcome cases, further investigation and research are necessary.

In outcome case (1), the fact that you couldn't find any product that does what your new product idea will do is encouraging, but you should ask yourself why. One reason might be that not enough consumers really need a problem solution that you are offering and, as a result,

there is no market for it and that is why no such product exists in the marketplace. Other inventors may have already thought of your idea, conducted their own market research and reached the same conclusion. Of course, you have no way of knowing this. A preliminary patent search would be wise to see if the idea has ever been patented. In general and, in any case, you will want to investigate the patentability of your idea, but it may be that someone has already patented it, but never did anything with it. A preliminary patent search will reveal this.

If, indeed, your new product idea is unique, then you are most likely in the Blue Ocean with a totally new idea. In this case, then you need to formulate a strategy as to how to move forward with this totally new idea and create a market for it. This is what is commonly referred to as the "Blue Ocean Strategy" by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne in their best selling book Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant (Harvard Business

School Press, 2005). In this situation, there is no competition and you have to create the demand for your new product and, as a result, potentially create a new industry. However, you should keep in mind what the noted automotive industrialist Lee Iacocca is quoted as having said, "You can have brilliant ideas, but if you cannot get them across, your ideas will not get you anywhere".

Now, the real interesting situation occurs in outcome case (2) where you find similar products and/or products that could be modified to provide the problem solution that your new invention idea offers.

If, indeed, you find one or more products in the marketplace that are similar to your new invention idea, that does not necessarily mean that you can't move forward with your idea, but you should at least investigate whether or not these have been patented. The fact that a product is available for sale in the marketplace does not necessarily mean that it has patent protection. This, however, could be an issue if you were to move forward and try to patent your new idea as these products would be considered as "prior art" in the patentability assessment of your idea. If any features of these other products have patent protection, then you will need to make sure that if you were to move forward with your new invention idea that you don't infringe on these features.

Good advice is provided by the Invent Guru (see "Finding a Similar Product" at http://inventguru.com/Finding_a_similar_product.asp) as follows. "You would also need to check if your product is designed in a different way so that it provides for a lesser cost in manufacturing your product. If you have any doubt with regard to the similarities in design, construction, size, shape, materials used and function of products that are already available in the market to your invention, it is best not to leave anything to chance. It is highly advocated that you seek out the professional advice of a competent, registered patent attorney who would be able to provide sound legal recommendations."

Another consideration is that, if your new invention idea could be obtained by modifying an existing product, then you might want to consider this approach, but you would need to make sure that your modifications are different from what the original patent holder has claimed. It is possible that you could improve an existing product and receive patent protection for the "new product". This is an approach followed successfully by many inventors.

In summary, always start with the "look around and see what you can find phase" in your initial assessment of the marketability and perhaps eventual commercialization of your new invention idea.

Contact John Rau at:
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714.281.0150

UNDER THE RADAR

1 PlayBase module

PlayBase is a radical new range of highly modular, multi-use, leisure equipment that will make anything else you have seen look positively last millennium! There are 15 outdoor modules in the initial PlayBase range that cover play, sports, relaxation and exercise. Exciting new modules with different uses, all of which will fit onto the basic PlayBase structure, will continue to be added to over time with 10 alternative indoor uses of the same modules covering sleep, sport, relaxation and study.

http://www.play-base.co.uk/design

2 E-Ink Phone Embraces Simplicity

The E-Ink phone from FormNation eliminates many of the adds-ons of today's smartphones in favor of simplicity, style, and the ability to operate for one month on a single charge. The phone is still able to carry out the same basic functions of conventional smartphones, including sending and receiving emails, texts and calls, listening to music, and accessing the internet and maps. It can also take photographs (in black and white) and the E-Ink display eliminates the glare that plagues many of today's smartphones. FormNation now hopes to enlist the interests of manufacturers, with a target price for the phone set between $175 and $200.

http://www.psfk.com/2014/07/formnation-e-ink-phone.html#!bdtSZd

3 DrinkPure - Simple, Affordable Water Filter

The student-developed DrinkPure water filter is able to purify water more simply and efficiently than any water filter to date. The DrinkPure filter can attach to almost any plastic bottle and does not need a pump or reservoir. It is also very easy to use—simply attach it to the container of water to be purified and take a drink—and its high flow rates means users can purify up to a liter of water in one minute. The DrinkPure features a three-filter system that includes a first-stage particulate filter followed by an activated charcoal filter that capture odors and chemical contaminants. However, it is the unit's ability to remove bacteria via its polymer membrane that makes it more reliable than any other outdoor-use water filter.

https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/drinkpure-a-novel-water-filtration-device

UNDER THE RADAR

4 Navdy Projects Smartphone Functions on the Windshield

The Navdy device works with a smartphone to project a heads-up display onto the windshield of any car, allowing the driver to access many of their smartphone functions without looking away from the road. Created by the San Francisco startup of the same name, the gesture-controlled Navdy is powered by the car's on-board diagnostics, which also enables it to display vehicle information, such as tire-pressure or distance-to-empty. It also pairs with a smartphone to allow many of the smartphone's functions (such as music, texts or calls) to be accessed via the device's gesture- or voice-recognition.Once the device has been placed on the car's dashboard, it will project "a transparent image into the driver's field of view which appears to float outside of the windshield," letting the driver to follow directions or check messages without looking away from the road.
http://www.navdy.com/

5 Intelligent Blinker Bracelet Blinks to Signal a Turn

Designed with urban bikers in mind, the wrist-worn Intelligent Blinker will automatically flash when the wearer raises their arm to signal a turn. The bracelet, developed by a team of EPFL design students, is equipped with an accelerometer and magnetometer able to detect the changes in the bracelet's orientation and trigger the array of LEDs. The LEDs can be set to illuminate depending upon the angle of the user's arm, and the device can be charged by USB or via its built-in solar panel.Currently, the circuit board controlling the Intelligent Blinker is too large to be worn comfortably, but the team is working to reduce the size of the necessary components as well as the device's energy consumption.
http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/blinker

6 MagnetPAL

The strongest magnet made. MagnetPAL is the size of your thumb, made from rare earth elements and rust proof injection molded plastic. It is able to hold a 5 lbs pipe wrench. The power is amazing. Every toolbox needs one. Attached bits, screws, nails, bolts and other hardware to a drill, hammer, wrench or tool belt to free your hands to safely work. MagnetPAL is an accurate stud finder by finding the nails in the wooden studs in your wall. Easily clean up metal shavings or find lost metal items in a carpet, grass or even in the sand for items lost overboard. The uses are endless. Once you have one your toolbox you will never want to be without it. Use it or lose it!™
http://www.magnetpal.com/

DREAM SMALL

DISCOVER NOTHING

IMAGINE LESS

DO WHAT'S BEEN DONE

INSPIRE NO ONE

GIVE UP HOLD BACK

INVENT NO MORE

IGNORE YOUR HEART

SHOOT FOR AVERAGE

THINK NEGATIVE

REACH FOR THE GROUND

IF CONGRESS PASSES LEGISLATION WEAKENING PATENT PROTECTION, THE MESSAGE TO INVENTORS IS, "WHY BOTHER?" SO WHAT INVENTIONS WON'T BE INVENTED? WHICH START-UPS WILL GET KILLED BY FOREIGN COPIERS BEFORE THEY GET STARTED? WHOSE JOBS WILL GET SHIPPED OVERSEAS? VISIT SAVETHEINVENTOR.COM AND TAKE ACTION TO HELP PRESERVE U.S. INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

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TAKE ACTION AT SAVETHEINVENTOR.COM

BROUGHT TO YOU BY INNOVATION ALLIANCE

UNDER THE RADAR

7 FoodHuggers

All of us have had a leftover half lemon, tomato or onion that we wanted to save to use later. Once the skin on a fruit or vegetable has been cut away, the time before the food spoils is greatly reduced. Inventors Michelle Ivankovic and Adrienne McNicholas have devised a solution that provides a food grade silicone replacement for the missing peel or skin to keep the fruit fresh as long as possible. Food Huggers are a set of four silicone food savers that fit over leftover fruits from kiwis and limes on the small scale, to a half grapefruit or sweet onion in the largest cover. The Food Hugger reduces the air circulation around the exposed flesh of the fruit or vegetable and helps preserve it until you are ready to use it. Food Huggers can also be used on open cans or over jars and glasses to keep the contents fresh for as long as possible.

www.foodhuggers.com

8 BlokRok Clean – Hands Sunscreen Applicator

BlokRok was developed by Charleston, SC entrepreneur Arianna Megaro to fix the mess and drudgery that limit sunscreen use. Over 200 million American use sunscreen but most do so improperly with 1-in-5 eventually suffering skin cancer. BlokRok employs a novel elastomeric membrane that pumps viscous lotions, including most sunscreens, without using flammable and potentially dangerous propellants. The pump is connected to a novel roller applicator, inspired by dimples on a golf ball, to quickly apply sunscreen in uniform coats. The main benefit is that hands stay clean – a plus to golfers, fishermen, boaters, sports enthusiasts and all those who must have clean hands. BlokRok's 'green' features are found in its fabrication from cellulose-based polymers and in its ability to be refilled, reducing disposable waste.

www.theblokrok.com

IPWatchdog®

Inventors are not patent trolls, and they are not the problem.

Powerful interests have been constantly pushing for patent reform for at least the last 10 years, both in the Courts and in the Halls of Congress. Little by little over the past 10 years rights have been stripped away from innovators, thereby making patents weaker and less appealing. One simply needs to look at the effects of the America Invents Act, court decisions like eBay and KSR and the string of recent patent eligibility cases leading to Alice to see how devastating these changes have been to inventors.

At the same time those forces that would prefer a weaker patent system engage in misrepresentation, sometimes so severely misrepresenting reality that one has to wonder whether there is malice involved. For example, recently at a hearing held by the Senate Judiciary Committee one witness, Krish Gupta, continued to cite the thoroughly debunked Bessen-Meurer "study" that erroneously claims that patent trolls cost American businesses $29 billion annually.

The estimate reached by the hopeless flawed Bessen-Meurer study continues to be the primary evidence used by those who want to destroy the patent system. But 75% of what Bessen and Meurer claim are "costs" are really payments for the transfer of rights, which is specifically and intentionally the point of the patent system. Confusing "costs" with "transfer payments" is either an egregious error, shows that Bessen and Meurer are unfamiliar with basic economic concepts, or it was done intentionally to create an artificially high, eye-popping estimate. Whatever the case may be it is impossible to take the study seriously, but that hasn't stopped supporters of patent reform from using it as if it is some kind of divine communication.

But there are other significant problems with the Bessen-Meurer study. For example, Bessen and Meurer estimate the benefits of non-practicing entity (NPE) litigation relying only on an excruciatingly small sample, namely the SEC filings from 10 publicly traded NPEs. The reliance on such a small sample size is hard to reconcile given the fact that they so broadly define NPEs to include independent inventors, Universities, R&D companies and even some operating companies. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to understand how one could legitimately characterize an operating company as a non-practicing entity. Of course, NPEs have long played a vital role in moving innovation forward in America; witness Thomas Edison, for example.

The never-ending public relations campaign by patent infringers has turned public sentiment, and at least some Members of Congress, against innovators. Indeed, anyone who owns a patent and has the audacity to try and enforce the rights granted to them by the Federal Government is vilified as a patent troll. The imagery of a troll ready to jump out from under a bridge to attack poor defenseless multinational, multi-billion dollar a year companies has captured the imagination of many and turned the public against the true underdogs — inventors.

I recently learned of a gentleman by the name of Fred Sawyer. By any reasonable definition Sawyer is a true American hero. He served the United States for many years, received numerous medals, and eventually retired as a full colonel. Sawyer is also an inventor, and he is no doubt an inventor a great renown even if you haven't ever heard his name before. Sawyer played an integral role in the development of the strategic missile defense system, which is more commonly known as Star Wars.

After leaving the military Sawyer, an inventor at heart, continued to invent. He holds a respectable paent portfolio in the RFID space, and as you might expect his patents are at least in some ways fundamental, which means there is ongoing infringement. Sadly, despite the fact that Sawyer is a true gentleman and a real American hero there are many that characterize him as a patent troll. As ridiculous as that seems it is the reality within the industry. Vilify, berate, slander, smear, disparage, malign, and then marginalize by dismissively calling someone a patent troll.

"I have been involved with RFID technology for over 15 years," Sawyer explained. "I spent my life savings, family inheritance in developing and patenting the technology and also in attempting to commercialize the technology." He went on to tell me that he just wants to be able to license the innovations he created for a reasonable price, just like IBM and so many other corporations do, which seems reasonable enough. Unfortunately, the current climate makes it extremely difficult for innovators working for themselves or small businesses to reap the rewards promised to them both in the U.S. Constitution and in the Patent Act.

Sadly, the companies that Sawyer believes are infringing his patents won't even talk to him unless he first sues them. That is the reality for inventors and small businesses, it happens everyday, but this aspect of the patent narrative is surprisingly not told in the popular press. To the contrary, many large corporations that make up what one could call "the infringer lobby" not only refuse to negotiate unless they are sued, but then turn around and complain to Congress that they are sued without warning. Either one hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing or there has been a concerted effort to mislead. Either way innovators are left holding the short stick.

"Compared to large companies, the independent inventor is already at a disadvantage," Sawyer explained. "As has happened in my case, the large companies can steal your patented technology, make a great deal of money, ignore you all together, and then have the resources, the vast resources in most cases, to delay your enforcement actions or actually destroy your patents by any means necessary."

Like many inventors, Sawyer is facing long odds simply because he is an individual up against large corporations with great resources at their disposal. But he isn't about to give up even despite what might be long odds. The eternal optimism of the independent inventor and entrepreneur shines through as you might expect. He even told me that he feels lucky because he is fortunate enough to have an Army pension to keep him going. "I am very interested in making things work, in innovation," he told me. "I get out of bed and that's what I want to do every day. So that's what keeps me going."

If you ask me, we are the lucky ones. Sawyer is a true American hero and he radiates the enthusiasm that is emblematic of the entrepreneurial inventor. So before you are ready to buy into the myth about poor defenseless multinational, multi-billion dollar companies that claim they are being bullied by innovators you really need to thoughtfully consider whether your understanding is built on a fictitious foundation. What actually transpires in industries bears little or no relationship to what is alleged in carefully crafted public relations campaigns.

If you would like to read my entire interview with Fred Sawyer please go to http://www.ipwatchdog.com/2015/03/16/.

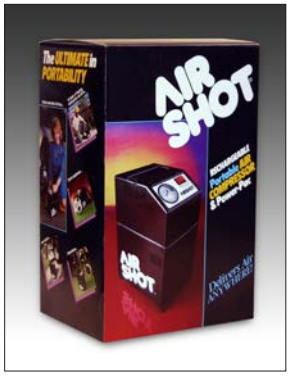
Visit Gene @
www.ipwatchdog.com

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Samuel Clemens - aka Mark Twain

David Fussell is an inventor, author, and manufacturing expert with more than 35 years experience in all phases of new product development, manufacturing including complex modeling, mold design, flow analysis for production. David has licensed more than a few products to Fortune 500 companies. He holds 30 patents worldwide, and his products have resulted in sales of more than $500 millions. David has often been called Mr. Christmas because of the many Christmas products he has introduced to the market but really enjoys working with in the field of electronics.

His first invention was the World's First self-contained battery operated air compressor. Featured in Popular Mechanics and Popular Science magazines this product fulfilled a real need in a niche market. At the time he was president of an air compressor manufacturing division owned by Masco Industries®, which was the 74th largest corporation in the United States. David got the idea for the invention while his son was racing in BMX. Just before the most important race of the year he discovered a flat tire on his bike. He had to take the rim and run out of the coliseum to his van to replace the tire and get a compressor. At the point of exhaustion after he completed the task he thought to himself, "I have never seen or heard of a small compressor that was portable". A compressor designed to operate anywhere. The thought consumed his thinking on the long journey back home. Over several months he developed a working prototype of the concept. David had an employment contract so he went to the Senior V. President of Masco and showed him the concept and he thought the market was too small so he released him from the contract so he could leave and follow the dream. Over the next few months David raised the funds needed and set out to manufacture the product. "I did not know much about Asia but thought it was the place to purchase components". He made contact with a Taiwanese company to import the high-pressure hose assembly.



As he remembers, the worthless $170,000 hose assemblies blew at 75 PSI when the compressor was rated at a 150 PSI. That was a sick feeling, but taught him a valuable lesson he never forgot. "I learned quickly how to vet a manufacture. I also discovered methods that assure you that you will get what you ordered and assure the quality is what you specified without having to pay a quality control group 10% of the purchase price".

David went on to introduce this product with sales in Sears, Wal-Mart, Kmart and many catalogs. He sold the concept to a large domestic air compressor manufacture and although the product has evolved over time you can see this product in almost all of the box stores and many catalogs. With this successful commercialization he embarked on a prolific invention journey that has included over 30 patented products.

David's most successful Invention was a tiny DC motor that plugged into a socket of a string of miniature Christmas lights. "Plug in a few of these motors hang an ornament on them and watch them turn. It turned your Christmas tree into a living carousel of motion. After making all the tooling in China, getting the devise UL approved, designing and printing the sales sheets and designing the P.O.P. for the retailers I made a list of companies in the Christmas Industry that would be candidates to license my products".

The first on his list of eight companies was NOMA Inc. He called one morning in August and spoke to Dan Daun VP of product development and told him about my product and that it was the most exciting thing to happen to Christmas in 40 years (since the time that NOMA created the bubble candle lights). Mr. Daun said that it sounded good but they at the moment were shipping product for the up coming Christmas and they would look at new products in January. He said, "It would be impossible to introduce any new products at the present time". David insisted that he see me now. He insisted this product was going to take the market by storm and he was going to call the second company on the list and when someone took the deal I was going to call the Chairman of the Board for his parent company who was a publicly traded company in Canada and tell them that I gave you this opportunity first and you declined. Mr. Daun said, "When do you want to come see me?"

When he arrived at the Noma corporate office in

Chicago they had already setup a decorated Christmas tree in their meeting room. He placed 12 motors and ornaments on the tree, the CEO, Sales manager and Mr. Daun came into the room. The CEO said, "Holy Cow, look at this product and it's ready for market. All we have to do was change some graphics."

David walked out with a signed 10-year license agreement and an upfront advance against royalties for $125,000. Noma sold 99,000 motors for the upcoming Christmas because the product was fully developed and ready for market. The next years they sold 3.2 million. "By the way, for all those that say,

that inventor royalties are limited to 4 to 6 percent, my royalty arrangement was 80% on manufacturing cost." David proclaims there is a way you do this and most inventors don't know about the way to maximize the royalties and for sure most product developers don't understand. David told us he sold 60 million of those tiny little motors over a 20-year run of the product before the patents expired and the copycats moved in.

Q: What did you mean by this statement: "an undeveloped idea can be a liability?"

A: When I took my Christmas motor to Noma I had an asset. The product was ready for market. All Noma had to do was insert their name into the packaging that's how they could get the product in with their customers at the 11th hour of the first year. That is how I was able to do the best deal for me including up front licensing fee and the royalty not that 4 or 5 percent industry standard that you hear about. Think about this, generally the more you do in developing your idea the more assets you generate, the more assets you have the more the product is worth and the more product value means greater leverage in all the negotiations. It's the same in almost all business. Too many inventors often misunderstand the value of the 'idea.' There are exceptions to the rule, however try taking an idea to General Electric® and see how far you get compared to approaching them with a patented new technology that you have fully developed. When I say fully develop I am referring to patents, trademarks, tooling, pre-production samples and a well thought out business plan. I introduced to GE® and licensed a patented technology that is presently in some of their products, these products with this new technology is sold in hundreds of thousand of stores in the USA and Canada.

Q: Was it your plan or a goal to become an inventor?

A: No, not really. I of course was interested in engineering and manufacturing because when I got my first inventive revelation while I was president of a manufacturing company. Those first thoughts were not about making money but making something that I needed and something that was useful to me personally.

Q: Has any of your patents been infringed upon?

A: Yes, in 1993 I discovered that my Ornamotion® product had been be knocked off by an American. I'm sure you thought I was going to say the Chinese!

Q: How did you discover this infringement?

A: I was living on a small island south of St. Augustine, Florida and had just home recouping from quad triple bypass surgery in July 2002. I got a call from a businessman who had seem my product

and wanted to license it and add it into his product line. It seemed that he was in a hurry to meet because of the urgency of getting his line ready for the next Toy Show in New York. That was the show that I had a showroom at and the only show for Christmas products that really matters.

When I told him about my surgery he said, "he would fly to my location". He said is there a place around your home where I can l and my helicopter? There was an undeveloped lot next door and so we agreed that he would fly to my location for a meeting. My wife prepared a nice lunch and we discussed the options and made a verbal plan to move forward with the idea. All was quiet after he return to the Miami area and I just thought that he had decide not to act of the license arrangement. In January 2003 when I walked into the showroom at the Toy Fair on the day before the show was to start one of my associates said, "David, your product has been knocked off. You motor is all over several Christmas trees in another showroom." Shocked is the way I describe that experience that soon turned into a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Q: What did you do next?

A: I found the man in the showroom and ask him, "why?" He said, "well, I was just as tired of others knocking-off my products so I just decided to do the same thing". Wrong answer! I returned home and filled and infringement suit.

Q: How was this infringement suit settled?

A: After spending over $100,000 in legal fees I stumbled on a little secret. The bad guys were bringing in many containers of the knock-offs and I filed a request with US Customs to seize the containers of infringing products at the port. The containers could not leave port until the suit was resolved or a signed order from the Judge. They had all that money in products that could not be shipped to his accounts. He came to me and begged for some relief. We settled at my terms.

Q: What is your most recent success you have achieved for a client?

A: The Revolve Chair - The world's first fold-up camping chair that swivels 360º. This chair is the invention of the Hills brothers from Phoenix, Arizona. Four years ago a mutual friend who I had done a lot of work for introduced them to me. I met the Hills and they showed me their rough prototype chair. Their concept was to have a bag chair that revolved 360º and their prototype used a standard 'Lazy Susan' metal devise. It weighted about 10 pounds and they told me the cost of that unit itself was $30. I remember telling them that the entire chair had to cost no more than $20. I told them that I could design a method of rotating the upper part of the chair out of plastic that would cost less than $4 and keep them involved in the design so that they could claim it was their invention and they would get a strong utility patent.

After the Hills did their reference checking they put me on a retainer to develop their invention, build prototypes and design their injection molds. I set up the manufacturing and contacted all the many buyers that I knew for catalogs and the big box stores.

I had 10 companies in China and 2 companies in the USA quote the tooling and manufacturing. We settled on a manufacture in Dongguan City, Dongguan, China - an hour train ride out of Hong Kong. The factory owner, Mr. Chiwing Poon, has done several products for me and I have had a successful business relationship with him for over 20 years. I have several companies that I have used for more than 25 years. The final price to manufacture

the chair in small quantities was actually where it needed to be.

One of the things I always try to do for my clients is make improvements to their inventions and give them more marketable features while making sure that the product can be manufactured at a price that will sell. I have been doing this so long that I can look a drawing, prototype or product and know if it has a chance at success. So I gave the Hills a swivel unit that was 2 plastic halves that rotated around a metal post on a thin piece of plastic that acted as a bearing surface.

Q: Did these inventors get a patent?

A: Yes, the Hills got their Utility and design patents that have been successfully tested several times.

Q: How did they get their product in the market?

A: The Hills decided that they were too busy with their other businesses and wanted me to handle all their sales. I agreed to stay on to handle the marketing.

The first sales call I made was to Camping World, a successful RV/Retail distributorship of 80 locations in North America. I called the buyer for furniture and continued to leave messages that I needed to talk to her about the most exciting camping chair to be developed in many years. No response. I sent her emails and a letter. No response. Finally I researched and discovered who the President of the company was and it was none other than the star of the current successful TV series, The Profit, Marcus Lemonis. At the time, he was Camping World's president. I told him about the chair and his secretary asks me to send him an email with a picture. I sent the picture and almost immediately I got a return email telling me that the furniture buyer was expecting my call. I called, and of course, she was ticked but agreed that I could have an appointment with the understanding that I had 10 minutes. I got in my car drove to Bowling Green, KY to meet with 3 buyers. I had a 1.5 hour meeting and left with an order for a full container of chairs. That was our first sale.

Q: What is the single most important tip you could give to an inventor?

A: Do not approach a large company with an undeveloped idea. This statement will raise some eyebrows. When I took my Christmas motor to Noma I had an asset. The product was ready for market. All Noma had to do was insert their name into the packaging that's how they could get the product in with their customers at the 11th hour of the first year. That is how I was able to do the best deal for me, including up front licensing fee and much higher royalty than usual. Think about this, generally the more you do in developing your idea the more assets you generate, the more assets you have the more the product is worth and the more product value means greater leverage in all the negotiations. It's the same formula in almost all business deals. Too many inventors often misunderstand the value of the 'idea'. There are exceptions to the rule, but try taking an idea to General Electric® and see how far you get compared to approaching them with a patented new technology that you have fully developed.

Q: Have you had any major marketing disasters with your inventions?

A: Of course and no one bats a .400 average, we all make mistakes. Mine was more costly than most because I had obtained sports licenses for MLB, NFL, NBA and NHL and each license required a large upfront advance against royalties.

The concept was similar to the old style picture flip books. We had a patent because of the

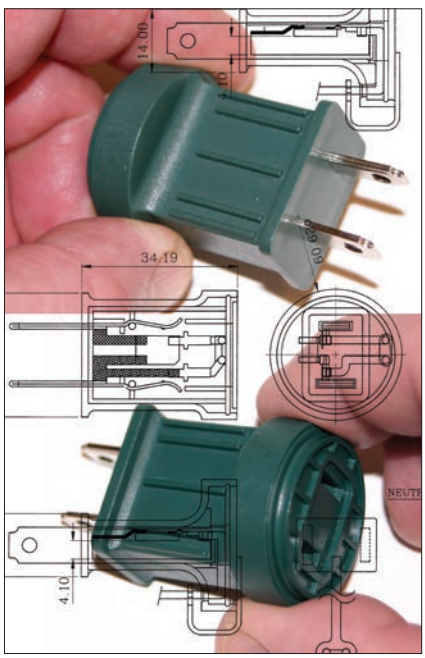
plastic gripping handle. We use actual film footage for the MLB Players Association of an important event for fun and learning new techniques. Mickey Mantle was the company spokesman and traveled to sports shows signing autographs. The first sale I made was to Toys-R-Us and no one purchased the product at retail. I did my homework, it was really a cool product and all the clubs and players loved the concept. However, as I often caution inventors, until the customer takes their hard earned dollars out of their pocket and buys the product you never know for sure that the product is a winner.

Q: What was the most exciting product you invented?

A: The world's first electrical plug that converted AC/DC current and UL approved. I can not disclose too much detail because I am still working on the patents for this product.

Q: What new product are you working on at present?

A: A new and different kind of foot defoliator. Butter Feet is a new and different kind of foot defoliator with the patent pending. The new technology exfoliates the feet, which is different from the products with pumice stone or sandpaper. The Dome will not wear out so there is no need to replace those messy sanding disk from other products.



This personal pedicure device will be called Butter Feet™. The fact that it is the world's first and only, compact, personal pedicure unit designed for the shower and engineered to operate on convenient AA batteries is a great feature. We developed a patent-pending personal care pedicure device with a state-of-the-art, long lasting dome and bearing system that delivers a high RPM for fast and professional results. The dome will be manufactured using a proprietary injection-molded abrasive surface to afford the user the satisfying experience of a professional

pedicure, removing unwanted build up of dead skin with little or no wear to the dome. We are filing a second patent application on this process for absolute and exclusive rights. We will trademark the term Abrasi-tek™

I am also working on several products for other clients.

Q: David, when do you plan to retire?

A: Never. At a young age of 73 I am truly blessed to be involved in such an exciting world of inventing and working on new inventions on behalf my many clients. These continued opportunities have kept me energized to the point that I can hardly wait to see what new ideas are just around the corner. Honesty, I have not worked a day for the past 35 years.

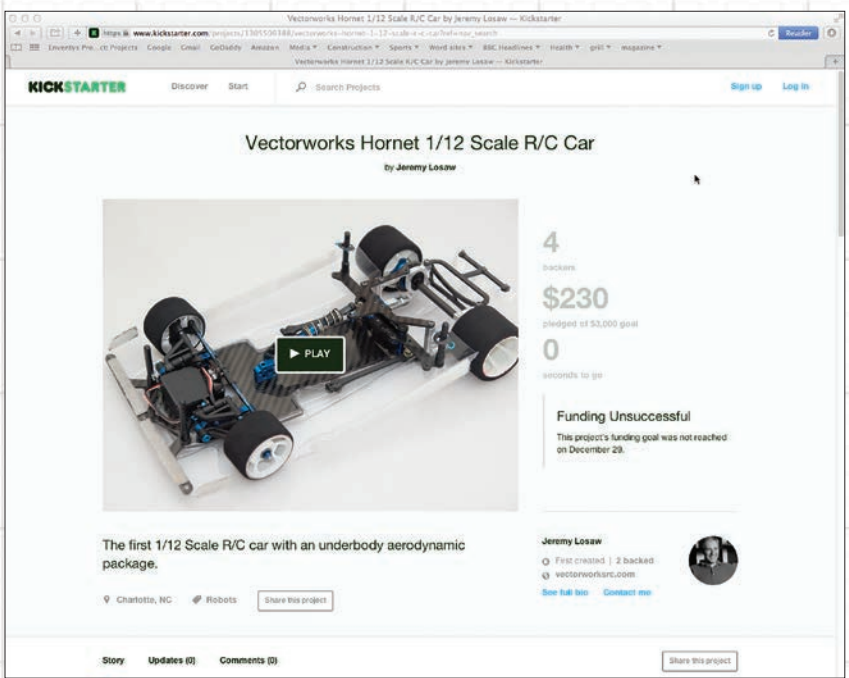
My approach to life has been to try to be happy with what I have, to be honest and to be generous with others. Life has a way of returning that energy to you so that you don't have to hunt for success and happiness, it seems to find you.

protoTYPING

By Jeremy Losaw

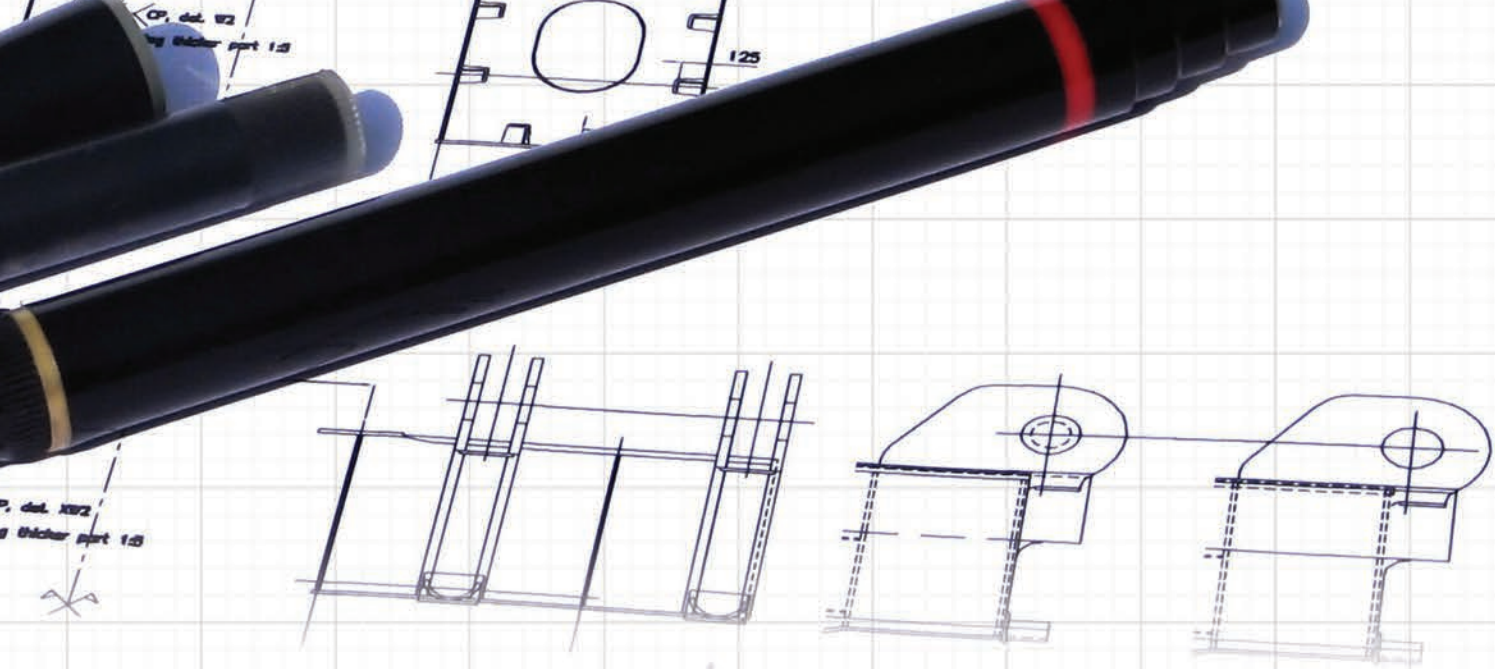
How to Fail at a Kickstarter Campaign

My Kickstarter campaign failed and it is all my fault. In fact, I think I made every mistake possible in launching a crowdfunding campaign up to and including the moment half way through the campaign when I decided that I would write my prototyping post about how my campaign failed and what not to do.



Funding unsuccessful. Only 1 backer - was not friends and family.

Crowdfunding sites have become increasingly popular in recent years. They are a great way for the individual inventor or a startup venture to raise capital and generate buzz that can drive sales and brand awareness long after the campaign is over. However, when done poorly, you end up with a lump of wasted time, a product that likely will never see the light of day, a feeling of rejection and a whole lot of friends that are sick of hearing about your campaign. This is a primer on how crowdfunding works and what



not to do, unless you only want four backers and $230 of a $3000 goal.

What is Crowdfunding ?

Crowdfunding is a funding practice for a project or venture where money contributions are raised from a group of people. While it's often difficult to find a few investors with a lot of money to fund a new product, it may be easy to find hundreds or even thousands of people to invest small amounts of money to get a project off the ground. Several crowdfunding platforms exist such as Indiegogo and Kickstarter as a way to connect project initiators (those with a project they are looking to get funded) and individuals or group who support the idea. Crowdfunding platforms are open to many types of projects including films, inventions, events, philanthropic initiatives and more.

Project initiators can structure their campaigns to offer rewards to the people that pledge money. These can be almost anything but are usually a website mention, the product they are seeking funding for or even an all inclusive vacation packages for those that contribute large amounts. Each crowdfunding site has different terms, but usually the campaign is only given the money if they reach their funding goal.

My Product

My failed Kickstarter project was an R/C car kit. In addition to working at Edison Nation, I have a small R/C car parts business on the side with my friend Brian Watson called Vectorworks RC. I have been racing R/C cars since 1993 and it has stuck with me ever since. I met Brian when I worked for a NASCAR team and gave him the bug too. For about a year, we made upgrade parts for other manufacturers' cars. However, I decided that I wanted to make a full car kit. I looked at some existing car designs and I saw an opportunity to make a better car by making it more aerodynamic. We started designing it in June of 2014 and after a couple of iterations the Kickstarter for the Vectorworks Hornet campaign went live just before Thanksgiving.

Mistake #1: The product was not as good as I thought.

I am decent R/C driver, but not great. To help with the development of the car, I enlisted a professional R/C driver, Dana Bailes, to help me out. (Yes there is such a thing as a pro R/C car driver.) After some testing, we took the car to the U.S. Indoor Championships in Cleveland over the Thanksgiving weekend, and we got killed. The car was over half a second slow on a 9 second lap, and in a class of 16 cars we finished 13th. The concept and the execution were just not good enough, but the campaign may have still worked if I had gotten the next steps right.

The Vectorworks Hornet with custom carbon fiber chassis and Lexan diffuser panels.

Mistake #2: The video did not add any value

My video was ok, but not great. To make the video, I had my friend, Rob Harris, help me out. He is a guerilla videographer and an expert in motorsports marketing. He did the initial cut of the video, and I thought it was great, but I did not appear in it once. Crowdfunding videos almost always have the inventor or project lead as a central focus. Just days before launch we decided to shoot a few additional segments of me talking and spliced them into the video. Boom, done. However, my segments were awful. I did nothing to convince the audience that I was either an expert in the field or a good person to give money too. I did not smile once except for a little smirk at the very end. I have been on camera plenty, including Everyday Edisons, but I blew it this time.

The smirk. Would you buy a toy car from this guy?

Mistake #3: I couldn't secure any news coverage.

I already have an R/C brand so I am familiar with all of the forums and blogs that release news about new products. I also used to write for the biggest R/C car magazine, R/C Car Action, and I thought it would be a

slam dunk for them to run a piece on the car. I did not contact any of my 5-10 media outlets before the launch of the campaign, assuming they would all run the story. Only one of them did.

As it turns out, most of the R/C car sites only publish news about products in production. The outlets were either confused about the concept of Kickstarter or uninterested in running a story of a product that was only theoretically going to be produced. Even my friends at R/C Car Action told me they would be happy to run the story once the car got made. It was frustrating to get the reject notices while time was ticking down on my campaign. I did not have my media outlets prepped for the project and it killed my chances of being successfully funded.

My car barrel rolling on its own at the U.S. Carpet Nationals.

Mistake #4: The product was too niche.

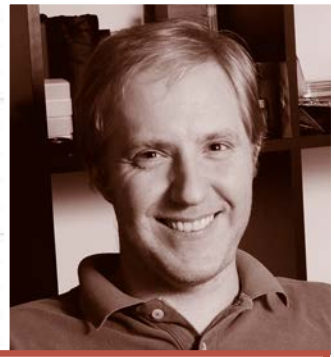
My product was too niche to be successful on a crowdfunding site. Most successful product-based campaigns are for products with mass-market appeal such as watches, coolers, video games and 3D printers. R/C cars can be broad audience products, but not mine.

Only a certain percentage of the population would purchase an R/C car, and of that percentage, maybe 5-10% of R/C car enthusiasts actually race R/C cars. Of those that percentage, only 1-5% run the class of car that I designed, and I was trying to drive them to an unfamiliar platform to buy a car that only theoretically exists. The market potential becomes vanishingly small very quickly, and it was unlikely to ever be a good fit for crowdfunding.

The Good News

It may seem like I am being hard on myself, but in a way, my failed Kickstarter campaign helped me. If I hadn't gone with a Kickstarter campaign, I might have invested a few thousand bucks to have 100 kits made and then tried to sell them. With Kickstarter, I was able to test the interest of my product without having a tangible product.

When it tanked, at least I was not sitting on a ton of excess product inventory. I was able to kill that product and move on to the next idea that may be better than this car was ever going to be. It also got me to go through the crowdfunding process first hand so I can better understand the effort it takes to get a campaign launched. Hopefully, sharing my mistakes will help you to assess whether or not Kickstarter is a viable option for your idea as well as potential pitfalls to avoid in order to be successful.



Visit Jeremy @ http://blog.edisonnation.com/category/prototyping/

Innovation Divaz Melinda Knight & Dhana Cohen from the Women Inventorz Network

Dhana Cohen is the co-founder of www.inventorznetwork.com the only connection platform in the inventor industry. From Media to Pitch sessions, to Industry Experts and Buyers, Dhana & Melinda have created an amazing network for all to get involved in!

international home +housewares show 2015 march 7 - 10 chicago • usa Inventors Corner

New products at the Home & Housewares Show

Bloomberg Business states that 2015 is the year of innovation. And we agree after attending this years International Home & Housewares Show in Chicago March 7-10. Sunny skies and great products will be remembered by the nations top retail buyers.

Inventorz Network has selected just a few (which was incredibly hard to do, by the way) of the Inventor's Corner innovations. The International Home & Housewares Show has developed one of the industries top notch educational and support programs for their inventors. We are honored to be part of their selected sponsors again this year.

More importantly, is the reminder of what is going on in the minds of new inventors, those who believe in their idea, take it to the next level and get their products ready for market. As well, taking the big leap to attend the nations largest tradeshow with the hope of being picked up by retailers and making their dreams come true.

One of the first product lines, solves an age old dilemma – the smell of garbage and does it in a way that is patented, non-toxic and lasts for months. Top if off with a replaceable cartridge, this Pail Refresher wins our vote as a leading innovation both for consumers and retailers.

If you are a cook or know of one then this next great product will make tons of sense! Taco Tuesdays are a favorite rotation in our family, each week I dread taking the fat out of the pan, afraid of the bowl will fill with the hot oil. Now none of us has to worry. Easy Greasy has given back the Taco Tuesday in my family as well as yours!

Millions of bottle water drinkers each day choose to drink their bottles, yet sometimes not as easy or simple when trying to juggle driving, running, working at our computers or talking on the phone. Kap Tap pierces the regular cap and turns it into a squeeze bottle. KapTap is a simple,yet very innovative solution which no one until now has thought of – Brilliant!

I love to bake, yet rolling out the dough has always been frustrating, many times I choose to take the easy route and buy a pre-made pie crust. Well, now I don't have to and neither do you. Dough EZ creator knew there had to be a better way, so she created a dough sleeve of sorts, with pre-marked sizes. All you need to do is place the dough inside the pieces of silicone and begin to roll to your desired size. Not only will your dough turn out perfect, you will never have to worry about it sticking to the rolling pin or the mess with all that extra flour!

Selecting just 4 products was the toughest job I had this month, as the Houseware Show delivered some incredible inventors, kudos to the staff for not only bringing new innovation but incredible programming, education for the inventors and life changing pitching opportunities to the panelists.

As an organization that also supports the inventor community throughout the year with education and industry experts that guide inventors in the retail maze, we wanted to make sure to thank our sponsors for this years show EzCom and Meltzer Media for believing in the connections of our network.

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Contact Dhana @
www.inventorznetwork.com

Crowdfunding Tips & Tricks

API (application program interface) is built specifically for platform businesses like marketplaces, crowdfunding sites and small business software. These platforms are empowering millions of users worldwide to unlock all kinds of creative commerce. Through its proprietary VedaTM risk engine, WePay (for example) gives platforms a flexible payments API that provides a great user experience while still being able to take on all their fraud risk and compliance burdens.

1. Get to the Point: Create a clear, direct and impactful explanation of the need. Make sure to spell out what you are fundraising for, why the cause is important to you and what difference each donation will make but keep it as short and sweet as possible.
2. A Picture is Worth a 1000 Words: The more visuals you can bring to the table, the better. If photos and videos are available don't hesitate to showcase them to best highlight your cause or mission.
3. Make the first move: Get the ball rolling by making the first donation to your fundraiser, your friends, family and associates will follow your lead. Be mindful of how much you give as well. If you want people to donate $100, don't donate less as you are setting the bar for others to follow.
4. Update, Update & Update: It's a given that you need to connect to as many social media channels as possible to spread the word about your fundraiser but it's also important to keep donors up to date on the status of your fundraising efforts. Changes in the status of a fundraiser such as raising your fundraising goal is information essential to share through Facebook, Twitter, email, etc.
5. Don't Forget To Say Thanks!: Crowdfunding sites will automatically send a confirmation message to your donors which will also thank them for their generosity but a personalized thank you note will truly show your appreciation. A list of donor emails can be made available to you for those who have opted to identify themselves.
6. Double Check Your Math: When asking for money most of us want to stick to just asking for what is needed and nothing more but don't forget to take into consideration additional expenses that can come up. For instance, crowdfunding for a new business can mean dealing with new kinds of taxes, marketing expenses, etc. that you may not initially think about. Think it through first before establishing the goal.
7. The early bird gets the worm: Prep work matters. Before you launch your crowdfunding campaign, reach out to potential donors to let them know what you're up to and how you'd like them to be involved. Campaigns that have the supporter base established in the beginning have a much greater chance of succeeding than those who set up the fundraiser and then begin reaching out to the community for donations.
8. Sweeten the Pot: Like anything in life, incentives get people's attention. Be resourceful and find ways to inspire people to donate, even more than once! Find a desirable prize to offer up as a giveaway. A giveaway such as donors who contribute more than $100 can be entered to win an Apple iPad can help you get closer to the fundraising goal. Certain platforms offers these kinds of incentives for people to donate to fundraisers happening on their platform.
9. Do Your Research: There are a lot of options out there to choose from to host your fundraiser but which one is the right one for you? Commission rates can differ along with varying rules on what you get or don't get based on meeting your goals. Some crowdfunding site specialize in certain kinds of fundraisers over others so dig around a bit to make sure you're selecting the best platform for you.
10. Take if offline: Social networking is key to creating momentum, but don't forget you can raise awareness about your campaign through face to face encounters at work, social and community gatherings. Also, don't forget about the media -- your local newspaper, TV and radio outlets may be interested in sharing your cause with the general public too.

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Some of the World's Worst Car Patents and Why They Never Made It!

The world is full of designers, engineers and inventors who are constantly evolving and improving the automobiles we use. Among that group, there are also a few star gazers who are trying their best to make their dreamed up sci-fi ideas into a reality.

The Car Seat Divider Construction Patent US 6142574

Below is a selection of interesting automobile patent applications filed over the years that didn't quite make it to the market - we'll let you decide why! For the benefit of the designers, who clearly gained their engineering knowledge by watching repeats of Wallace & Gromit, we have imagined what the promotional material for their products might have looked like.

We imagine that the inventor of this product, Margaret T. Alexander, came up with this idea on a very long journey to Great Yarmouth on a hot summer's day, with two screaming children in the back of the car.

The object's purpose is to create a "removable divider for the back seat of a vehicle to separate sparring siblings or the like".

We can sense poor Margaret's irritation and despair, and imagine the chaos that usually erupts in her family car journeys as she writes the patent application…"a practical car seat divider that will totally isolate one child from another during long or even short trips when the sibling rivalry between the children reaches the dangerous level such that each child has their own private space and the urge to interact with one another in a negative manner is virtually eliminated".....and breathe.

The Flying Car - Patent US 3090581

Margaret rejects current car dividers as just not being good enough to keep her little brats apart, because these products that are already on the market "have no barrier present below the level of the seat and as a result they can still kick at one another in an attempt to annoy or otherwise exhibit dominance over their sibling rival for the affection and/or attention of their parents".

For now, Margaret, we'll stick with our ordinary seats and accept that our children will just have to bear one another for their future car journeys until adult-hood.

Patented in 1959 by inventor Einar Einarsson, this inventor had the dream of many designers before him. He wanted to take the family automobile to the skies.

In the patent, Einersson defines the purpose of the invention as to "provide a ground vehicle with propellers and wings, as well as wing flaps so that the vehicle may take off and fly in the air".

The idea behind Einarsson's 'flying car' was to create an automobile that looks and operates on the ground as a normal car with the addition of propellers and wings that allow the vehicle to "take off and fly into the air".

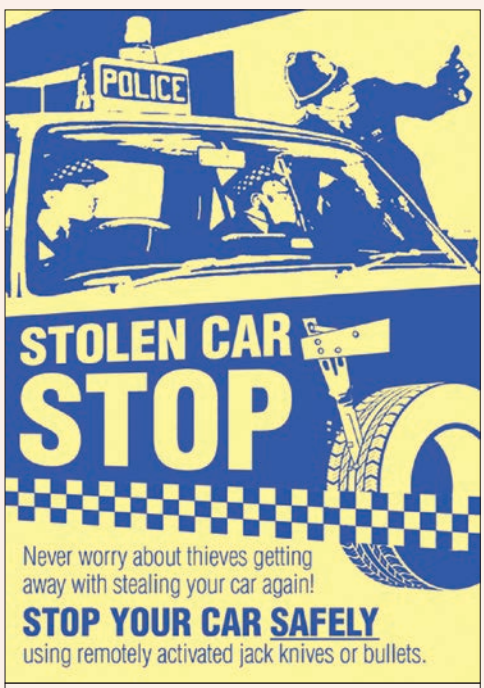
Although the bird like design is impressive to look at, this winged vehicle never quite made it to production. Let's face it; it's highly questionable whether this automobile/flying machine would have ever worked on the ground, let alone in the air.

Clearly these inventors had never heard of Starbucks!

We're not sure how safe it is to start brewing fresh coffee while driving down the M25, although the patent does clearly state that this in car coffee maker "allows the driver of a motor vehicle to brew a cup or other single portion of brewed beverage without taking attention from the road".

The In-Car Coffee Maker
Patent US 5233914

A device that sprays out hot water whilst on the move doesn't seem like the safest option for a nice cuppa and unfortunately the patent also fails to describe how the driver is to drink the coffee after it has been made without ending up with a face full of hot coffee!



Bar code to stop a stolen car
Patent US 7108178

The title of this patent pretty much fully describes the purpose of its design.

The idea of this device is to have a unique bar code on every car, which is scanned by passing police cars. If the car is registered as stolen, an array of James Bond style gadgets are deployed. These include the car's engine being remotely switched off, or its tyres punctured with bullets, or other mechanical means (including jack knives!).

Whilst this device may work in bringing a stolen car to a halt, it is most definitely extremely dangerous for almost everyone involved in the situation, either on, or near the road.

Our favourite part of this patent application, however, is the very technical drawings and the decision tree included in the patent (below) which ends simply with "STOLEN CAR STOP".

Useless invention or a work of genius? We'll let you decide.

Information Source: google.com/patents

We'll run more of these as space allows.

Open Innovation: An Open Door to Opportunity

Like many inventors and entrepreneurs, Sumitra Rajagopalan is on a personal mission to help the world. TheCEO and founder of Bioastra Technologies Inc., a smart materials company headquartered near Montreal, aches for her compatriots in India who suffer from the blistering summer heat. Her dream is to invent new fabrics that will protect them from heat stress.

She launched her organization to eventually turn that dream into a reality. She created solutions for smart materials that change their properties in an almost lifelike manner, quickly reacting to external stimuli. For example, a coating she created can absorb body heat in hot weather and release it back in cold weather.

The organization grew at a moderate pace until Sumitra became active with an open innovation (OI) solution provider network, and then that growth accelerated. She found that her smart polymer technologies were not only suitable for clothing; they had important applications for the packaging, oil/gas, medical device, pharmaceutical, animal health, and smart-home industries. Thanks to OI, she's now working with Fortune 500 clients in a variety of sectors. She's expanding the resources she needs to fulfill her original dream, and building a thriving business, too.

As OI Surges, Solution Providers Reap Rewards

Sumitra is taking advantage of the growing adoption of OI, a strategy that large organizations are using to maintain their market leadership. With the ever-growing pressure to reduce new product development cycles, these companies realize that they must reach outside their networks to create and launch groundbreaking products faster. Through OI, they are accessing complementary technologies from inventors, entrepreneurs, designers and research labs, and incorporating them into their development processes. Through collaboration with these solution providers, companies can reduce R&D development time by months or years. GE Industrial Solutions hosted a rotary handle design competition for its molded case circuit breakers and ultimately chose five winning solutions to be incorporated into their product. As a result of the OI competition, GE anticipates it will launch the state-of-the-art circuit breaker platform in half the time of its previous product launches.

Companies, like GE, are looking for new approaches from technologies for controlling and improving the stability of food, to alternatives for chrome and zinc coatings, to more ergonomic handles that improve product performance. Solution providers benefit from many types of collaboration, including joint development partnerships, mentoring, and multimillion-dollar licensing arrangements. Each new engagement represents a new business development opportunity, expanding their business channels and the opportunity to apply their technology in ways that they had not imagined.

It's not just product development that these large enterprises are looking to accelerate. Many also see OI as a strategy for becoming better world citizens. Organizations like Cisco, the NCAA, the NFL, GE, Under Armour, and the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation (CCEMC) have launched highly public Grand Challenges to help find solutions to complex problems—i.e., global warming, Internet security threats, and traumatic brain injuries incurred in sports or battle. These Grand Challenges are especially compelling for inventors who can make a meaningful contribution to society while earning significant monetary prizes. For example, in 2014 alone, prizes of $25 million were offered to solution providers on NineSights.

com, NineSigma's open innovation platform.

Last fall, we collaborated with Harris Poll to understand how executives at organizations with $1 billion or more in revenues envision the impact of their innovation programs. Their responses reinforced the opportunities for solution providers:

- 80 percent of corporate executives expect their company to increase its budget for innovation programs in 2015.
- 87 percent of corporate executives say their company has the resources and capabilities to leverage innovations from external partners.
- 68 percent of corporate executives say their company is using prize-based competitions to innovate their products and services.

But just because OI is widespread doesn't automatically mean that every potential solution provider stands to benefit. Those who want to realize benefits from the surge in OI need to understand the priorities of the enterprises they want to reach. These solution seekers are not crowdsourcing; they're "smart sourcing." They're reaching out to find people with the precise expertise they need, and an ability to bring their solutions forward. Instead of the "average," they want the "extraordinary."

Extraordinary is just what Scott Jewett, CEO of R+D research company Element-Y delivered when responding to a request by the US Department of Defense (DOD). At the time, he headed another engineering firm and was asked to survey the damage to the Pentagon after the September 11 attack. The DOD's goal was to find a way to better protect the Pentagon Building inhabitants in the future. Since traditional methods were not possible, Scott invented a novel solution that won the contract against 11 other proposed solutions. Ultimately, his innovation was chosen. He wrote the specifications and procedures, and installed his seven-layer compo site system to protect the Pentagon from bomb blasts and extreme force. Scott credits an open innovation mindset that enabled him to identify the true essence of the challenge and invent a game-changing solution. Instead of thinking 'What are they asking for', he considered 'What do they really need'. And from there a novel solution was born.

Best Practices for Solution Provider Success

How can other solution providers reap the benefits of increased OI activity? Following are best practices for others who would like to follow in the footsteps of Sumitra Rajagopalan and Scott Jewett:

- Work with OI intermediaries: These firms are engaged by enterprise clients who have immediate technology needs, and they're always looking to expand their global solution provider networks. Choose long-established firms known for vetting both solution providers and seekers across diverse industries and technical disciplines. The intermediaries who are most helpful will seek out solution providers and engage them in a specific opportunity relevant to their backgrounds, interests and capabilities.
- Expect the unexpected (and then capitalize upon it): Once solution providers join an OI network, the intermediary will alert them when opportunities are relevant to their technical know-how. Being open to these opportunities, no matter where they come from, can help a solution provider find growth in unexpected and lucrative markets. Many intermediaries also offer online OI platforms where solution providers can access companies' needs and respond

directly. Inventors should bring the same openness to this online process—evaluating whether they might have the core technologies that an organization needs, regardless of the end application.

- Acknowledge the elephant in the room: While our motto at NineSigma is "fearless innovation," we realize that solution providers often approach OI with trepidation because they want to be sure to protect their IP. Inventors should consider taking a page from Sumitra Rajagopalan's playbook, and put protections in place from the start. Before she enters into any engagements, Sumitra works with solution seekers on a simple, one-page term sheet. The document defines each party's pre-existing (background) IP as well as foreground (emerging) IP. It also specifies tipping points—i.e., milestones where both parties decide whether to advance to the next stage of a project, and how IP is handled at those junctures.
- Develop an IP strategy, too: For Sumitra, the bigger issue—and opportunity—is to have a strategy for capitalizing on the IP being developed through each OI collaboration. When managed properly, OI actually nurtures IP. Projects won through OI expand a solution provider's available technologies, making them valuable to an increasing number of enterprises.
- Make a good first impression: Start with submitting proposals that are thorough but concise, with wording that's clearly understood. Exhibit your expertise in the technology being sought and provide compelling data.
- Show you can go the distance: Demonstrate to the solution seeker that you not only have a promising technology, but that you're capable of being a partner in getting it commercialized.
- Think differently: Make sure to understand the true "essence" of a challenge. Scott observes that often, problems are presented in terms of potential solutions. Ask yourself: "What is the real need here?", "Specifically what constitutes a game-changing solution?" If the problem statement contains anything that could be considered a solution, it probably isn't distilled to its essence. Great OI solvers see what others don't; they read between the lines.

In our global economy that has been flattened by the internet, OI is the "front door" to large enterprises that provides access to any inventor. Removing the barriers of the traditional supply chain, OI offers an efficient pathway for realizing their ambitions. Approach OI strategically and with confidence, and your dreams, too, can come to fruition.

About The Author:

Denys Resnick is Executive Vice President of NineSigma which provides innovation services to organizations worldwide. Founded in 2000, NineSigma helped pioneer the practice of OI. The company has the largest open global network of solution providers and an extensive database of existing solutions spanning numerous industries and technical disciplines. For additional information, go to NineSigma.com,

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Recognizing Academic Innovation: 2014 Fellows of the National Academy of Inventors

170 Academic Luminaries Elected to Fellow Status

By Lauren Maradei

In December 2014, the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) announced the election of 170 distinguished innovators to the 2014 class of NAI Fellows.

NAI Fellow status is a unique professional distinction accorded to academic inventors who have demonstrated a highly prolific spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development, and the welfare of society.

Including the newly elected 2014 Fellows, the number of NAI Fellows now totals 414 outstanding academic inventors and innovators, representing more than 150 prestigious research universities and governmental and non-profit research institutions.

Collectively, the 414 NAI Fellows hold nearly 14,000 U.S. patents and include 61 presidents and senior leadership of research universities and non-profit research institutes, 212 members of the other National Academies, 23 inductees of the National Inventors Hall of Fame, 16 recipients of the U.S. National Medal of Technology and Innovation, 10 recipients of the U.S. National Medal of Science, 21 Nobel Laureates, 11 Lemelson-MIT prize recipients, and 112 Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, among other awards and distinctions.

The induction of new NAI Fellows is part of the annual conference of the National Academy of Inventors, held this year in March at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Deputy Commissioner for Patent Operations Andrew Faile is the keynote speaker for the induction ceremony, where Fellows are presented with a special trophy, newly designed medal, and rosette pin in honor of their extraordinary accomplishments.

A complete list of all NAI Fellows is available at **www.academyofinventors.org**.

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INTROVERT
EXTROVERT

Are you an ambivert? Have you ever thought about producing and marketing your invention, versus patenting and licensing it? If you haven't and you're the kind of inventor who prefers to work alone, shunning the world of the entrepreneur, then you can skip this article. Just kidding. Read it anyway. It might make you feel more confident about your choice as inventor-licensee.

"Ambivert" appears to be a word coined in 1927 by Kimball Young, a sociologist. Young, no doubt, created the term based on the writings of Carl Jung, the psychologist, who, six years before, who coined the words extroversion and introversion. Introverts are content to spend time alone with their thoughts. They have less need for social stimulation than extroverts. Extroverts are social animals, often the life of the party. Introverts and extroverts define the two halves of a spectrum, and, the ambiverts are, of course, in the middle of that spectrum.

Most people lie one side or the other of dead center in the spectrum, but not at either extreme. My personal experience with hundreds of inventors over the years is that we tend to lie more toward the introversion side than the extroversion side. The better we are at inventing, the more we want someone else to take over marketing our inventions so that we can concentrate our efforts on creating. We wish to avoid the tasks of detailed planning, making contact with prospective licensees, and negotiating face to face. At the extreme is the narcissist who believes his creative gift rises to the level of genius, and that somewhere there is a potential partner who will feel deeply honored to serve him or her by handling the tedious work of marketing. I get at least a couple of letters from this kind of inventor every year, from people wanting me to broker such a partnership.

An excellent article by Jason Ankeny in the March 2015 Entrepreneur, digs into the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three basic positions on the spectrum, making us aware of three writings that cover various aspects of personality. A paper by Adam Grant, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, titled Rethinking the Extroverted Sales Ideal: The Ambivert Advantage, reveals a study of successful sales representatives. (This paper is available on the Internet.) Grant measured introversion and extroversion on a scale of 1 to 7. The sales of reps who scored between 3.75 and 5.50 -- in other words, the ambiverts -- were nearly 24 percent higher than the extroverts, and nearly 29 percent higher than the introverts. Professor Grant claims that the characteristics that make the ambiverts achieve higher sales performance are also the characteristics that make them better entrepreneurs than either extroverts or introverts.

The book, Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, by Susan Cain, has had significant influence on our understanding of the effectiveness of introverts on managing businesses. Cain claims that introverts are less inclined to risk, and are more willing to listen to criticism. But Grant doesn't see it that way. His assessment of Cain's introversion is that it is closer to ambiversion than introversion.

Brian Little, senior fellow at the Wharton School, and author of Me, Myself, and Us: The Science of Personality and the Art of Well-Being, adds that the ambivert's ability to adapt sets him/her apart from introverts and extroverts, who may be unwilling or unable to adapt when adaptation is the tactic needed. Little says that if you're an ambivert you're more likely to succeed as a lone entrepreneur, whereas the introvert or extrovert will need a partner with complementary qualities.

In one of my Inventors' Digest articles several year ago I sort of jokingly listed the qualities I observed in the most creative inventors I had personally known. (I say "jokingly," but my exaggeration is not extreme.)

As I recall them, they went something like this:

- Forgets anniversaries and birthdays of close relatives and friends.
- Incurs late fees when paying his credit card bills.
- Has forgotten at least one doctor's (or other important) appointment in the last year.
- Unconcerned if his socks don't match as long as they're approximately the same color.
- Works on new inventions before closing out former inventions.
- Scribbles notes and makes sketches when eating out with friends.
- Loses notes he has written, or can't recall where he filed them.
- Unconcerned about the mess in his lab or workshop as long as he can still squeeze in and out without personal injury.

You might wonder if a high level of creativity identifies with introversion. In my experience it does, although all introverted persons aren't necessarily creative. But my making fun of introverted inventors doesn't mean that I think less of them than I do of ambiverts or extroverts. There's need and plenty of room for all of us, and no doubt some of our best inventions to date have come from introverts. We all know the name, Bill Gates. He's almost certainly an ambivert, which is why he is well known. But how many of us know who Chester Carlson was? He is the inventor of the Xerox® process, which drives our laser printers as well as our copiers.

What I'm suggesting here is that you understand and be true to yourself if you peg yourself as falling too far outside the ambivert range. If you feel that you are a true introvert, and you want to produce and market rather than patent and license, you'll probably need a partner who can handle marketing.

Can an introvert discipline himself to act as an ambivert in order to produce and market successfully? Maybe. But Brian Little states, in his book (above), "Proactively acting out-of-character is going to cause emotional and physical decline -- the summary word would be burnout." And burnout may be as significant a cause of startup failure as lack of capital.

It seems that we sacrifice a bit of ourselves when we force ourselves to play a role for which our DNA has not destined us or equipped us. We know from experience that we come into this world hitting the ground running. By that I mean even as toddlers, we have definite personalities, which mature to abilities that have value in the marketplace. And it is these natural abilities that we use to our best advantage.

Not just us as individuals, but our species, too, has profited from our natural abilities. In the most successful tribes, the chief was probably an ambivert -- the person who could speak the language of both the introvert and the extrovert to bring about the optimum tribal strength and survival. But the arrowheads and axes that were needed for obtaining food, and crafting shelter, required an inventor to find precisely the right kind of stone, and chip away at it contentedly for hours.

So, if you're an introvert, be a good one. And if you must temporarily take on the role of ambivert, recognize that it will require continuous vigilance and discipline. As Polonius advises us in Shakespeare's Hamlet,

"This above all: to thine own self be true."

Contact Jack Lander at:
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