
New Product Marketing

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Obtaining Patent Protection Packing Your Own Chute (Part 1)

Imagine for a moment the fears and thrills a skydiver experiences as he struggles into his parachute. Now he is ready to step out into a void of cold air and free-fall to his release point. He hopes a tug on his ripcord will open the graceful silk blossom of his parachute and permit him to drift lazily back to earth.

Do you suppose he relied on someone else to pack his chute? Of course not - his life depends on how well he has learned to do that task himself. Other people were also involved -- the instructor who taught him how to pack all those yards of silk and the pilot who carried him aloft.

You too can "pack your own chute" during the transformation of your idea into an innovation! Although it is not a life and death issue like skydiving, your present and future livelihood may depend on it. You should channel your commercialization efforts into a narrowly focused beam -- as a skydiver does when he learns how to pack his chute.

Evaluating Your Idea

The road to innovation success is rough and rugged. A key to smoothing out many of the rough spots is found in your ability to learn to be objective.

If you cannot handle the emotion associated with your innovation, you should never begin the journey. If the skydiver is too fearful of jumping into the void, he or she should find a different sport.

Objectivity in innovation means learning to accept what the market says about the efficacy of your innovation. It may scorn it and scoff at it, it may "court" it -- or it may fall in love with it.

Much depends on correctly positioning the novelty and benefits of the innovation to the market -- and also removing barriers that hinder communication lines needed to validate the market approach. Failing to be objective is one barrier that must be overcome to receive useful evaluations of your project from the market.

Once you feel you can remain objective, the second thing to do to "pack

your own chute" is become as knowledgeable about the innovation process as you can. Read, study -- and then read and study some more. Winston Churchill once said, "Only through knowledge can we persevere!"

If our parachutist did not learn about cross-winds and how to handle them -- or how to properly land as he touched down -- he could be injured from his lack of knowledge.

One may not learn everything, as we are all in the learning mode, but he can learn enough to serve him well in the months ahead -- and quite possibly what he learns could keep him from becoming financially injured in the process!

Resources

A very good way to optimize the learning curve is to become familiar with the Internet. The World Wide Web (WWW) can quickly take you to resource centers around the world and allow you to talk with inventors and marketing people. You can also join newsgroups target-specific to your particular innovation. Huge archives of information are available, as well as the ability to do on-line research through the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Additionally, almost any topic you would elect to search for can be found on the web, down-loaded to disk, and/or printed in just a few minutes. This is very helpful in determining the potential size of the market you wish to impact into, vendors and manufacturers you could possibly form relationships or strategic alliances with, venture funding, material prices, off-shore contacts, and on and on.

The growth of the internet is phenomenal, with more computer monitors sold in the United States last year than television sets. Over 9,000 new users sign onto the internet every day, truly making this the "Information Superhighway".

If you have a home computer or access to one at your place of employment, I urge you to "sign on". If you do not have a personal home computer, you will probably have a friend who does. Ask him to give you the "nickel" tour -- and get ready to discover a new world of information for the choosing!

I cannot overemphasize the freedom of information exchange available via the internet -- this is something you must truly experience for yourself.

To help in your quest, I've tabulated below some of my favorite resources.

Recommended Web Sites

www.gibbsgroup.com -- This is the Home Page of The Gibbs Group, a very honest and professional consulting and inventor advocate site. Andy Gibbs has posted many articles and resources to this site. Downloadable files,

inventor information, and latest legislation can all be found here. Andy is the author of "Iron Man Inventing."

www.inventorsdigest.com -- The Home Page of the popular and informative magazine, "Inventor's Digest." I suggest you subscribe. Here you will find many honest resources and articles that concern "scam" organizations, along with articles of success written by fellow inventors.

www.uspto.gov -- This is the Home Page of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. You can perform search functions that relate to your innovation, or request information that will help you self-file. Also they will provide you with a list of registered practitioners.

www.inventnet.com -- This is the Home page of Victor Lasrov's moderated newsgroup. Victor also prints a monthly newsletter specifically for inventors. I recommend you subscribe to this no-cost newsgroup -- much information can be learned here.

www.ipc.com -- This is a virtual compendium of knowledge that relates to the innovative process. This Home Page of the Intellectual Property Creators has links to many other valuable web locations, and keeps you abreast of latest court cases and challenges to our system of patent protection.

www.inventworld.com -- A very good Web Site to visit. Tons of information useful to the inventor to be found here, including a state-by-state list of inventor organizations, selected marketing firms, and a great link on the benefits of self-filing.

www.alliance-dc.org -- This is the Home Page of the Alliance for American Innovation, one of the top-notch non-profit inventor organizations in the world. Visit this page for in-depth reviews on pending legislation that concerns the innovation process and what you as a private citizen can do to help.

www.heckel.org/invsams.htm -- Here you will find information from the nation's watchdog for inventor justice -- Mr. Bob Lougher and the Inventor's Awareness Group. Mr. Lougher and his non-profit group have managed to put many fraudulent invention development firms out of business. Their investigations have involved the Federal Trade Commission and the FBI on numerous occasions.

www.innovationcentre.ca -- This is the Home Page of the Canadian Industrial Innovation Centre, a group dedicated to assisting inventors, entrepreneurs, and innovative companies. They provide evaluations, market research, and licensing via technology transfer.

www.inventnet.com/prod/books.html -- This is the Home Page of the Inventors Bookstore, an excellent place to visit. Here you will find articles designed to help you, and some of the better books on the inventing process. Everything at the Bookstore is devoted to inventors, and is run by a

successful inventor in his own rights.

www.webcom.com/aspn -- This is the Home Page of Ed Verry's book store, called the Innovators' Booksource. Ed is continually updating his catalog of fine quality invention-related books. His on-line catalog at the current time is over 16 pages long! He offers fast shipping on all books, and accepts MasterCard, Visa, and American Express.

patent.womplex.ibm.com -- This site not only allows a searchable index for patent searches, but also the ability to download claims and drawings of patents already issued.

Recommended Books

Marketing Your Invention, Thomas E. Mosley, Dearborn Publishing, \$21.95 + S&H.

Patent It Yourself, Dave Pressman, NOLO Press, \$44.95 + S&H.

The Inventor's Notebook, F. Grissom & D. Pressman, NOLO Press, \$19.95 + S&H.

Marketing Warfare, Al Ries and Jack Trout, Plume Press, \$12.95 + S&H.

Other Resources

The Inventors Book Store (mail order), Jack Lander, 37 Seneca Road, Danbury, CT 06811-4422. E-mail: jlander@eci.com

Innovator's Booksource Catalog, Ed Verry, 908 S. Tracy Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59715. E-mail: aspn@webcom.com

Inventors Bookshop, PO Box 1020, Fort Jones, CA 96032. E-mail: mfull@snowcrest.net

Inventor's Awareness Group, Attn: Mr. Bob Lougher, 1533 East Mountain Road Ste B, Westfield, MA 01085-1459. E-mail: iabob@aol.com

Center for Law and Education, Ridge School of Technical Arts, 1875 Connecticut Ave NW Ste 510, Washington, DC 20009. E-mail: hn1669@handsnet.org

American Intellectual Law Association, 2001 Jefferson Davis Hwy Ste 203, Arlington, VA 22202. Phone: 703-415-0780. Fax: 703-415-0786.

International Technology Exchange Center, Charlotta Thunander, Director, 3600 Market St Ste 100, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2642. Phone: 215-823-5004.

National Technology Exchange Center, Wheeling Jesuit University, 316 Washington Ave, Wheeling, WV 26003. Phone: 800-678-6882.

Franklin Pierce Law Center, 2 White Street, Concord, NH 03301. Phone: 603-228-1541.

United Inventors Association (USA), PO Box 23447, Rochester, NY 14692. Phone: 716-359-9310.

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