

Inventors' Network

Volume 11 2003
Of the Capital Area [INCA] Issue 11 November

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Richard Leshuk, at our September meeting, shared an approach to finding “prior art” close to our idea .

Baby West. At the August meeting, an INCA guest had described a “baby holster” whose patent search revealed a prior art which precluded a patent. Richard believes he recognized the prior art and related this story.

Gerry and Francis were the nurses who saw a need for improved emergency evacuation devices for infants in hospital newborn nurseries. They designed, fabricated and patented a vest-like garment with 4 large pockets in which small babies could be carried during a hospital evacuation.

They called the device a “Baby-West” TM due to its similarity to an inflatable “Mae West” life preserver known to air travelers and below-deck naval personnel.

They found some ladies with sewing skill, plus necessary sewing machines and places to work, so the Baby-West company entered low rate production with only piecework expenses and considerable flexibility in production rate. The lady-inventors provided kits of parts to be assembled by the seamstresses.

Their initial marketing approach was to send letters to hospitals in Virginia, and surprisingly, got a 20% response on first mailing; in contrast to industry standard of 2%. They had quickly discovered that their product could be made and sold profitably. There are approximately 6,000 hospitals in the US; only those with new-born nurseries of at least 6 bassinets were the target market. The nurses patent was issued in 1980. They maintained their side business until the late 1990s when they felt they had essentially saturated their limited market with a product that held minimum potential for repeat sales.

Richard noted a number of lessons embedded in the Baby West story:

It was a success story of novice inventors who succeeded, doing things right; by the book.
It illustrates the fact that “success” is not necessarily the “million dollar idea”; the Baby West gave its inventors the

satisfaction of making a major contribution to US hospital safety and achieved a reasonable return from a neat, little, part-time enterprise.

As for the "holster " inventor:

What if he or she had offered to take a license for a fraction of what a patent would have cost, and paid the nurses a modest royalty while he pursued his own market?

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TOP 10 INVENTIONS

The TOP 10 inventions were selected from the initial field of more than 400 new product inventions. The inventions celebrate National Inventors' Month. The search was sponsored by the Proctor & Gamble Company.

GRAND PRIZE (an extra \$1,000) winner:

The Gearmax Backpack, a backpack that opens to a portable locker with a wall of pockets, Inventor: Kenneth "Buck" Albritton of Richmond, Virginia.

The Hand/Wrist Restorer, a disposable device which can be used for the relief of symptoms related to carpal tunnel syndrome. Inventor: Clyde Morgan of Olathe, Kansas.

Little Steps Handrail, for small children, that can be easily mounted and removed without damage to the wall or existing handrail. Inventor: Karen Hargis of Livonia, Michigan.

Mother's 3rd Arm, a holder for bottles and cups with a universal flexible "arm" that easily attaches to wheelchairs, tables, strollers, etc. Inventor: Margo Smith of Phoenix, Arizona.

Multi-Alert, a multiple-unit wireless smoke detector that sends signals to all units in succession after one sound. Inventor: Richard Kirchner of Janesville, Wisconsin.

The Multipurpose Single Sheet Container, a shipping box that can be configured to different shapes and sizes. Inventors: Richard, Bobby, Susie and Debra Kim, of Aurora, Colorado.

Polar Fusion SoundFlips, acoustic ear warmers that allows users to hear outside sounds more clearly. Inventor: Spring Faussett of Mountlake, Washington

Roller and Stamper, a tool that creates "talking foods," with embossed messages and graphics for advertising, branding and fun. Inventor: Rich Errera of Nesconset, New York.

VISITCOM Doorbell Intercom, a user-installed, wireless front door communication system. Inventor: John Stuart of Scottsdale, Arizona.

The waveRoaster, an at-home coffee bean roaster that eliminates smoke and heat typically associated with the process. Inventor: Glen Poss of Spokane, Washington.

Grand Prize Winner was selected by - Dr. Forrest Bird, inventor of the respirator, and Dr. Robert Rines, inventor of high definition radar and sonar.

<http://www.marketlaunchers.com/customer-testimonials.html>

BACKGROUND ABOUT CONTEST SPONSORS:

The United Inventors Association (www.uiausa.org) was founded in 1990 as an outgrowth of a U.S. Department of Commerce program on innovation in America. This non-profit 501(c) (3) organization's membership includes inventor organizations as well as individual members. The UIA's mission is to educate and support those entrepreneurs who are developing new products.

Inventors' Digest (www.inventorsdigest.com), founded in 1985, is a national magazine dedicated to educating independent inventors about the new product development process. Articles include success stories and "how-to" pieces as well as networking opportunities for those individuals who have ideas for new products and are seeking assistance.

Since 1963 the Academy of Applied Science (www.aas-world.org) has been dedicated to stimulating people of all ages to think creatively and to realize their innate innovative talents. This non-profit 501(c) (3) organization administers several national and regional youth science and invention programs.

The TOP Ten Prize winners can be viewed online at the United Inventors Association Website:

<http://www.inventorhelp.com/FirstScreen/HuntTopTen.htm>

Photos of Judging are at <http://www.inventorhelp.com/FirstScreen/TopTenJudging.htm>

<http://www.marketlaunchers.com/customer-testimonials.html> Editor: Paul Niemann
800-337-5758 Extracts:

Stephen W. Frey, President, Inventor Council of Dayton and Member, Engineers Club of Dayton

swfday@aol.com shared his exchange with Paul Niemann about **Rube Goldberg**.

Paul relayed his newspaper column, INVENTION MYSTERIES that further defined who Rube Goldberg was.
Ref: Paul Niemann <http://www.InventionMysteries.com> 800-337-5758

Did Rube Goldberg ever invent anything worthwhile? Who was (or is) Rube Goldberg? Is he still alive? Was he a real person or a fictional character?

Most senior citizens and baby boomers think that Rube was an eccentric inventor who created elaborate contraptions to accomplish ordinary, simple tasks.

Rube Goldberg was a popular cartoonist whose work appeared in newspapers throughout the United States from the early 1900's to the 1960's. His drawings included sports cartoons, comic strips and political cartoons, but **he is best known today for the complicated machines that he drew.**

Born in San Francisco in 1883, he earned a degree in engineering upon his father's insistence. This engineering background served as a basis for his cartoons of machine contraptions that would take an easy task, such as swatting a fly, and require at least a dozen steps to accomplish it. **Rube made sure that every one of the machines in his drawings could work.**

Webster's New World Dictionary describes Rube Goldberg as an adjective: "Designating any very complicated invention, machine, scheme, etc. **laboriously contrived to perform a seemingly simple operation.**"

To illustrate this point, take a look at a typical Rube Goldberg invention --his method for a simple fly swatter -- without the drawing:

Carbolic acid (A) drips on a string (B) causing it to break and release elastic of bean shooter (C) which projects ball (D) into bunch of garlic (E) causing it to fall into syrup can (F) and splash syrup violently against side wall. Fly (G) buzzes with glee and goes for syrup, his favorite dish. Butler-dog (H) mistakes hum of fly's wings for door buzzer and runs to meet visitor, pulling rope (I) which turns stop-go signal (J) and causes baseball bat (K) to sock fly who falls to floor unconscious. As fly drops to floor, pet trout (L) jumps for him, misses, and lands in net (M). Weight of fish forces shoe (N) down on fallen fly and puts him out of the running for all time. If fish catches the fly, the shoe can be used for cracking nuts.

The National Cartoonists Society gives an annual Reuben Award to the year's top cartoonist. The "Reuben," as you may have guessed, is named after Rube Goldberg, the Society's first president.

Rube Goldberg succeeded while tens of thousands of other people who created cartoons, inventions and sculptures failed to get them off the ground. Rube Goldberg succeeded by taking an easy task and telling how to devise a complicated contraption to achieve it.

He died in 1970 at the age of 87. Today, more than years later, his name is synonymous with inventions -- even though **he was not an inventor himself**.

Paul Niemann is a contributing author to Inventors' Digest magazine and he also runs MarketLaunchers.com, helping inventors bring their new products to market. If you'd like to read a new INVENTION MYSTERIES article each week in your local newspaper, call or e-mail your local newspaper and ask the editor to carry INVENTION MYSTERIES in the paper. Details are at <http://www.InventionMysteries.com>

Individual Inventors in the Innovation Big Picture VP Richard Leshuk

Notes: The preamble is focused at the 09/15/03 INCA audience. 14 visuals are drawn from the 40 - 45 visuals used in my overview lecture for the formal **Technology Transfer** course.

My outline includes abbreviations: **TX = Technology Transfer** ; TTS = Technology Transfer Society).

Reproduction of the 14 slides are in bold type.

I. Why is inventing important?

- A. Jobs - Economics Nobel thinking
- B. Jos. Schumpeter 1883-1950
 - 1. Growth inputs: labor + material
 - 2. Innovation is missing factor
 - 3. Patent process is critical

II. Issue of impact on national economy is topic in body of knowledge: TX

- A. TX: Big Picture of Innovation
- B. Core of TX study is same concept of idea ----> market that INCA discusses.

III. Studying TX

- A. Our INCA discourse on TX is approximately 30 minutes
 - 1. USDA/TTS TX Overview is 30 hours
 - 2. Georgetown GTU seminar in New Product Dev'l : \$5,200 Tuition
 - 3. MS from UT,Arlington is 300 hrs/ \$30,000 Tuition

- B. Would MS in TX make you better inventor? -- definitely
1. Is it worth it ? --- heck no!
 2. Much better to study “individual inventor” specific material
 - a) Inventor's Digest
 - b) Inventor's Bible
 - c) Raoul's inventor course

- C. So, who takes TX courses and degrees?
1. Members of NIH 100 person licensing dept
 2. Employees in IBM licensing in support of their \$1B/yr. activity
 3. Staff in UofMD,CP 10 person Tech. Comm. office
 4. DoCommerce policy analysis professionals
 5. PG County Economic Development Planners

 6. Unredeemed information junkies like me

IV. Agenda

- A. Look at some interesting content in the Big Picture
- B. Examine a couple of topics very important to individual inventors
1. evaluation of inventions
 2. licensing strategies

Intro Definition **TX = Technology Transfer**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Defn.: TTS = Technology Transfer Society | 8. Push/Pull |
| 2. Handoff - GatorAide example | 9. Obstacles |
| 3. Issues | 10. Bazaar analog |
| 4. Players | 11. Paradise analog |
| 5. R&D \$ | 12. Cum. Cost from idea to market |
| 6. Patents Dynamics | 13. Observation: Risk -1000 ideas yield 1 marketplace winner |
| 7. Mechanisms | 14. Facility of Transfer Tools |

- A. Resources
- B. Evaluation Form
- C. License Rates

Thanks to Richard A. Leshuk 9004 Paddock Lane Potomac, MD 20854 (h) 301-279 - 2120 (o) 301-279- 2686 (fax) 301- 762-3309 e-mail: rleshuk@aol.com

Gene Scott of Newport Beach 714 668 1900 www.inventiontrader.com sent INCA a card that offers “low-cost help” [\$20 per year] for inventors/entrepreneurs to find buyers for technology, products and ideas.

At first reading, this card may be inviting. If INCA members or guests discuss their protected products and ideas with this firm, please share facts and impressions with the rest of us.

www.SCOR-Report.com Is an unusually useful resource for research and education about Small Business Capital Formation. Stewart-Gordon Associates Inc offers both open information and professional reports that are focused on helping Entrepreneurs and Professionals (attorneys, accountants, consultants) .

THE STEWART-GORDON ASSOCIATES, INC. WEB SITE

This site is reported to be the distillation of the things they have learned in 35 years of small-business life. It's purpose is to support SCOR Report subscribers and potential subscribers with basic information about ways in which small businesses can raise money.

This site is intended to cite questions one should answer before going into business, and the way they should be answered. **in-depth analysis and the use of as much factual data as possible.**

The rationale is that the clearer a client's view of what he wants to do, the easier it is for the professional to help him. This is a large site.

Maurice's Notes

Introductory remarks of June 16 INCA meeting bring merit in repetition about our marketing approach:

IS IT ME OR IS IT THEM?

“My friends like my invention but I'm not making sufficient sales.”

IS IT ME? [Is my marketing insufficient?]

- * Insufficient marketing effort
- * Lack of a good market plan
 - Marketing to the wrong group
 - Marketing in the wrong media
- *Bad packaging / Design kills appeal
- *Niche market

Lesson: Revise marketing approach; Test market

IS IT THEM? [Nobody wants my invention]

- *It has been invented before
- * There are better products in the market
- * It is too expensive
- * It has limited utility

Lesson: Give up: go on to next invention

In April 02 www.Amazon.com announced availability of Razgaitis Valuation and Pricing of Technology-Based Intellectual Property. Its new cost is \$85; Used from \$63. Seems to include a lot of negotiation rules, but leaves to the reader the task of obtaining equivalent data.

If an INCA person orders this book for analysis or ownership, this reporter would like their impression about its utility for an inventor who wants to appraise the value of his property.

Ken Chowder writes for the Smithsonian magazine in Sept 03 about inventions [p92 -97].
“EUREKA! As Louis Pasteur noted, “Chance favors only the prepared mind.” Pages 95 and 96 picture and describe the Segway human transporter.

November - December article in Inventors Digest by Vaughn Goeri talks about IRS and inventors. He says : The inventor can deduct the costs [of his R&D work] on his or her personal income tax return. Schedule C. . His lessons about IRS structure by inventors is available also on www.inventorsdigest.com

Next month we expect to include Barbara Hapern’s outline about Marketing Personified, as it was handed out to last month’s attendees.
