

Inventors COUNCIL

OF MID-MICHIGAN

PO Box 232, Lennon Michigan 48449

Web Site: INVENTORSCOUNCIL.ORG

The Inventors Council is an independent, non-profit 501 C-3 corporation formed to help inventors pursue their dreams of bringing new and innovative products to market. Our goal is to help fellow inventors succeed in the most efficient and least costly manner possible by providing education and business networking.

Founded by Robert (Bob) Ross in 1995

We meet monthly at Walli's Restaurant, 1341 South Center Road Burton, Michigan. Just Two blocks south of I-69, Exit 139

VOLUME SIXTEEN

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY, April 12, 2012, 7:00PM

NUMBER FOUR

April Featured Speakers

Starting at 7:00 pm April 12, 2012

Tonight we will have Matt Hahn for the ThumbWorks and will talk about what the ThumbWorks does for the business, entrepreneur, inventor community. They are located in Marlett and are a great resource for all inventors and businesses in the Thumb area.

Daniel Davis co-inventor of Icanstand, a new device for wheel chair users. It was featured on ABC Channel twelve. Two prototypes are built and expect for go to market in about 18 months. Dan is bringing a prototype to the meeting. Be there.

The meeting will begin at 7:00pm in the upper level of Walli's Restaurant on Center Road in Burton.

March 22, 2012 Meeting

ICMM attended the Jumpstart Entrepreneur Conference. It was one of the best the GRCC have had to date.

ICMM maintained a booth and conducted a break out session for the attendees. Marty Sovis and Rick Mason attended the table and answered questions. Mike Ball conducted a 40 minute break out session about Inventing from Idea to market. It was well attended.

The panelists from GRCC did a great job telling about their companies. Some were very inspirational,

I would recommend Jumpstart to anyone.

Shhhhh ! Don't Tell them That !!!!

When we first get a new idea we always want to tell people, We're excited and we feel really smart, and we just know what we came up with is going to change the world! For the most part telling people in your immediate family and very close friends about your invention is normally pretty safe. What you need to stay away from is telling people just for the sake of telling them, or showing people in ways that it could be classified as disclosure - Like trade shows, posting it on a forum, or at a large inventor's meeting.

When you are ready to branch out and start talking about it there are 3 basic levels of protection you may want to make sure you have in place first.

An Inventor's Notebook. This is a simple thing you can do to document the date of invention. It should be in a bound notebook consecutively numbered. The section of the book with your idea should be signed and dated by two disinterested witnesses stating "witnessed and understood." The notebooks would be required to be presented to the USPTO to prove the date of invention. Make sure you notarize your signature for each idea area in the book.

A Non Disclosure Agreement: (NDA) this is a document signed between two parties that forms a letter contract stating the receiving party will not disclose what he/she was told about the invention. This is significant because an NDA is enforceable the moment it is signed, and violation of an NDA is a violation of Trade Secret laws. The theory is simple, the person you told could not likely develop your invention without disclosing the details to another party, by doing so they would be in violation of the NDA.

A Provisional Patent Application: This is NOT a patent. This is a very basic patent application that is filed with the USPTO establishing the date you invented (or filed) your product/idea. It only has a 12 month life, and then must be replaced with a normal patent application so timing is important.

As you can see from the time you develop an inventor's notebook you enjoy some level of protection. Each step you take after that is like building the fortress a little higher.

It has been my experience that you are pretty safe telling people in your local circle about your invention once you have a properly documented inventor's notebook. In most cases with a strong notebook and an NDA you can approach some companies to "test the waters". But if you're going to go full force trying to sell your ideas for license you should really invest in a PPA before you get too deep into the process.

Mark Reyland is a professional inventor and product developer. The information contained in this blog is based on years of taking products to market



MARKETING

Hints from the Fog
by Mike Ball, President



So Much Information

Some things to think about when looking for one of the many service providers in the inventing industry. Like most industries we have both good and bad companies selling dozens of services needed to commercialize an invention.

Take the time to educate yourself on what makes a company good, and more importantly what makes a company bad.

1. Ask for their success rate: Ask for in writing the number of ideas they have represented and how many inventors made more money than they invested. This is required information under the Inventor Protection Act and they should provide it to you.
 2. Ask for references: Ask for the names of three satisfied customers that you can talk to. You do this with a babysitter, with a car...why not with your checkbook?
 3. Avoid too much pressure: Are their sales people calling you often using high pressure tactics?
 4. Are they sending you pre-signed confidentiality agreements in their "free kits"? Only sign agreements after you decide you want to use them or anyone else (but before discussion of any ideas).
 5. Have they asked you to write your ideas down and mail them to yourself? This process is a myth; it will not protect your idea.
 6. Early in your discussions, ask what the total cost of services will be. Not just the one they want to sell you first, ask for an outline of all their services and what ones will be required to actually allow you to make money in the end. Any hesitation to answer is normally a bad sign.
 7. Market evaluations provide an objective evaluation of the merit, technical feasibility, and commercial viability of your invention. Ask for their criteria, system of review, and the qualifications of company evaluators.
 8. Do they check on pre-existing patents for your same idea? Some companies will promote almost any idea, without knowing if there is patent infringement involved.
 9. Do their "patent searches" come without a written opinion of patentability? Do they refuse to provide in writing the resulting number of favorable patent searches vs unfavorable searches they experience?
 10. If they claim to have a special relationship with a manufacturer, ask for proof. Watch out, if they ask you to submit your idea to a manufacturer before you have properly protected it.
 11. Avoid a jack-of-all-trades. No one is an expert in all those fields, ask them how they can evaluate many different categories of innovation.
 12. Watch out for addresses that don't match, they claim to be in one state but the mailing address is different. The same for no direct phone contact, are you always reaching their voicemail?
 13. Ask all the above questions and be on triple alert if you're responding to a slick TV, radio and magazine ad - the real guys have to advertise too, so know what to look out for.
- In the end it's YOUR responsibility to do your homework. Selecting an invention service provider is the same as buying a house.
- Ask people who have used the service what they experienced. Make sure the price you are paying is a good value for the service and that it is in line with what other companies charge. Be an informed consumer and check things out before you start getting out your checkbook.

Reprint from Mark Reyland article

Invention Review Panel

For objective evaluation and priceless feedback, share your invention ideas with an educated group of inventors, business owners, engineers and authors!

Our Panel will sign a non-disclosure agreement to guarantee your ideas are kept secret while we provide you with the input needed to make decisions, no matter what stage of the invention process you're at!

There's a \$25.00 Donation for a Review. The Panel meets at 6:15pm before each meeting. Call Panel Chairman Rick Mason at 810-659-7935 for an appointment.

Review Panel Members
Rick Mason Marty Sovis
Jim White

Bob Ross 1919 - 2004
Inventors Education Column

Inventors Resources

Michigan Inventors Clubs
Inventors Council of Mid-Michigan
Inventorscouncil.org

Muskegon Inventors Network
Muskegoninventorsnetwork.org

Grand Rapids Inventors Network
GRinventorsnetwork.org

Jackson Inventors Network
Jacksoninventors.org

Mid-Michigan Innovation Center
ww.mmic.us

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A 501-C-3 (All-Volunteer) Corporation	

Michigan Shifting Gears recruiting 10th Cohort. For individuals who have been displaced and are looking to shift gears, gain new skills and connect with mentors, this program is transformational. For stakeholders who can provide valuable assistance, we are looking for your participation as well.

March 30 and April 3, 4, 5, 9 and 11.

Webinars.

www.mitalent.org/michigan-shifting-gears

MI-SBTDC Events and Workshops. The Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Centers around the state offer dozens of opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners to get training and education. Workshops like: Five Keys to Achieving Fiscal Fitness, Fundamentals of Writing a Business Plan, Starting a Business, FastTrac programs and more.

April 1-30

<http://www.misbtdc.net/events.aspx>

Monthly 5X5 Night. On the last Tuesday of each month in Grand Rapids, 5 presenters with 5 ideas have 5 minutes each to present 5 slides to 5 judges for the chance to win up to \$5,000 in grant money—no strings attached. That's a lot of 5's, but we just call it 5x5. Find out more on winning, applying, judging, voting, cheating, and what makes a good idea submission!

<http://5x5night.com/faq>

Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association Auction. GLREA is holding a new fundraiser which will allow visitors to the site to bid on wonderful products and services donated by members and local Lansing businesses.

April 1-30

www.FreeCharityAuctions.com

Operation Jumpstart: First Step. Are you a new entrepreneur with an idea for a business? Are you ready to test the feasibility of your business idea? Operation JumpStart: First Step is an intensive multi-day workshop that helps you learn the business basics to test your business idea. At the end of this workshop you will have a feasibility plan that will tell you if your business idea is a "go" or "no go." Details: TechTown is offering an Operation JumpStart: First Step workshop series on Saturdays starting April 14, 2012. The ten-session workshop will run from April 14 through June 16. Each session will be from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Course fee: \$80.

Weekly on Saturdays starting April, 14.

TechTown, 440 Burroughs Street, Detroit.

shakara@techtownwsu.org

Small Business Unlocked's Marketing Mondays. Small Business: Unlocked's "Marketing Mondays" series features a monthly workshop that focuses on helping small businesses improve their sales and marketing tactics by learning the latest trends and cutting edge practices presented by an industry expert. While many businesses are well versed in interacting with a traditional consumer they often fall short when their audiences are other businesses. This session provides an in-depth look at social media strategies for business-to-business communications that can be easily integrated into your business's overall marketing plan.

Monday, April 16, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Imagine Entertainment, 200 North Main Street, Royal Oak. <http://www.detroitchamber.com/register/MMON0412>

Pre-Business Research Workshop/FastTrac Orientation (Lapeer). Thinking of starting your own business and want to research your business idea? This workshop is designed for you to learn best practices for increasing your chances of entrepreneurial success. The takeaways: an understanding of the business planning process; how the planning process develops your business plan; and the critical role of research in business planning and feasibility analysis. You will also learn to separate the myths from the realities of small business financing and have an opportunity to ask questions of a business consultant.

Monday, April 16, 9-11 a.m.

Mott Community College, 550 Lake Drive, Lapeer.

<http://www.misbtdc.net/workshop.aspx?ekey=60320004>

Entrepreneurial Support Services Bus Tour – Day 2. MEDC Entrepreneurial Support Services takes to the road for the second day of the bus tour. Each stop features a networking and educational event in full swing as the bus arrives to connect entrepreneurs with funding and grant opportunities, education, business advice, mentors and other resources. Learn about MEDC-supported programs assisting startups and growing technology companies.

Tuesday, April 17

8-10 a.m., Eastern Michigan University Business School, 300 West Michigan Avenue, 473 Gary Owen Building, Ypsilanti.

10 a.m.-noon, Wayne State University, Danto Engineering Development Center, 5050 Anthony Wayne, Detroit.

11 a.m.-1 p.m., TechTown and NextEnergy, 440 Burroughs Street, Detroit.

1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Macomb – Velocity, 6633 18 Mile Road, Sterling Heights.

3-5 p.m., OUIncubator, 401 Sunset Lane, Rochester Hills.

4:30-6:30 p.m., Automation Alley, 2675 Bellingham, Troy.

<http://www.michiganadvantage.org/Events/Entrepreneurial-Bus-Tour/>

Hot Shots: Career Connections at Arbor Brewing Company. Bring your resume, and come and mingle with growing, innovative companies in a fun and relaxed environment! This event is only for talent seeking opportunities for themselves. Recruiters and staffing companies should use other venues to meet with these company representatives. If you would like your company to participate, contact Britany Affolter-Caine at Britany@AnnArborUSA.org.

Tuesday, April 24, 5-7 p.m.

Arbor Brewing Company, 114 E. Washington Street, Ann Arbor

<http://www.annarborusa.org>

Facebook for Business (Advanced). Create and Launch your Facebook Campaign. In this Advanced session of Facebook for Business you will establish objectives and goals for a Facebook campaign, create and Launch a Facebook campaign, learn advanced strategies for reaching influencers and building a long-lasting online community, explore ways to take Facebook beyond social media marketing, learn how to run effective Facebook promotions and/or sweepstakes that meets Facebook's rules and guidelines, and much more! **Prerequisites for this session are Facebook for Business (Beginner) and Facebook for Business (Intermediate).

Tuesday, April 24, 6-9 p.m.

Oakland County Business Center, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford.
www.oakgov.com/peds/calendar.

BOOST Detroit. Each presenter will have 2 minutes to present their idea (sorry no slides) to a board of very qualified judges for valuable feedback. Two winners will be selected based on the most popular vote of the judges and the support folks in the audience. The two winners will be invited to present at a future Blue Water Angel dinner.

Wednesday, April 25, 4-7:30 p.m.

Detroit.

<http://www.mmhc.us/component/registrationpro/event/89/BOOSTI-Detroit.html>

Oakland County Economic Outlook Luncheon. Announcing the 27th Annual Oakland County Economic Outlook Luncheon, hosted once again by Oakland County Economic Development & Community Affairs, Chase and Oakland Community College. To register, please visit www.oakgov.com/peds. Registration deadline is April 19, 2012. Please note that seating is limited and tickets are non-refundable. Seating arrangements will be given at registration. Fee for attendance is \$40.

Thursday, April 26, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Troy Marriott, 200 W. Big Beaver, Troy.

Contact Nancy Nagy 248.858.8706.