

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 SEVENTEEN

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2013, 7:00PM

NUMBER TWO

Thursday February 14, 2013 Meeting

The meeting will take place at 7:00 pm in the upstairs of Walli's Restaurant in Burton Michigan.

Our Speaker for February is Ryan Grepper. Product Developer at Large. website is www.inventorsblueprint.com. Ryan is out of Portland Oregon and will have a lot of interesting items to discuss with us. You are strongly urged to go to Ryan's website and watch his free training material then be ready to ask some questions at the meeting. .

Meeting will start at 7:00pm Thursday February 14, 2013

Thursday January 10, 2013 Meeting

2013 Elections were held and the following members were elected to the Board of Directors.

Marty Sovis

Rick Mason

Andy Burglar

Roger Stolpin

Ron Kilponen

Mary Kordyban

Mike Ball was elected President by the board

Jump Start Entrepreneur Conference

All inventors and entrepreneurs should try to attend the event. You can meet many people and organizations that can help you. This is our fourth year participating and we will have a booth there if members wish to display their inventions. Just let Marty or Rick know, to make sure we have space for you. We will be conducting a breakout training session during the Conference again the year.

Jump Start Entrepreneur Conference

February 28, 2013

8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Gateway Centre
5353 Gateway Centre, Flint
Cost: \$20 per person
Breakfast and lunch will be provided

Participants will have the opportunity to hear other business professionals talk about their experiences with starting, developing, and managing their businesses.

Information breakout sessions include:

- Government contracting
- Business planning
- Marketing
- Legal fundamentals
- Inventors: Idea to Market
- And more

Register online:

www.thegrcc.org/jumpstart

ICMM Regular Meeting Agenda will follow our speaker at 8:00 pm Cubicle Cop —"ICCM Invention 2011" This is our invention project and we are at the packaging stage. We are refining some issues and will continue to work on the product development of the "Cubicle Cop" in 2013 and continue to train our inventors how to invent and take the product to market.

ICMM
Home of the Happy Inventors



MARKETING

Hints from the Fog
by Mike Ball, President



Do as much of the work possible on your invention, yourself

Everyone has ideas that they think are great. The best ones always come when you say, I have a better way to do this. Or why doesn't someone make a product to solve this problem?

An idea is cheap and easy. You can lay on the couch and dream it up. All you need to do is call an invention company and they will do it all work and thinking, then mail you checks every month. Of course you will be mailing them a lot of checks first and until you run out of money, they will keep telling you how good you are. This is how people lose money fast. They may get you a patent (for a fee and normally useless) and a marketing plan (boiler plate), but no sales and no income. They get the gold mine, you get the shaft.

Why do most people go to an invention company? They are lazy or they think there is no way they can do some of these tasks themselves. Wrong. Let's walk through a simple invention I had which did not prove to be cash flow positive so I dropped the project.

This is a typical product idea. My wife says I need to invent something, I say its not needed since you can do the same thing with a pencil, hammer, level, and ruler. She bugs me, I work on it.

My steps are always as follows:

(1) I roughly sketch my solution to the problem on paper. I do this because I do not want to be influenced by someone else's idea how to solve the problem. This forces you to think.

(2) I go on the web and google the type of product I have sketched. I am looking for a few things: design and features of the product, how many sellers are there on the web, what is the price point (how much they retail for) they sell for, and the most important thing of all is distribution (who sells the product to the end customer) If a product has no big box or chains selling their products, it means they don't have wide retail appeal. If it only sells on their web site, then sales are very small. It will be easy to sell a better design and price product, but how many can you really sell if the retailers don't sell it?

(3) If it has distribution, I go to the stores (correct type) and look at the competition and maybe even buy a couple of them so I can see how they are manufactured and the material used.

You have just done "market research". What did it cost? Mostly time, your time. If you hire a company to do this for you, you must pay them for their time. I don't work for free for people (except this inventors club) and neither would you. What does a professional do for you? They identify the competing products (use web or stores), who they sell them to (distribution), how much they sell for (price point), and finally assess the quality and function of competitive products (see how they are manufactured and with what material, packaging, etc.).

The only reason not to do this part yourself is you have too much money, or you are lazy. It takes very little time to search a web inquiry today. And you can look at the store shelves when you go shopping. That is a case of believing that an "expert" knows more than you. Nonsense.

You may not be able to do every step of the inventing process yourself. Even I do not, but I do all the things I can myself. You will understand your invention and its competition when you do the research and you will make a more informed decision on the potential of your product.

You should get an expert or tradesman to assist when you need it, but you will now know what you want your invention to look and function like and what stores or distributors sell a similar product that you will have to compete against for shelf space. Don't think final sale as much placing you invention on a store shelf or catalog and let them sell it for you. They will do it only if they can make money and each store or distributor is a sales force working for you.

Do all the inventing tasks you are able to, but you can do it. "If its going to be it's up to me." Use the other inventors in the club to network with and help each other. Have fun developing your invention (product) and spend money only when you need skills you don't have. I have done it and so can you.

The Events on the following page(s) are listed to try to help inventors and friends of ICMM club to network and learn from other organizations and resources.

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
Marty Sovis Rick Mason
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

MidMichigan Innovation Center
ww.mmic.us

Officers and Directors

Mike Ball *President* 810-245-5599
michaelball@turbousa.com
Roger Stolpin *Membership* 248-634-2129
Finite-007.att.net
Ron Kilponen *Legal* 248-344-7132
kilponen@bignet.net
Rick Mason *V-Pres* 810-659-7935
xzymason@aol.com
Andy Burlager *Director* 810-695-5752
andyburlager@Gmail.com
Marty Sovis *Sec/Treasr* 810-659-6741
Msovis@comcast.net
Mary Kordyban *Director* 313-481-1391
mkordyban@gmail.com

Home of the Happy Inventors

Links for ICMM Inventors to Review to find networking opportunities

[ACE'13 - Annual Collaboration for Entrepreneurship, January 31.](#)

Join our forward-thinking community of entrepreneurs, innovators and business leaders from around the Great Lakes region to network, learn and connect.

Entrepreneurs - Display Table and Pitch Competition Registration

Register now for a display table and a chance to be selected for the ACE'13 Elevator Pitch Competition, a fast-paced program with six entrepreneurs presenting three-minute pitches to win awards and services. You must be registered for an entrepreneur display table to be considered for the Pitch Competition. ACE'13 showcases ventures that are technology oriented, web based or intellectual property centric and looking for investment.

Thursday, January 17, exhibit table registration deadline

<http://ace-event.org/exhibitors-2/>

Attendance Registration

Attend ACE'13 and hear leading experts, watch the elevator pitch and to take advantage of The Consultants' Corridor. Consultants' Corridor will have more than 130 sessions open to entrepreneurs on a first-come, first-served basis for 20-minute, one-on-one sessions on sales, marketing, funding, intellectual property, business startup, entrepreneurship and more. We are expecting over 1,000 in attendance. You won't want to miss this event.

Thursday, January 31, 2-8 p.m.

Burton Manor Conference Center, Livonia

<http://www.ace-event.org/>

First Quarter 2013 Highlights

Global MIT Enterprise Forum and SAE Auto Innovation Competition. Many inventors have difficulty getting to the right evaluators of their products within the automotive industry. This offers the chance for them to present technically about their products and processes (not a funding or a business strategy presentation) to the automotive engineering community. Audience of supervisory or manager level engineers from Tier 1 and OEM companies. Semi-finalists will pitch at Thursday, January 31 event, see below.

Thursday, January 17, applications to compete due to mitgreatlakes@gmail.com

Thursday, January 31, 9-2 p.m.

<https://www.messageblocks.com/ace2013>

Startup Weekend – Grand Rapids. All Startup Weekend events follow the same basic model: anyone is welcome to pitch their startup idea and receive feedback from their peers. Teams organically form around the top ideas (as determined by popular vote) and then it's a 54-hour frenzy of business model creation, coding, designing, and market validation. The weekends culminate with presentations in front of local entrepreneurial leaders with another opportunity for critical feedback.

Friday, January 18, 4 p.m.-Sunday, January 20, 10 p.m.

The Factory, 38 West Fulton Street, 4th floor, Grand Rapids

<http://grandrapids.startupweekend.org/>

ACE'13. Attend ACE'13 and hear leading experts, watch the elevator pitch and to take advantage of the Consultants' Corridor. Consultants' Corridor will have more than 130 sessions open to entrepreneurs on a first-come, first-served basis for 20-minute, one-on-one sessions on sales, marketing, funding, intellectual property, business startup, entrepreneurship and more. We are expecting over 1,000 in attendance. You won't want to miss this event.

Thursday, January 31, 2-8 p.m.

Burton Manor Conference Center, Livonia

<http://www.ace-event.org/>

Startup Weekend – MPowered. All Startup Weekend events follow the same basic model: anyone is welcome to pitch their startup idea and receive feedback from their peers. Teams organically form around the top ideas (as determined by popular vote) and then it's a 54-hour frenzy of business model creation, coding, designing, and market validation. The weekends culminate with presentations in front of local entrepreneurial leaders with another opportunity for critical feedback.

Friday, February 1, 6:30 p.m.-Sunday, February 3, 9 p.m.

Location TBD, Ann Arbor

<http://annarbor.startupweekend.org/>

Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MISBTDC). The MI-SBTDC offers a comprehensive selection of trainings and workshops statewide for Entrepreneurs – almost 100 each month. The topics are geared to those just starting their first business and also those experienced entrepreneurs looking for ways to improve and enhance their success. Topics include: Writing a Business Plan, Business Accounting and Budgeting, Business Start-up, Cash Flow Management, E-Commerce, Finance, Government Contracting, FastTrac(TM) New Venture Workshops, Managing a Business, Managing Employees, Marketing and Sales, Taxes, and Technology. **The GLEQ calendar will highlight select events offered, but many more are available.**

<http://www.misbtcd.net>

Motor City Connect Live – Novi. Join the business professionals of Motor City Connect for an effective and fun alternative to the traditional networking meeting. This is a chance for everyone to come face-to-face with other MCC members. MCC Live lunches are relaxed, casual and usually good for a few laughs. It's never a something you have to attend; it's an event you want to attend. No sixty-second commercials. No ten-minute speakers. This is just a chance to break bread together, meet new people, seek to understand their needs and connect on a new level.

Tuesday, January 1, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

BD's Mongolian BBQ, 43155 Main Street, Novi

<http://motorcityconnect.groupsites.com/calendar/event/2013/1/1/353712>

Motor City Connect – 275. Join the business professionals of Motor City Connect for an effective and fun alternative to the traditional networking meeting. This is a chance for everyone to come face-to-face with other MCC members. MCC Live lunches are relaxed, casual and usually good for a few laughs. It's never a something you have to attend; it's an event you want to attend. No sixty-second commercials. No ten-minute speakers. This is just a chance to break bread together, meet new people, seek to understand their needs and connect on a new level.

Tuesday, January 8, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Brann's Steakhouse, 39715 Six Mile Road, Northville

<http://motorcityconnect.groupsites.com/calendar/event/2013/1/8/38642>

SBIR Update from the Department of Transportation. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its Phase I SBIR Solicitation 13.1 on December 10, 2012. This solicitation is the first one issued by DOT since incorporating significant changes from the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act. Rachael Sack, DOT SBIR Program Analyst, will present this free live webinar summarizing changes from previous solicitations, discussing the mission of the DOT and the role of SBIR, and sharing tips for preparing proposals. Rachael will also discuss other ways to learn about work opportunities with the US DOT.

Wednesday, January 9, 2-3 p.m.

Inventors' Council of Mid Michigan Monthly Meeting. Bring your questions and get some help with the next part of your journey of inventing. You'll have networking time, hear others stories of success and enjoy good food and a beverage beforehand.

Thursday, January 10, 7-9 p.m.

Walli's Restaurant and Banquet Center, 1341 S. Center Road, Burton

<http://www.inventorscouncil.org/>

Motor City Connect – Royal Oak. Join the business professionals of Motor City Connect for an effective and fun alternative to the traditional networking meeting. This is a chance for everyone to come face-to-face with other MCC members. MCC Live lunches are relaxed, casual and usually good for a few laughs. It's never a something you have to attend; it's an event you want to attend. No sixty-second commercials. No ten-minute speakers. This is just a chance to break bread together, meet new people, seek to understand their needs and connect on a new level.

Tuesday, January 15, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Tequilla Blue, 526 Main, Royal Oak

<http://motorcityconnect.groupsites.com/calendar/event/2013/1/15/40865>

Speaker Series – Jimmy Greene. Mid Michigan Innovation Center (MMIC) presents Jimmy E. Greene, CEO and president of The Association of Builders and Contractors, discussing "The Politics of Entrepreneurship".

Tuesday, January 15, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

MMIC, 2007 Austin St., Midland

<http://www.mmic.us/>

Tips on Electronic Submissions to Department of Energy. Tips for successful SBIR/STTR proposal and submission and how to avoid common mistakes will help ensure an on-time submission.

Wednesday, January 16, 1-2 p.m.

WEBINAR

<http://www.bbcetc.com>

Government Contracting 101. Find out what it takes to sell your goods and services to the federal government and the State of Michigan. In addition, learn about the services and continuous support the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) has available to help your company with the contracting process.

Thursday, January 17, 9 a.m.-noon

Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia

infoeq@schoolcraft.edu

The ABCs of SBIR/STTR Funding. Designed to provide enough information for attendees to determine if they would like to seriously pursue proposal development and tools to help begin the process.

Thursday, January 17, 1-2 p.m.

WEBINAR

<http://www.bbcetc.com>

ORBIT Start-up Launch Training. ORBIT Launch! is the introductory workshop series Kettering TechWorks offers to help technology entrepreneurs plan and start their ventures. This highly popular program has graduated more than 400 Michigan startup leaders, employees and advisors. It is made possible through the support of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Kettering University and the C.S. Mott Foundation.

Wednesdays, January 23-March 20, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Kettering University, Campus Center, Room-A, 4th floor, Flint

<http://www.ku-tw.com/index.php/we-can-help/trainingprograms>

Doing Business in Mexico. Looking to learn how your business can benefit from expanding beyond Southeast Michigan to reach customers, partners and clients in Mexico? Speakers will include Eve Lerman, senior international trade specialist at US Commercial Service. Kurt Saldana, President of Quality Metalcraft, Robert Ruffini, President of Fluxtrol, Consul General Vicente Sanchez from Mexico and Jeanne Broad, international trade manager for MEDC.

Thursday, January 24, 8-11:30 a.m.

Automation Alley, 2675 Bellingham, Troy

<http://www.automationalley.com>

The Mobile Explosion – How Can Your Business Take Advantage of Mobile Technologies to Increase Productivity and Profitability? In this Lunch and Launch, Linda Daichendt, Executive Director of the Mobile Technology Association of Michigan (MTAM), will conduct a presentation regarding the surge in mobile technology, and how it is impacting businesses today in more ways than just the next new "app."

Thursday, January 24, noon-1 p.m.

Macomb-OU INCubator at Velocity, 6633 Eighteen Mile Road, Sterling Heights

maclnc@oakland.edu

Tri-City Brewing – Their Startup Story. The Mid Michigan Innovation Center presents this Startup Story highlighting Tri-City Brewing. Attendees will get a tour of the facility, and hear Tri-City's story; how they got the brewery going, struggles they faced, and how they have progressed into the brewery that they are today. After the tour and discussion, the night will be finished in their taproom where we can enjoy a variety of their craft beers.

Friday, January 25, 2-7 p.m.

Tri-City Brewing, 3020 N. Water Street, Bay City

<http://www.mmic.us/>

Fireside Growth Series with Jake Sigal. The Fireside Growth Series is interactive and designed to educate emerging entrepreneurs on the trials and tribulations of creating a successful business, with real stories of business success. During each session, presented by a successful entrepreneur, the speaker will discuss challenges, solutions and successes; they will tell their story! This month's speaker is Jake Sigal, Founder and CEO, Livio Radio.

Tuesday, January 29, 5-7 p.m.

Macomb-OU INCubator at Velocity Center, 6633 Eighteen Mile Road, Sterling Heights

maclnc@oakland.edu

SBIR/STTR 101: Introduction and Overview. Attendees will learn SBIR/STTR program basics, including: program purpose, eligibility, sources of funding and tools for proposal development. It is designed to provide enough information for attendees to determine if they would like to seriously pursue a grant or contract proposal.

Wednesday, January 30, 9 a.m.-noon

One Golf View Lane, Rochester Hills

<http://www.bbcetc.com>

Venture Plan Online. This program is perfect for entrepreneurs who want help to bring their new business ideas to reality. The Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) is recruiting 160 people (40 per class) to participate in their newly launched program "Venture Plan Online". This eight-week webinar program will guide participants through their startup pains providing weekly one-hour webinars, participant manuals, online tools and other web resources. The program is based on Palo Alto software curriculum. There is a generous grant so the cost is minimal. There are four ten-week classes:

- Tuesdays, February 5-March 26, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Tuesdays, February 5-March 26, 4-5 p.m.
- Wednesdays, March 6-April 24, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays, March 6-April 24, 4-5 p.m.

Monday, February 4, Registration deadline

