

## Marketing Inventions

### Compiled by Glenn Eisen, SCORE Westchester County, NY

Following is some of the information received from SCORE counselors across the United States for input about how inventors can best get their products to market.

The first table lists some useful. Also included are some government sites for grants, benefits and business opportunities.

The second table are some of the comments received. The list of SCORE chapters that contributed demonstrates how broad the input is from SCORE's counselor network.

The article following the second table, **10 Steps to Protect Your Great Idea**, appeared in our August 2010 eNewsletter.

<b>Websites that might be useful for Inventors</b>	
Inc. Magazine has a list of Angel investor networks	<a href="http://www.inc.com/articles/2001/09/23461.html">http://www.inc.com/articles/2001/09/23461.html</a>
A recommended site	<a href="http://www.inventorsalliance.org/index.cgi?ba_">http://www.inventorsalliance.org/index.cgi?ba_</a>
Wisconsin Innovation Service Center, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater	<a href="http://wisc.uww.edu/">http://wisc.uww.edu/</a>
Georgia Tech Research Institute, a research arm of the Georgia Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.gtri.gatech.edu/">http://www.gtri.gatech.edu/</a>
Great resource for our inventors Mark, the attorney who started this website is the son of an inventor who got fleeced trying to get his invention "out into the world" as a money making venture. He specializes in working with "independent inventors"...has reasonable prices...and great ideas.	www.patwrite.com_ ( <a href="http://www.patwrite.com">http://www.patwrite.com</a> )
information on the grant programs that are available and who may qualify for them	<a href="http://www.grants.gov/">http://www.grants.gov/</a>
information on all Federal government benefits programs, economic development act and latest stuff on loans.	<a href="http://www.govbenefits.gov/govbenefits_en.portal">http://www.govbenefits.gov/govbenefits_en.portal</a>
Federal Business Opportunities	<a href="https://www.fbo.gov/index?cck=1&amp;au=&amp;ck=">https://www.fbo.gov/index?cck=1&amp;au=&amp;ck=</a>
AOL article on how to get SBA loan	<a href="http://smallbusiness.aol.com/2010/07/28/how-to-get-an-sba-loan/?icid=main htmlws-sb-n dl2 link1 http%3A%2F%2Fsmallbusiness.aol.com%2F2010%2F07%2F28%2Fhow-to-get-an-sba-loan%2F">http://smallbusiness.aol.com/2010/07/28/how-to-get-an-sba-loan/?icid=main htmlws-sb-n dl2 link1 http%3A%2F%2Fsmallbusiness.aol.com%2F2010%2F07%2F28%2Fhow-to-get-an-sba-loan%2F</a>

Counselor's Chapter	Counselor's Comments
From a Portland OR counselor	I would think the MS Association would be the place to contact to see what they can do for your client
St. Paul MN	<p>I would be extremely careful with connecting with Inventor helpers. Many scams exist and even in the best cases, selling ideas is hard. I've been told that the best plan is to build a business plan for how to make money with the idea and sell that to an investor. You'll need a management team that is credible.</p> <p>You don't say where you are, but there are angel networks many places with executive directors who might be willing to meet your client and discuss what the business plan needs to look like. Inc. Magazine has a list of networks at <a href="http://www.inc.com/articles/2001/09/23461.html">http://www.inc.com/articles/2001/09/23461.html</a> .</p> <p>Defining the business is the only way I know of to value the invention.</p>
Silicon Valley	<p>I would be extremely careful in this area. I am not sure if anyone is keeping tabs but I think that SCAMs for inventors is about the most frequent thing going.</p> <p>I would also be very cautious in giving something that resembles legal advice. The only site I lead people to that I trust is <a href="http://www.inventorsalliance.org/index.cgi?ba">http://www.inventorsalliance.org/index.cgi?ba</a> , (<a href="http://www.inventorsalliance.org/index.cgi?ba">http://www.inventorsalliance.org/index.cgi?ba</a>)</p>
Eugene OR	<p>The following are extremely good sources for inventors: Both are highly regarded .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisconsin Innovation Service Center, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater,</li> <li>• Georgia Tech Research Institute, a research arm of the Georgia Institute of Technology.</li> </ul>
Silicon Valley	<p>I can certainly endorse the Wisconsin Innovation Service center part of the MEW system helping small and medium sized manufacturers... similar almost to SCORE but focused on manufacturing and the staff is salaried... The e mail is <a href="http://wisc.uww.edu/contact-us.html">_http://wisc.uww.edu/contact-us.html_</a> (<a href="http://wisc.uww.edu/contact-us.html">http://wisc.uww.edu/contact-us.html</a>) for contacting them.</p>
Iowa City	<p>Another great resource for our inventors has been <a href="http://www.patwrite.com">_www.patwrite.com_</a> (<a href="http://www.patwrite.com">http://www.patwrite.com</a>) Mark, the attorney who started this website is the son of an inventor who got fleeced trying to get his invention "out into the world" as a money making venture. He specializes in working with "independent inventors"...has reasonable prices...and great ideas. It is not clear to me whether or not your client wants to actually carry through with making and selling the product or selling the idea. In the latter case, I agree that creation of the business plan will be the best next step toward finding a purchaser for the idea. (Has he built a prototype?)</p>

## **10 Steps to Protect Your Great Idea**

### **Got a Great Idea? Follow these First Steps**

**By Alan Tratner, SCORE Counselor from Santa Barbara, CA**

1. Put all your ideas, notes and drawings in an inventor's journal, and have it signed, witnessed and dated. Be careful about disclosing your ideas to anyone—use a confidentiality or non-disclosure document when discussing your ideas.
2. Decide whether to file a provisional patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. For more information on the benefits and how to file, visit the USPTO Web site at <http://www.uspto.gov>.
3. Conduct a Preliminary Patentability. Search to discover what patents exist like your ideas—and get a patent attorney to render you a Patentability Opinion. There are many ways to conduct the search, including the Patent Depository Libraries on the uspto.gov Web site. File a PTO Provisional Patent Application for one year if all looks good.
4. Make a model, demo or illustration and conduct preliminary market research with end-users. Know the consumers of your product, and listen to feedback. Use feedback to fine tune your project.
5. Investigate intellectual property filings such as utility and design patents in the United States and overseas. Also investigate copyrights, trademarks, service marks and domain name registrations for Web sites. Explore U.S. and international protection options and limitations.
6. Think about the two main pathways to inventing success: entrepreneurship or licensing—how do you want to be rewarded for your great ideas? The pathway you choose will dictate a lot of your actions—and budget.
7. Do not fall prey to invention development/promotion scams, which are prevalent. Check with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for a list of these unscrupulous firms. If their promises sound too good to be true, they probably are. Get real professional help and seek the support of legitimate inventor organizations.
8. Investigate competitive products to make your product superior or better priced. Employ brainstorming techniques to evolve and accelerate the marketability of your ideas.
9. Find an inventor mentor—some one who's done this process before—to provide guidance.
10. Believe in your ideas and persevere—it takes some time and effort to do all this right. Be realistic about your goals and good luck.

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