

fruition i.d.

invention development services

If you have a great idea for an invention and don't know what to do next, you've come to the right place. This website will help provide new inventors with a better understanding of the *Invention Development Process* and will provide a legitimate resource for invention related services.

fruition id specializes in helping inventors obtain patent protection and creating working prototypes to aid in the license and mass-production of their inventions. Once we understand the details of your invention, we can provide you with a free estimate for these services. Before asking for an estimate, or for that matter discussing your idea in detail with **anyone**, we recommend that you first request a Confidentiality Agreement. We can provide you with a standard form, or you can locate and download one on the Internet.

overview

It's been said that everybody comes up with at least one great idea in their life. The question is what are you going to do with it?

Figuring out how to turn your idea into a saleable product can be difficult and overwhelming to people unfamiliar with the Invention Development process. This web site is specifically designed to help you understand the options, as well as the pitfalls, and to provide you with a resource to develop your idea.

In the next sections you will get a detailed explanation of the development process. It will clarify how to bring your product from an idea to a manufactured product. These steps include sorting through the patent issues, creating a working prototype and getting your product into production.

about patents

The first thing to do is establish a date of conception. In other words, you'll want to establish concrete proof of the date the idea was conceived. This would protect you if someone submits a similar patent application the same time as you. In the U.S., the rule is "first-to-conceive" rather than "first-to-file", as in most other countries. This means if two inventors' files for a patent at the same time but you can prove you thought of it first, the idea belongs to you.

An easy way to establish this date is take a trusted friend (ideally not related) and bound book with sketches and/or a written description of the invention to a Notary Public. There your friend can have their signature on these pages notarized to establish a conception date. The person you choose to bring would then be your legal witness as to the contents of the documents (they must be familiar with the invention), with the notarization confirming the date of the signatures. (the notary does not need to know what the documents contain)

After you've established you Date of Conception the next step is conduct a Patent Search. A Patent Search will verify if your invention is, or is not, new

and/or novel. (There are over 7 million patents on file at the Patent Office and only about 1% of those are ever developed.) Before you spend money developing your invention, you want to be sure someone else hasn't patented it. Using your invention description, we search through all of the patents on file at the US Patent Office to find anything similar. A copy of each relevant patent is sent to you for review. About 15% of the time the Patent Search returns a similar or identical patent.

Next, you'll want to get the U.S. Government on your side with patent protection. Most people think patents cost too much but are not aware of some of the options the U.S. Patent Office provides. The quickest and most cost-effective patent is a Provisional Patent. It establishes a date of conception with the U.S. Patent Office and gives you one year to file for full patent protection. Here are the main advantages of filing a Provisional Patent as taken for the Patent Office web site:

provides simplified filing with a lower initial investment with one full year to assess the invention's commercial potential before committing to the higher cost of filing and prosecuting a non-provisional application for patent
establishes an official United States patent application filing date for the invention
permits one year's authorization to use "Patent Pending" notice in connection with the invention

If you're not comfortable filing a Provisional Patent yourself, fruition id can create the drawings and put together a Provisional Patent package for you to submit to the Patent Office. This service is free for clients who utilize our services to develop a working prototype. Most attorneys charge thousands of dollars for the exact same thing. Once the patent office receives your package, they will file it and send you a Provisional Patent number that entitles you to a "Patent Pending" status for one year.

Also be aware, if you publicly show or sell your invention more than one year before you file for a full patent, your patent application may be denied. So a Provisional Patent should not be entered into lightly. This is why we recommend waiting as long as possible before submitting your Provisional Patent.

Regardless of whether you have Provisional Patent protection, if you need to discuss your idea with an individual or a company, have them sign a Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Agreement. This will allow you to document exactly when and with whom the conversation takes place. fruition id has a standard Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Agreement that is signed for each and every client soliciting our services.

prototype

The next thing you may want to do is to create a working prototype. What is a prototype? A prototype is a working representation of a product that "looks like" and "works like" the real thing.

Prototypes are created for any of a variety of reasons. Here are a few of the most common:

1. Before the product can be mass-produced and sold, prototypes are created, tested and reviewed as many times as it takes to get them working perfectly. Once the prototype is finalized, you can safely assume there will be no surprises in the production parts and assemblies, and the functionality of the product should work perfectly. This process saves considerable time and money that would be wasted if problems were not discovered until thousands of units have already been produced.

2. You may intend to license the product to a company already established in that particular product market, whereas, they would handle the manufacturing and sales of your product. In this case, the prototype is used for demonstrations in the hopes of finding an interested party. For example:

John comes up with an idea for a clever way to trap mice without hurting them. He does not have the time, money or expertise to manufacture the product himself. Instead, he uses a prototype for demonstration to companies already established in the farm and home accessories market. He finds a company interested in adding the device to their product line in return for royalties on each unit they sell.

3. Sometimes people want prototypes for a particular event, such as a trade show. There are trade shows for just about everything imaginable. They are a great way to get feedback on a new product idea before it goes into production. Most companies use trade shows to introduce new products on a regular basis.

4. Another use for a prototype may be to get a jump on marketing and sales. Prototypes can be used for product photography, packaging development and any type of sale literature. In this way, you will not have to wait until a production unit is in your hands to accomplish these tasks.

If you decide you would like a working prototype, Fruition ID can create one, or many, for you. We will help you come up with a design, engineer any mechanical or electronic requirements, draw each part using 3D CAD (computer-aided-design) programs and lastly, create the fully functional prototype.

Using CAD also allows us to create computer-generated renderings that look like a photograph and may take advantage of high-tech prototyping processes such as laser prototyping. As the inventor, you are closely involved in the entire process and are required for feedback and approval of each step along the way. The entire process to go from idea to prototype can take as little as 1 month, or more than 1 year depending on the complexity of the design. Call us at 423.877.3480 or email us at rl@fruitionid.com and we'd be happy to provide you with an invention development estimate at no charge.

production

If you are ambitious, you may decide to manufacture and sell the product yourself. In this case, you will have to fund the manufacturing, marketing and sales. This is a costly and time-consuming endeavor, but worthwhile if done successfully.

To get from a prototype to production requires a few more steps in the development process. The first step is to create Engineering Documentation.

This is "blue print" of each part of the product assembly. This drawing contains all of the dimensions and specifications particular to each part to the extent that any manufacturer, anywhere in the world, will be able to understand exactly how to manufacture the part. Well-done engineering drawings are universal and should not leave any questions unanswered.

Once a complete drawing package is created, it is sent out to many manufacturers for price quotes. In this way, you are assured the best possible price. Once you choose a manufacturer and place your order, you officially have your product in production.

fruition id can create all of the necessary engineering documentation as well as find manufacturers around the world. All information is simply passed along to our clientele for them to make the final decision as to who will handle the production manufacturing.

Of course having the product in your hands is only the beginning. We also offer Graphic Design and Web Design services. This means we can create company and/or product logos, packaging, brochures, advertisements, web sites and any other materials to help you promote your product.

We assist you in promoting your product by creating the promotional materials you may need. fruition id **does not** promote the product on your behalf. The sales and marketing of the product is handled 100% by our client. We are compensated only for the services we provide and do not have any stake in the sales or success of your product. Revenue generated from your product belongs solely to you, the inventor.

word to the wise

There are all types of companies vying for your business. The best thing you can do to protect yourself is to be educated on the Invention Development Process. Here are a few pieces of advice taken from the personal experience of Robert Lotufo. This advice is based on having spent more than 25 years providing Product Development services to individuals and companies designing products for the consumer, medical and industrial markets. Robert holds many patents and awards for products he has developed including a few of his own.

Confidentiality

When talking to anyone or any company about your idea, always have them sign a confidentiality agreement before you disclose any information.

fruition id does not make any guarantees to the accuracy of the information provided here, and will not be held liable for any errors. We do however make every effort to ensure accuracy. If you find any mistakes please contact us so that we can correct them as quickly as possible.

about fruition id

fruition id is an **invention development service** specifically created to help individuals and entrepreneurs take great ideas through the development process. We are able to take your great idea, whether it is a verbal description or a

"doodle sketch" on a cocktail napkin, and transform it into a mass-produced product ready for sale in the market place.

Our group represents a variety of expertise chosen to cover each aspect of the **invention development process**. These skill sets include conceptual design, CAD engineering, electronic engineering, prototyping, graphic design and package design.

Robert Lotufo is owner and Design Manager at fruition id. **Rob** has over 25 years providing Product Development services to companies and individuals alike. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact **Rob** via email (rl@fruitionid.com) or call directly at 423.877.3480. He will be happy to answer any questions you may have and offer advice, if needed.

If you would like a free **invention development estimate**, we will first need to complete a Confidentiality Agreement so we can openly discuss your Invention. Please email us at rl@fruitionid.com with the following information (this information will not be shared with anyone outside fruition id):

Full Name

Mailing address

Email (please be sure our emails are accepted by your server)

Contact Phone Number (the best way to reach you)

Invention Category (examples- golf product, toy, tool, automotive, novelty, etc.)

Scope of Development For which of the phases described are you interested in receiving an estimate?

How would you like to provide the details of your Invention? (Phone call, email, fax, other)

How did you find fruition id? If the Internet, which search engine? (Google, Yahoo, AOL, MSN, etc.)

Using this information we will put together a Confidentiality Agreement between you and rl@fruitionid.com. The signed agreement will be emailed to you for your records. From there, we will be able to go over the details of your invention so we can put together an invention development estimate for your review.

information for inventors

The following information is intended to answer commonly asked questions and clarify commonly misunderstood facts:

documentation

The most important thing you can do as an inventor is to **document everything**. You cannot overdo it when it comes to keeping well-organized notes and drawings. From the first moment you have the idea, begin a book. Buy yourself some type of permanently bound book, number the pages and record everything. This will be one of your most valuable assets should the need arise to establish a **date of conception**.

protection

There are many ways to protect your idea. Here is an overview of the most common options in order from minimal to maximum protection:

Napkin sketch

Loose pages of drawings and notes

Loose pages of drawings and notes with notarized signatures

Bound book full of notes, drawings and dates

Bound book full of notes, drawings and dates with a notarized signature throughout

Disclosure Document (on file with the U.S. Patent Office)

Provisional Patent (gives you Patent Pending status 12 months)

Non Provisional Patent (full patent protection for 20 years)

Patents

You **do not need a patent to develop a product**. There are many products for sale in the market place that do not have patent protection. *Not all products are patented and not all patents are produced.*

So why get one? Patents are good for two reasons. One: Should you put your invention into production and another company comes along and starts to manufacture and sell the same thing, your patent will be used in court to prove you have the sole right to profit from the product for a period of 20 years. In this scenario your patent is only useful if you are willing to back it up in court. Two: Many large companies (i.e. GE, Ford, and Sony) will not look at any invention without a patent for fear it will compromise an in-house development. Smaller, independently owned companies typically do not have the same strict policies.

Do I Need a Patent Search?

No. You do not need a patent search. However, you should get one. It would be much better to learn that someone else has laid a claim to your invention *before* you spend thousands to develop it.

What is a Patent Search?

A Patent Search is a thorough search of all patents on file at the U.S. Patent office for a particular idea, product, or invention. At fruition id, a copy of each "similar" patent is sent to you for review to see if your idea is, in fact, new or novel enough as not to infringe on an existing patent. These searches are limited to non-provisional patents only. This means anything with a Patent Pending status cannot legally be searched.

Note: I've run into inventors that told me they had a Patent Search conducted by another company who gave them the green light. However, they never saw the results. If a company stands to make money based on the project going forward, don't you think all "searches" get the green light? Until you have seen the search results with your own eyes, don't believe you're in the clear.

The United States Patent Office

There is lots of good information on the patent office web site. The site is extremely cluttered and difficult to navigate but good information is there. You just have to find it. The site can be found at www.uspto.gov

Prototype vs. Mock-up

Many people contact us and say, "I have a prototype." But in actuality they do not. When you have a model that is made with rubber bands, cardboard and glue, (or any substitute materials) it's called a mock-up. Mock-ups are used to work out and prove the key features of an invention. A true prototype is much more. A prototype looks-like and works-like the real manufactured product. It should be impossible to tell you are looking at a prototype if it's done well.

Success Rate?

Occasionally we are asked, "What is your success rate?" Success rate is defined by how much money an inventor spends versus how much he/she makes back. This definition only applies to companies who *claim* to handle the licensing, sales and/or marketing. **Fruition id** does not. We do not get involved on the marketing, sales or licensing of the products we develop. Therefore, success rate does not apply. Our success is simply defined by developing the invention to meet or exceed our client's expectations. Whether or not the invention makes money is not in our hands.

Costs

We are always asked, "What are the costs of your services?" We are sometimes asked before we even know what the product is, or what services are needed. In order to provide you with an accurate estimate, we need to know what the product is, and what services you would like from us. Our estimates are based on how much time it will take to complete the services that are requested. Simple products take less time and, therefore, cost less money.

Confidentiality

As a practice, we sign a Confidentiality Agreement with each new client. This binds our company to secrecy and allows us to openly discuss the details of the invention so that we can put together an Invention Development Estimate. To get a Confidentiality Agreement, please send us an email using the email link on our web page.

Once we receive this information, an agreement will be emailed back to you for your records. At that point, we will be able to discuss your invention details and give you and estimate for our services.

Too Good to be True

Be wary of any companies that claim to handle every imaginable part of bringing a product to market, including market analysis and product promotion. If they claim to be able to provide a "Free Market Analysis" I would be very suspicious. I have reviewed one of these "Market Analyses" and was shocked to see the

company supplied one generic form designed to take anybody's idea and make it look like it was the greatest idea since the wheel.

If you want a market analysis, go to a company that specializes in market research. If you want help promoting your product, hire experts in that area.

Likewise if you want Invention Development, go to a company that specializes in Invention Development, such as fruition id. Would you want your lawyer to throw in a lower G.I. exam with the purchase of a last will and testament?

Other Companies

Stay away from the invention companies that claim to submit/promote your invention on your behalf. I have talked with many individuals who have spent a good deal of money working with these companies and have nothing of value to show for it. Companies that won't discuss fees over the phone are trying to force you to go in for the face-to-face hard pitch. This process begins to have the same appeal as a cult.

These are the same companies that advertise at 3 am on late night TV for a free inventor kit. If a company makes you uncomfortable or gives you any reason to be suspicious, STAY AWAY!

The Federal Trade Commission, or FTC, has stepped in to help bring some order to the invention development industry. In doing so, they created "Project Mousetrap" to identify and shutdown fraudulent invention companies. You can learn more about this law enforcement program at

www.ftc.gov/opa/1997/07/mouse.htm

Before conducting business with any invention company I recommend using the FTC web site to find out more information first. Go to <http://search.ftc.gov/> and type in the name of the company and principal into the search box to see if they have been cited, and/or, fined for fraudulent activity.

summary

Be careful, be smart and be educated. You can call or email us any time and we'd be happy to answer your questions.

contact information

free estimate requests, questions/comments

phone: 423.877.3480

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address

fruition id

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We would be happy to provide you with a free **invention development proposal**. In order for us to provide you with the costs of our services we will need to know the details of your invention. The complexity of the product directly impacts the cost. (ie: the cost to develop a golf tee would be less than the cost to develop an electrostim therapy unit). We can help cultivate your concept with any of the following services:

idea generation

starting from the ground up, we can help you solve a problem, or fill a need with an innovative solution, or a combination of ideas to help meet your goal.

brainstorming

this is a rapid fire idea session, where the sky is the limit, and we reach out to find concepts and solutions that might not normally come to the surface.

protection

we can conduct a **Patent Search** at the US Patent Office to be sure your invention is original and unique. We can also refer you to an excellent local patent attorney if and when you decide to employ one.

concept sketching

In this phase we conceptually design the invention based on your direction and present it in the form of hand drawings.

solid modeling

The package includes a computer-generated, color rendering.

virtual 3-d presentation

we can then take the 3-d model, and place it in a virtual environment, simulate interaction with other objects or entities, or simply put it on a pedestal and let you take a 360 degree tour of it, complete with showroom lighting, or props.

product engineering

next we take the approved concept and fully engineer each part of the invention using a 3D CAD system. detail drawings, exploded views and dimensioned views. Also, these drawings can be used to obtain a Patent Pending status.

rapid prototyping

these 3D files are then used to produce prototype parts and build a working prototype. These prototypes look, feel, and perform almost exactly like a real product.

manufacturing engineering

one of the very unique advantages to fruition id, is that we were all trained in manufacturing. We always consider the feasibility of a product during the design phase.

cost estimating

whether you need 1 or 20 marketing models, 10 thousand or one million units, we can give you a very realistic idea of what your manufacturing cost will be. We don't do commercials or advertising, and we do not specialize in packaging, but we know manufacturing, domestic and imported.

tooling

Some jobs require a one-up silicone casting mold, some rate a 32 cavity hot runner injection mold. We can make molds right here in Tennessee, or work with our associates in Schenzen, China to make your tooling project in a sensible, economical fashion.

small or large scale production

We **almost never** advocate producing parts overseas. Long lead times, shipping expenses and piracy are just a few of the pitfalls of importing a new product. In some rare cases, where part price is essential, and it outweighs the drawbacks associated with importing product, we send some work out. We are trying as hard as we can to keep domestic manufacturing alive here in Tennessee.

We have a broad range of manufacturing capabilities in our Hixson *Lookout Industries* plant, as well as an active network of industry associates that can manufacture just about anything.

Remember, a well designed product can be sourced, and produced anywhere in the world. So although we would love to help you every step of the way, you always have the option of getting multiple quotations for any of the previously described services. We know you have these options, and that is why we strive to be as efficient and economical as possible.

We hope this overview has given you a little insight into our approach to new product development. Please feel free to call, e-mail or write any time. As always, we look forward to helping you bring your ideas to **fruition**.

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