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Fruition ID to help inventors Inventors

By MIKE PARE

DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

Chattanooga Rob LoTufo believes there's a groundswell of invention going on in America, and he has created a company to help develop the ideas.

"We've got inventors coming out of the woodwork, and they want help," he said, citing the popularity of the "American Inventor" TV show developed by Simon Cowell and the producers of "American Idol."

Mr. LoTufo's new company, Fruition ID (for invention

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development), emerged out of Lookout Industries, his existing product design and development company in Hixson.

He periodically would come across inventors who needed help, and he decided to form the new company that can take a project from a pie-in-the-sky

idea to a market-ready product, he said.

Mr. LoTufo said he doesn't do marketing, but his business is aimed at helping inventors develop a market-ready product that is "well designed and poised to succeed."

"If you want a prototype, we can do that," he said. "If you want mass production, we can do that."

Doug Johnson, a patent attorney for the Miller & Martin law firm, said a lot of the inventions

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of independent inventors need guidance on getting the product to market.

"Getting the patent is the easy part for them," he said. "Getting it made and on store shelves requires effort."

J.Ed. Marston, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce's vice president of marketing, said many people have interesting business ideas.

"Very few of them know how to take an idea and turn it into a profitable business," he said.

Mr. LoTufo, who started Lookout Industries about 15 years ago, said he's working with some inventor groups in the region to help get the word out about his new venture.

Services are available on a "cafeteria plan," he said. A project's scope may be as thorough or conservative as the inventor sees fit, Mr. LoTufo said.

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STAFF PHOTO BY PATRICK SMITH

Rob LoTufo, right, talks with Ralph Brett about the development of Mr. Brett's electronic heart monitoring protective sleeve.