

We turn good ideas into *great* products.

2004 -A Year of Progress and Growth

This summer and fall have been seasons of growth and achievement at Porticos. Since our move to our new facility in late spring, we have been busy meeting the needs of our expanding customer base, as well as planning for the future. We have seen the addition of many new consultants bringing a wide range of talents at varied levels of involvement.

In addition to serving the needs of our customers, we have also been busy with the internal conception and development of ideas that solve problems and meet urgent needs. This independent idea-generation effort continues to yield results, highlighted this quarter by our ongoing development of the Porticos "Personal Cooling System" for the US Dept. of Homeland Security.

We want to thank our current customers for their confidence and support, as well as the many folks in our network who continue to spread the word and recommend others to us. We wish you all a happy holiday season and we look forward to working with you in 2005!

THE BUSINESS OF IDEAS

Greg Patterson, CTO

Part 3 in this 12-part series focusing on the development of ideas into viable products...

Passion. It's a common word in our vocabulary. Most often you'll hear it used in the context of romance. Webster's defines passion as; *"intense, driving, or overmastering feeling or conviction, a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept."* But what's this got to do with the *Business of Ideas*? More than you might think. I'd be comfortable in saying that passion for innovation is the cornerstone upon which a successful inventor builds their portfolio.

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RECENT HEADLINES & UPDATES

U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security has awarded Porticos an SBIR research grant for the development of an Innovative Cooling Garment for Emergency First Responders.
Press Release

[Porticos Awarded Dept. of Homeland Security SBIR Grant](#)

Porticos Completes New Enclosure Design for Covelight Systems, enabling them to stand out visually above their competition.

Press Release

[Porticos Completes Covelight Systems Enclosure Design, Highlighting Brand Identity](#)

Porticos meets with Rep. David Price to discuss Porticos' patented PCS Innovative Cooling System.

Press Release

[Porticos Founders Meet With Congressman David Price](#)

And the Winner Is

Tim Norris of Insight Global, Inc. was the lucky winner to have his name randomly drawn in the recent IPOD Mini drawing. We thank Tim and all who participated in the drawing.



New Faces

Montie Roland joined Porticos in November as a Consulting Engineer. Montie is an experienced mechanical engineer with a 14



year track record of achievement and innovation in mechanical design.

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Developing and driving an idea from concept to the market isn't for the faint of heart. If you've read any of the previous articles you are probably still sore from me trying to beat this into you. Innovation has to be a passion and the kernel must excite the inventor or else it isn't going to stand the rigors of development.

Let's take a little quiz to see if you have the passion necessary to weather the storm.

- 1) When you are faced with a fairly simple task that your standard assortment of tools just isn't cut out to handle, do you:
 - a) Fabricate a special tool to get the job done, even though the fabrication process will take longer than doing the job in the first place.
 - b) Do a time value study of money, comparing your salary to the cost of outsourcing, and decide to hire someone to do the job for you.
 - c) Put the task at the bottom of your "honey do" list hoping that you will never get that far down the list.
- 2) When you are pushing the cart and following your significant other around the isles of your local Wal-Mart, do you:
 - a) Mentally design a new 5 quart capacity motor oil container that would also serve as the drain pan for capturing and recycling the old oil.
 - b) Daydream about your busy afternoon lying on the couch and watching your team lose yet another playoff game.
 - c) Shake your head amazed at the fact that no matter what you came in to get, you always leave with a cart load of stuff you didn't need.
- 3) When you are standing at the magazine rack of your local book store do you find yourself reading:
 - a) The history of the alarm siren in the Invention and Technology magazine.
 - b) The Red Hot Chili Peppers interview in the Rolling Stone.
 - c) The swimsuit edition of Sports Illustrated.
- 4) When it's time to clean the leaves out of the gutter's on your house, do you:
 - a) Go down to the hardware store, buy some PVC pipe, flexible hose and duct tape, and create an attachment for your leaf blower so you can blow your gutters clean from the ground.
 - b) Get a ladder and yo-yo your way around the house slowly cleaning the leaves out 3 feet at a time.
 - c) Make your kids climb out the upstairs windows and clean out the gutters by hand.

Okay put your pencils down, times up. It has probably become obvious that answer a) in these questions is symptomatic of someone who has a passion for innovation. Don't get me wrong, it's not always the best or most practical answer, but a true "inventor" is always willing to do twice the effort just to develop an idea. The success comes when the two align and the hair brained idea turns out to be the best solution.

So maybe you didn't answer a) for all of the questions, but you're undaunted in your resolve to be an inventor. It sounds fun, and it must be better than what you're doing now, right? While I wish you all the best, it's been my experience that this approach doesn't work. During my career in management I had the occasion to test this out. I had a team of smart, hard working folks. Being technical folks, all argued that we lacked the opportunity to be innovative because of the pressures of product development. So I decided to "reward" some of the hard working engineers fresh off a completed project by allowing them to focus strictly on innovating a new "widget". The goal was to develop some new concepts and do some rough order feasibility to see if it could be viable. To my surprise it turned out my "reward" was anything but. They became distracted by all sorts of unrelated mundane tasks, often seeking those tasks out. Without the "whip" of the project goals and checklist tasks, and without the passion for the idea kernel, the results were typically uninspired. I suspect the only reason the investigation yielded any results at all was because of the responsibility the dedicated engineers felt to produce results.

That effort was a stark reminder that, without the passion, even fun or challenging work can fail to produce intended results.

So what's the purpose of this story? Innovation is not a simple "check in the box" type of project. And even for those few boxes that are there, the goal isn't to put the check in the box, it's to spawn ideas and provide rough guidance. Just making it your job to do it will rarely result in a valuable invention.

Don't be disheartened if your personal reflection is leading you to understand that perhaps you're not an "inventor". The fact is that building a business of ideas takes different skill mixes. And many of those skills are just as difficult for the inventor as inventing might be for the non-inventor. The tinkering inventor doesn't typically make the top of the "business-savvy" list. So focus on your strengths and surround yourself with people who have strengths in critical areas where you don't. That's how you'll have the best chance of success in your road to build a *Business of Ideas*.