

# Inventors COUNCIL

OF MID-MICHIGAN  
PO BOX 232, LENNON, MICHIGAN 48449

*OF, ABOUT, and FOR the education, promotion and protection  
of inventors and their intellectual properties and ideas.*

THE INVENTORS COUNCIL is an independent, non-profit organization 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. We are the minnows protecting each other from the sharks.

FOUNDED BY ROBERT (BOB) ROSS IN 1995

inventorscouncil.com

WE MEET MONTHLY AT WALLI'S RESTAURANT, 1341 SOUTH CENTER ROAD  
BURTON, MICHIGAN, JUST TWO BLOCKS SOUTH OF I-69, EXIT 139

VOLUME THIRTEEN

MEETING THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2009, 7:00 P.M.

NUMBER FOUR

## TONIGHT'S SPEAKER

### Your success is our business

Our speaker tonight is Steve Rau, owner of Harvest Media Works in Corunna. The company's four areas of expertise are:

- Professional Business Consulting
- Website Design and Hosting
- Custom Marketing Magazines
- Television Commercial Placement

The company's staff include: Steve Rau, President/Owner; Diane Harrell, Designer/Editor; Bryce Louth, Programmer, Ryan Vanloon, Video Production/Editor.

If you're just starting up or foundering in today's tough economy, ask yourself the following questions:

What's the next step for creating a successful business? What media outlet is the best way to advertise my business? What can I do to make my business more profitable with a small advertising budget? I can't afford a web designer full time, but I know I'm missing out on internet marketing. What can I do about it?

Why does it seem like I'm throwing away money when I attempt to advertise? My website attracts traffic, but why am I struggling to convert internet surfers to customers? Why are fliers not effective for me any more? What are the benefits of networking?

Steve will address each of those concerns tonight and offer effective solutions.



STEVE RAU

## MARCH MINUTES

With the last minute cancellation of our speaker, President Mike Ball said he brought material and information to explain the difference between a mockup and a prototype. Then he covered how we will help new inventors over the next 12 meetings.

He turned the meeting over to Secretary-Treasurer Marty Sovis for the financial report. During the report Marty covered the cost of the Inventors Digest at \$19 to ICMC members, and offered applications for members to send in. He also said the subscription can be made through ID's website.

Marty covered our obligations to the IRS and the State of Michigan to report our status as a 501c3.

Mike began his presentation by explaining what a mock up is – a representation of what you want to make. A mockup is not testable, not durable, and can't be used in production. It is used for startup ideas.

A prototype, on the other hand, represents the finished product and has three stages:

- Alpha is the first with no finish, etc.
- Beta has the correct finish, material and size, but isn't saleable.
- The Production prototype is complete but may not be ready for mass-production.

Mike stressed using the language of engineering when dealing with engineers. That's the main reason for understanding the difference between mockups and prototypes.

Be careful when you ask for a prototype to be made. Let the experts have

input. They understand the idiosyncrasies of manufacturing and may have some good suggestions for you. Fred offered the point that these companies are not trying to steal your idea, they look on you as potential customers, work for their business, and you will pay them.

You can learn from your prototypes and change material or design as you progress.

Mike had several samples of product to show during his explanations, including the mold he uses for one of his products. This was a very informative session for new members and those ready to take the crucial step to make that first part.

Mike also touched on cash flow. He told us he never begins building a large number of parts until he has the sales agreement to buy them.

— Marty Sovis, Secretary

## 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 inventors with the input needed to make decisions, no matter what stage of the invention process they're at!

There's no cost for this service. The Panel meets at 6:15 p.m. before each meeting. Call Panel Chairman Mike Wiley at 810-691-4451 for an appointment.

### REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

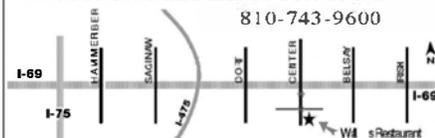
MIKE WILEY  
JIM WHITE MIKE BALL

## OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD AT

### WALLI'S RESTAURANT

1341 SOUTH CENTER ROAD IN BURTON  
JUST TWO BLOCKS SOUTH OF I-69

810-743-9600



WE MEET THE SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH

## Inventors COUNCIL

OF MID-MICHIGAN

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by Mike Ball, President

Spring is here and things are a-changing. Bill Brabenec is retiring as our editor in chief. We all appreciate Bill's fine efforts and dedication since 2003. Bill will remain as a Board member and help in other ways in our club. Please help me in recognizing Bill for a job well done for the Invention Council of Mid-Michigan.

Our Board of Directors has a lot of things on their plate and they are going to need all the help they can get. If you have any of the skills we need, please volunteer to help.

We're looking for teachers, article writers, speakers, reporting, typing, and just about every other skill it takes to conduct meetings, publish a newsletter, network with other clubs, etc. Please contact a Board member if you can help in any way.

Our new room at Walli's is now upstairs in the large meeting room. We made a deal that we can use it at a reduced rate as long as no other large group books the room. The small rooms downstairs are just over capacity when we exceed 40 people at the meetings. It's becoming common to draw over 45 people.

Members have privileges and we intend to act upon this in the next few months. Paid up Members will be receiving more services than Guests.

The first new item we're working on is the Member Profile Network that will help our Members interface with each other.

The next item is the Service and Product Profile that will list Member recommended vendors that other Members can buy or contract their services from. There will be more about this in the next few weeks.

The final new item is the Inventors "To Do" Matrix. It comes from Mike Ball's new book, "The Inventors Blueprint" which is in its final stages. This matrix will be given to paid up Members and covers everything in the invention process from the beginning to the end. It will be available at no charge to our Members.

We're also working on a new networking process with other inventor clubs and organizations that will give us the benefits of the United Inventors Association affiliation on a national basis.

These are exciting times for our Inventors Council. Get involved and help us grow and our Members to be successful. Get to know other members of our Council and help each other to succeed.

See you at the April Meeting.

## Board of Directors Meeting

January 30, 2009 — Bill Brabenec has decided to retire from his position in communications. He is going to allow himself some time to drop a line off his dock and catch a few perch. Mike Ball congratulated him for doing an excellent job on the newsletter since 2003 and thanked him on behalf of all Council members. The following responsibilities were reassigned:

**Press Releases** — Marty will take over the press releases to local papers after the April meeting. Bill will work with him on names and e-mail addresses.

**Newsletter** — Mike Ball will take over the newsletter with help from Marty. They will evaluate our current subscription list and mailing methods and report back to Board members on streamlining publication. Bill will put out the April newsletter to give time for a smooth transition.

**Member sign-in** — Jim Harris has agreed to incorporate his responsibilities of membership with the sign-in sheets. All dues will go through Jim.

Bill will continue to handle the Sign-In table at meetings, along with maintaining and creating special forms and flyers.

**Website Discussion** — Mike Ball mentioned that members don't get any privileges over someone who just walks into a meeting. He suggested the member profiles be put on the website with access by a member's password. Member services could be added in the same category. Mike is developing the format and will work with Jim White on inputting information on our site. Talk of hard copies was also discussed.

**Input sheet for products and services** — Mike Ball would like these to be signed by whoever uses this service. We then would be able to see the networking fruition of our council and gain more notoriety for future membership.

Mike showed us a draft of his matrix "Inventors to do list". A good outline for new inventors.

**Help with speakers** — Mike has been having trouble getting speakers to come, once committed. This opened discussion on potential networking with other inventor groups and the United Inventors Council.

Marty will make contact with other Michigan inventors groups to form a type of "alliance" that should help not only speaker commitments but exchange of information. He will also get with the UIA to get ICMC certification with that organization.

He will get with Orville Crain of the Muskegon Inventors Group, who is also on the board of the UIA. The UIA is coming out with a 10 part PowerPoint presentation on the steps to inventing. We will ask Orville to make that presentation to our group when it is available. All members will submit names and numbers of interested speakers to Mike Ball.

— Marty Sovis, Secretary/Treasurer

## Shipping and Handling

By William E. Thomas, P.E., C.Mfg.E.

Shipping and Handling or S&H is the final paper work a company does with its product prior to delivery. The method of shipping used will determine the type of packing, labeling, and handling. The three main types of shipping for smaller size items are by mail, by small freight carriers like Fed Ex and UPS, or truck.

Shipping by mail requires meeting package contents and dimensions. The package can not contain any hazardous material, must have the correct label and be within optimum size and weight limits.

If the package is just an 1/8" over a size category or a 1/2 oz. over a weight category, it can end up in a higher cost bracket. It's wise to consider these parameters when designing your product and its packaging.

These requirements can be easily found on line. Some for parcel post are that the package can't have a loose paper cover and can't be tied up with string or wire. The box must be of heavy enough cardboard to meet the weight requirements and well secured with shipping tape. The labels need to be covered with clear shipping tape to prevent being smeared or destroyed.

For priority mail the post office has special envelopes, boxes and tape that they furnish. They prefer their own preprinted labels available on line. Some of their boxes don't have a weight limit so they're less costly than parcel post with quicker delivery time.

Small freight carriers will handle larger and heavier packages, pick up small quantities at your plant, and collect for your product when they deliver it (COD). They like to stay below 70 lbs. but some will deliver up to 90 lbs. with an extra charge. They'll deliver tubes or narrow boxes up to 8' long. These larger boxes have to be within a total measurement and weight limit (length + width + height = total measurement). These larger packages also cost extra.

Private carriers will pick up and deliver regular boxes or plastic wrapped products. They'll also accept stronger types of packaging material such as wooden and heavy cardboard boxes that are strapped or wire wrapped or a skid of boxes.

All limits and costs are available on line. When shipping regularly you can set up an account with the carrier that will charge the shipping to your credit card. This account will also allow you to print on-line labels just like the post office.

When the carrier collects for your product you can specify what you'll accept: A personal, business or certified check, or money order. The carrier then puts the payment in an envelope and sends it back.

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