

Newly Invented Products Play Important Part in U.S. Economy

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Few people are aware of the importance of the nation's economy of newly invented products, or of the vast number being patented and introduced on today's market.

More than one-third of the products we now use were invented since World War II. Time Magazine recently stated that "nearly 75 per cent of the U. S. growth in sales volume in the next three years will come from new products."

There has never been a period when the inventor has played so important a role in the advance of living standards, or when he was reaping greater rewards for his ingenuity. A lot of that ingenuity is being uncovered here in Jackson county by Sharon Patents company, which provides a new products development service that includes free advice to would-be inventors with ideas they think might be of value.

Career Starts

Since this writer's career with inventors began in Detroit more than 30 years ago, he feels justified in the belief that they contribute greater over-all benefits to humanity than any other single class. For in truth they accomplish what others can't, and frequently what a majority think is impossible.

The scientist and the engineer and the physician and the educator can all produce theories and probabilities, but it is the inventor who pro-

duces the ways and the means for their practical use.

In Detroit, where so many impossibilities have been overcome by inventive genius, big industrialists, when faced with an "impossibility," often still follow a pattern of accomplishment established back in 1898 by the late Alex Dow, when he was president of what was then Edison Illuminating Company (now the Detroit Edison Company) and which he served for 42 years.

His firm was one of five power companies in that locality, and its chief engineer was a young man named Henry Ford.

An engineer-inventor himself, Dow contributed a wealth of new ideas to the industrialization of the world's motor capital. He was a close friend of Thomas Edison, whose slogan was "There's a better way to do it—find it."

Dow knew that only one of the five power companies in Detroit could survive and that it would be the one that could contribute the most. The other four companies disappeared.

When he had a technical

problem he couldn't solve Dow referred it to his research department, which was staffed by more than 100 of the best engineering brains he could hire. But it was not unusual for him to present a problem that stumped them.

"Very well, gentlemen," he would say, "then I have no other recourse but to assign the job to someone who does not know it can't be done."

Edison once said, "Genius is 1 per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration."

Inventors generally are found in two classes. One creates a single new product and hangs on to it desperately demanding far more than it actually is worth. "This patent will make me a cool million," he tells himself, and no manner of argument can dislodge that belief.

There are, to be sure, inventions worth "a cool million," but they are extremely rare and are almost never bought for that amount in

cash. The inventor who expects it is generally an impractical dreamer.

In another class is the true genius-type inventor who creates useful products and, by selling or licensing their rights intelligently, receives substantial returns in royalties over long periods. He is that practical minded fellow who is endowed with a compulsive urge to continue seeking new and better ways and things.

Few inventors can know the actual commercial worth of a patent, nor can even an expert determine that worth without a lot of time-consuming research. The successful introduction and marketing of a new product is a complicated business that takes years to learn and master.

The report of one rather simple little product owned by Sharon Patents Company required several months of research before it could be finalized. The complete file of accumulated facts filled four thick files and the condensed report itself required 39 typed pages and drawings under some 40 separate headings.

Newly Invented Product

Obviously, success of a newly invented product calls for a brand of talent and experience few inventors have. And the tragic part of it is that so many of them lacking competent patent development help and advice, so often spend anywhere from \$300 up to a thousand or more for patents that turn out to be worthless.

While many patents themselves are often worthless, even an unpatented idea can be of great value if expertly processed and assigned to the right interests. Otherwise, it has no value and little legal protection, particularly if revealed to the wrong people. Many persons have lost valuable patentable ideas by offering them to firms under the mistaken belief they have cash value and their disclosure obligates the firm to pay for them.

An idea, however, may be partly protected for a limited time, if sufficiently described in writing, dated and signed and has the signatures of two or more responsible witnesses. But the document still will only prove the inventor had the idea as of the date indicated, and a lawsuit involving an alleged theft often is a waste of time, depending on a number of factors that may be brought to light.

Best Protection

The best protection, of course, is a patent grant that

has been issued on the basis of a well constructed application. Just now, it takes from two to three years to get a patent, for the Patent Office is buried under a backlog of some 200,000 new applications.

But a good patent application on file does provide the best temporary protection of an idea.

An application should be prepared by a competent attorney or patent agent who has met the qualifications required by the Patent Office for such practice. The present Patent Office directory contains the names and addresses of 24 such attorneys and agents in Oregon. All but two are located in Portland.

Assigned Number

When a patent application has been accepted by the Patent Office, it is assigned an official registration number. The inventor may then use the term "Patent Pending" in connection with the manufacture and sale of his new product. Use of the term without an official registration number is illegal.

Whether an idea is patentable depends on a number of factors. Even though it has already been patented, you may still get a patent of your own. Many patents have been granted to inventors who have simply found a better way of producing the results for which an original patent was granted. That "better way" means the discovery or development of new basic features.

And that word "basic" is mighty important to invent-

ors. It means the basic idea must be entirely new and different from the basic ideas contained in all prior patents.

Inventor Has Idea

For example, a local inventor had an idea for an improvement on a device that has been in common use for more than half a century. A search of the Patent Office records disclosed 16 patents had been issued for the device. All but the last had expired and it had another seven years to run. It was the only patent standing in the way of an application for the one the Medford inventor wanted.

A close study of that patent revealed the key to what could be done. Its coverage of the device was so complicated that the device was impractical from the standpoint of commercial value, to the inventor or anyone else.

The local inventor, by streamlining his design right down to its best elemental features, was able to present sufficient novelty for consideration by the Patent Office of a possible new "basic."

The application was accepted and officially registered. Sharon Patents company is only interested in certain types of new products, preferably the most novel and useful. Some ideas submitted would require entirely too much technical work and more market study time than they would be worth, even if a patent search revealed favorable patentable possibilities.

The point is, an idea has to

be practical, or such that by further development it can be made practical.

It is no secret that a lot of money is wasted on patents. A large number are found lacking in the basic features that are necessary to provide

full and lasting value that can be protected over a long period of time. That one defect, which can be quickly spotted by an experienced patent man, is the reason why so many patents are worthless.

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Lumber Hearing Moved To Eugene

Portland—UPI—A change in location of the Senate Commerce committee's June 4 meeting from Portland to Eugene has been requested by the Lumbermen's Economic Survival committee.

The group represents operators in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and California.

Some of the hardest hit businesses are in southwest Oregon, the committee said. It added that Portland is out of the way for this area and there is pressure from Lane, Cook and Jackson counties to have the hearings moved to Eugene.

The Senate Commerce committee recently held a similar hearing in Washington which was scheduled for Seattle and later moved to Olympia. Some 200 persons attended.

MISHAP KILLS GIRL

Wallington, N.J. — A 9-year-old girl was injured fatally Wednesday night when a pole on which she was playing snapped off and crushed her. Mary Ann Kwiecien, a fourth grader at the Sacred Heart school, had been swinging on a rope attached to the 20-foot-high pole when the accident happened, police said.

Housing Trends Is Subject of Course

Eugene — "Housing Trends in the 60's" will be explored in a short course at the University of Oregon next month.

From June 25-29, the course in home planning and construction will be held under the sponsorship of the university's schools of business administration and architecture and allied arts.

The course is designed especially to give mortgage lenders, real estate appraisers, brokers, investors, developers, building contractors, parks and recreation personnel, savings and loan associations, practicing architects, property managers and firms selling building materials a practical understanding of current developments and future trends in housing.

Conducting the program will be staff members from both schools. Stanley W. Bryan, professor of architecture, will discuss the changing trend in housing, house construction materials, the manufactured house and the conflict between good design and high profits.

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