

*"It's great to know that TechHelp is there for me and my clients when I need to test product ideas, formalize designs, create prototypes or find manufacturing resources. I see TechHelp as an extension of my company and my skill set and look forward to our continued partnership and success." Doug Gaus, Owner, Innovation in Mind*

## INVENTOR SAVES THOUSANDS ON DESIGN AND TESTING

**ABOUT.** Many people have ideas for inventions, but only a few act on them. Doug Gaus of Innovation Mind quietly produces numerous inventions from his home in Boise, Idaho, taking the steps needed to turn his ideas into marketable products. He has several licensed products, including a new hand-held cordless grinder for the kitchen, and one houseware-related item licensed to a company with close to half a billion dollars in annual revenues. His products have been sold in major retail chains, including Sharper Image, Brookstone, and Tower Records, and through major mail order catalog houses such as Damark, Home Decorators and Harriet Carter. Doug's latest projects cross over into several industries, including entertainment, automotive, and housewares. In addition, Doug works as a consultant, helping others bring products to market.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Although Doug is a successful serial inventor and entrepreneur, he sometimes needs to augment his skills and knowledge by tapping into the TechHelp team at the New Product Development Lab (NPD) at Boise State. TechHelp is a NIST MEP affiliate, and the lab is staffed by a team of mechanical engineering students, full-time mechanical engineers and an artist. The team can help any inventor turn an idea into a 3D CAD drawing, a prototype and a finished product. While Doug is perfectly capable of creating rough sketches and prototypes, he turns to TechHelp when he needs to formalize and finalize a product design or create prototypes. During the development of a salad cutter and flying nerf toy, Doug turned to TechHelp for help with product design and prototyping.

**MEP'S ROLE.** Doug worked closely with the NPD Lab to create prototypes and final drawings for the lettuce cutting machine. TechHelp assisted Doug in securing a \$5K grant from Idaho's Procurement Technical Assistance Center that he used to perfect the lettuce cutter design as well as prototypes for potential use in the U.S. military. Lifetime Brands picked up the lettuce cutter, modifying Techhelp's solidworks engineering drawings to get the look they wanted. Doug also worked with TechHelp to perfect the design of his "Poof Fling Flyer," a flying nerf toy. They tested prototypes of the Fling Flyer in Boise stores, and Doug saved thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours using the product design skills and tools of the TechHelp NPD Lab. He became a member of Idaho's inventor network and won licensing deals from Alex Brands and Lifetime Brands worth thousands of dollars.



## RESULTS



Developed **2** new products



Saved over **\$1,000** on design and testing



Saved over **100** hours using the TechHelp NPD Lab



Won licensing deals worth over **\$1000**



Became a member of Idaho's inventor network

## NEXT STEPS



Boise State University  
1910 University Drive  
Boise, ID 83725-1656



(208)426-3767



shatten@boisestate.edu



www.techhelp.org

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Idaho Manufacturing Specialists