

Idea Evaluation Checklist

By John S. Jacob

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Got a great idea? Wondering if it's any good? Follow these steps to find out. DO NOT spend any money on patents or prototypes before you do this! Evaluating the idea is absolutely the first thing the inventor must do before anything else. In other words, this is the place to start.

Step 1. Search the internet for your idea. Most inventors fear above all else to take this step, for what they might find. You should not fear to do this, because nobody ever has just one good idea. However, many people only ever have one good idea *at a time*. So the sooner you either develop or move on from this idea, the sooner your next one will come. If you find that your idea is *not* currently available right now to buy somewhere, go on to Step 2.

Step 2. My Idea Has Already Been Thought of. Accept this as fact. It's OK! Get over it. I don't know of any big idea in history that was not thought of first by someone else or by several people at once.

Step 3. Research the following question.

Given that others have already had this exact idea, why is it not currently available on the market?

Below are seven possible answers to this question. After careful research and consultations with experts, you will find that at least one of them applies to you. They are in a specific order, so concentrate on the *first* applicable answer in this list.

Possible Answer 1: It is not available because it does not work in accordance with Natural Laws as presently understood. The Natural Laws affecting anything that can be manufactured on this planet are now totally, perfectly understood, if not by you, then by lots of other dedicated, hard-working, intelligent and *extremely competitive* people who are all trying to disprove the laws of Nature and failing miserably at it. Perpetual motion, faster-than-light travel, cars that run entirely on water and so forth have already been proven beyond every possible doubt not to work. So why waste billions of your own dollars testing the Laws of Nature when Nature is not about to change Her mind? Progress is made only by standing on the shoulders of giants (as Isaac Newton said), and NOT by ignoring their discoveries and thinking yourself more clever than they.

Possible Answer 2: It is not available because the technology required to make it does not yet exist. If this is so, then your job is to advance technology to the point where your idea is finally possible. Or, modify your idea to use existing technology. If this is the *only* reason your idea isn't already available, then you've got work to do!

Possible Answer 3: It doesn't solve an actual problem. This doesn't mean your invention won't be a success. Think of all the fads and gimmicks out there that have made a lot of money. Toys and trendy fashion items for example don't solve a practical problem, but fulfil a person's need to feel special by discovering and

purchasing a novelty. But if your invention is, say, a new kitchen gadget that solves a problem that doesn't exist in any real kitchen, then forget it. You might choose to go in search of a problem to which your idea is the solution, but there is a high risk that this strategy will never pay off. Inventors are well advised to start with what people need, and not with what the inventor can do.

Possible Answer 4: The idea solves a problem, but the solution is too expensive. It is frequently the case that the solution costs more than people feel the problem is costing them. Get back to inventing! Simplify the core essence of the solution, find ways to make it cheaper, or expand its capabilities to solving more problems than just one. Note however that these must be problems that the same person experiences almost simultaneously.

Possible Answer 5: Nobody wants it. Human beings are funny, and sometimes they actually *want* the problem (as you see it) more than they want the solution (as they see it). Best to discover this now than AFTER a million dollars has been invested in development and marketing. A little market research in the beginning goes a very long way.

Possible Answer 6: The technology needed to implement this idea was not previously available. Old problem, new tools. Cool! This is one of the two “good” answers to get. But be assured that others are thinking the same thing you are. You will need to be both the fastest to market and the best. Be quick! And get some specialized R&D assistance, because you do NOT have time and money enough to learn it yourself the hard way. One tip: be wary of technology that is not fully mature, that promises more than it can deliver, or that turns out to be a short-lived fad.

Possible Answer 7: The problem this idea solves didn't previously exist until now. And YOU have the solution! Cool! Again, one of the two “good” answers. Others are aware of the same problem, however. Your solution just might be the creative one that is the lowest cost and most acceptable solution. Good luck!

Step 4. Now that you know WHY your idea isn't already a product on the market, it is up to you to decide if it is worth a further investment of your time and money. Would you allow a family member or friend to invest in an idea like this one?

Step 5. Before committing a large amount of money, it's not a bad idea to get a second or third opinion on it. A safe and easy way to do this is through www.GradyMyIdea.com. The report you receive has the added advantage of helping to establish a priority date for your idea, increasing the chance that nobody besides you will be able to patent the idea. Other ways to get a second opinion include attending inventors' associations meetings and online forums such as www.international-inventors.com.