

Ideas2Market Helps Commercialise Townsville's Number 1 Invention

The Idea

Ken Anderson, inventor of the No1. Aussie Hangout, came up with the idea when he was setting up for a party at his house. Ken wanted a fuss-free urinal trough for the males coming to the party and after exhausting the names of hire businesses in his local phonebook and getting responses such as "there's nothing like that, anywhere" and "you'd be better off making your own," he decided to do just that.

Traditional port-a-loos were often costly and difficult to keep clean and smell-free. Besides being useful for household parties, Ken also knew that his idea had multiple real world applications, not only for hire purposes but also for the military, major events, festivals and the mining industry. In the near future, mining laws will be tightened to ensure all mining sites have a regulated washroom facility, a role that Ken's product can fulfill.

The Opportunity

When market research showed there was nothing in the marketplace like his idea, Ken decided to make his own portable urinal. The idea was simple; however creating the design was significantly harder. In order to protect his intellectual property, he chose to keep his idea a secret, which made creating a design a lot harder. After more than 12 months of work Ken took his design to a rotational moulder, where he was told the design was way off where it needed to be. So, taking their comments on board Ken returned four hours later with a new concept; it was workable.

A prototype was made and just when Ken thought the hard work was over, he was wrong. After making the initial mould, the moulders pulled out of the project to focus on making water tanks, which left Ken with a prototype and no mould. For the next 12 months Ken and his team searched around Australia for a new moulder to make his product. The first finalised product was made in Sydney, which was very expensive and time consuming but ultimately worth it. His products are now made locally from the mould attained from the Sydney factory.

The Outcome

After nearly two years of progressing with his idea Ken attended a local Ideas2Market workshop, where he learned a number of valuable lessons and met a range of industry contacts including Mentoring for Growth, who offered further advice. Ken said his only regret was not having attended the workshop 12 months earlier.

"Ideas2Market was just what I needed; if I'd attended sooner it really would have saved me a lot of time and money. It did give me a clearer direction for where I had to go in the future," Ken said.

"I had already progressed down the path and made some simple mistakes that were expensive to correct."

Over the past 12 months Ken has put those lessons to work and has been utilising the networks he established from his 20 years' of experience within the mining industry. He has developed working business relationships with several high profile mining companies including Rio Tinto, BHP and Xstrata.

While building these relationship Ken was also busy promoting his product at mining expos and at the Xstrata Mount Isa Mining Expo 2007, the No1. Aussie Hangout won an award for the "Most Innovative Design".

The design is truly innovative as the No1. Aussie Hangout is now a waterless, portable urinal requiring no plumbing or mounting and with a 220 litre holding capacity, it capably holds more than 400 uses. It doesn't produce bad odours because the waterless seal cartridge contains a sealant gel, which allows fluids to pass through and prevents the return of odours from the waste holding tank. This environmentally friendly unit comes fitted with hand wash, soap and paper towel dispensers, a rubbish compartment and foot pump servicing hand wash, thus making the No.1 Aussie Hangout a hygienic washroom unit.

The award gave Ken the backing he needed and truly helped him further his working relationships – he has since sold his product to Rio Tinto and Xstrata and is leasing it to BHP. BHP is in the process of putting the No1. Aussie Hangout on its vendor list, which will lead to it being listed on the best work practice website so that then the product can be exported globally.

For further information visit www.no1aussiehangout.com/