

[INVENTIONS AND IDEAS]

THIS MAKES SCENTS

Imagine being able to smell everything from fresh flowers to steaming baked bread right from your computer

As soon as the holiday shopping season begins, so does the ritual of buying gifts for loved ones. Popular items such as scented candles and perfume will certainly be added to many online shopping lists. Wouldn't it be great if buyers could sample these gifts by smelling the fragrances right from their desktops? That scenario is not as far-fetched as you might imagine, thanks to the Scent Dome, an invention by Ellwood G. Ivey Jr.

The Scent Dome is a machine that reproduces smells using a cylinder that houses fragrance oils in several cartridges. Diffusers vaporize the requested scent from the fragrance oils. The process creates any aroma you can imagine—a new brand of perfume, steaming baked bread, or freshly brewed coffee.

Ivey launched his flagship product, the Scent Dome, in April 2006 after five years of development at his Savannah, Georgia-based technology company, TriSenx (www.trisenx.com; 888-834-7369). The invention promises to fill an interesting void. Ivey says practical applications are being created for multiple uses. For example, you can use the Scent Dome to have an aromatherapy session or enhance a sales or marketing presentation.



"Sensory technology will be somewhat ubiquitous in the next three years because the whole world is wired," says Ivey, a 45-year-old Georgia native. "I was in the creative mindset when I came up with the idea for scent technology. We're rounding out the digital world." The Scent Dome, which plugs into a USB or serial port, sells for \$369 and comes with a free cartridge that contains 20 base scents from the company's library of 2,000 scents.

IVEY'S
PRODUCT
ADDS A
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Do you have an invention that you want to bring to the consumer market? Inventors Raquel P. Lett-Anderson and Antonio Anderson, authors of *Take It to the Market! The Invention Process Made Easy* (www.takeittothemarket.com), offer this six-step guide to move you toward completing the invention process:

- **Develop your idea into a product.** First, turn this innovative idea into a prototype. Once an idea is conceived, it is important that all the features and benefits are documented in a journal.
- **Define a target market.** A target market is a segmented group that will purchase a new product designed to satisfy a need and/or fulfill a desire. Your target market can be constructed through a marketing research firm, focus groups, surveys, or trade shows.
- **Sell your product.** Visit a number of stores in order to determine the price points and category in which your product will be sold. Next, get a copy of state guidelines. Finally, examine the department categories and pitch your product to the owner by describing the benefits.
- **Begin the patent process.** A patent gives an inventor the exclusive right to make, use, or sell his invention (for a limited number of years). Contact a patent attorney to help you conduct a patent search and file an application. For more information, visit the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office at www.uspto.gov.
- **Get funding.** Funding can be acquired from a bank loan, business line of credit, venture capital, angel investors, and/or family and friends. This is a long process that requires knowledge and perseverance.
- **Choose a manufacturer and a distributor.** Know the industry standards for manufacturing and distributing the product that you have developed. Access an assortment of current manufacturers and distributors from online databases such as www.thomasnet.com.

—Anthony Calypso