

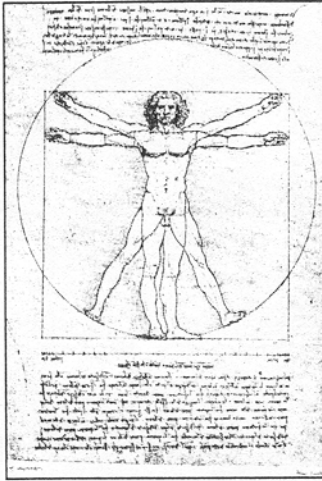
# Poltorak's Business Incubator

Even as the computer industry matures, the image of the lone inventor working in a garage remains one of its icons. But despite the almost religious status afforded the maverick geniuses, many lack the funding and support to get their inventions to market.

Alexander Poltorak hopes his company, General Patent Corp., can remedy that problem. The Monsey, N.Y.-based firm, which Poltorak describes as a "business incubator," acquires proprietary technologies and patented products, forms companies around them, raises venture capital to support the companies and hires experienced managers to run them. Once products are successfully launched, the inventors receive royalties from sales.

Right now, Poltorak holds the patents to five products. One of them, the Acticon Connector, could become a new standard in electronics, he says. This serial connector contains, within its housing, all of the serial interface circuitry that a computer needs to communicate with peripheral devices, eliminating the need for a separate serial interface card. As a result, it frees up both an expansion slot and precious space inside the computer. The connector doesn't use entire chips; only the dies, or brains of the chip, are mounted inside.

Other technologies that General Patent Corp. plans to market include a telephone network coupler that uses a light-emitting diode to isolate the circuitries of telephone equipment and related devices. The diodes, which are tiny black chips, eliminate the bulky transformers now being used and reduce the size and weight of modems, faxes, PBXs and cordless phones. The company also hopes to offer a multiple connector interface, an integrated connector and modem, and Bite by Byte, a software program that acts as a diet aid and nutrition consultant.



Poltorak, who holds a Ph.D. in theoretical physics, understands the tribulations of starting a company. He founded his own company, Rapitech Systems, around a conversionware program, which converts software from one computer language to another. Poltorak took the company public in 1986 and left the following year. Rapitech still sells the program, called Fortrix, for mainframes, minis and workstations.

"There are so many inventive minds out there," Poltorak says. "And there are so many products that never go anywhere. It's a pity."

But if Poltorak has concocted a formula for success in the '90s, we may not have to feel sorry for those unheralded inventors anymore.—By Donna Tapellini