



King City, Ontario, Canada

JULY 2013



Spark Innovations, King City



Spark Innovations Inc. operates in an unassuming commercial building set on a beautifully treed lot on King Road in the business core of King City. The company was founded by Bob Dickie in 1988. His goal... to create innovative product designs with strong intellectual property.

The People

Robert Dickie was born and raised in Montreal, receiving his training in electronics through the Motorola Institute of Technology. His working career began with General Electric, where he became the youngest regional manager in the company's history, managing Communications in Eastern Canada. Following a change in the political scene in 1976, GE moved its Head Office to Toronto. With the move, Bob was one step closer to the creation of Spark. A number of years later, having accepted the position of V.P. with Layola, a \$35M computer company, Bob had the opportunity to build on skills of upper management. After careful consideration, he decided that the corporate world was not the fit he wanted; and his entrepreneurial Spark began to flare.

Spark began in 1988 as a home-based business in Newmarket, but outgrew its location. Bob, while on a motorcycle ride through King City along Keele Street, found rental space available in the outbuilding of Crawford Wells.

The current site of 2189 King Road in King City was purchased in 1991, both as a good business decision and to accommodate growth.



"We're asked to do things that have never been done". (Bob Dickie)

The Spark Innovations team is an experienced group of talented players, who also work independently. Included in the team are three mechanical engineers, three industrial designers, an office manager, two clerks, a Chief Financial Officer, a co-op student, and the General Manager for the toothbrush company in which Spark is a partner.

“Spark focuses on the pursuit of opportunities in little high volume things where we can innovate and patent.”

Bob Dickie

The Product

Spark Innovations Inc. was lauded as **Canada’s Most Prolific Inventors** in the *Report on Business 2010*. Although the company tackles a wide variety of projects, including the unique design of an aesthetically pleasing 48’ yacht, Spark focusses on the pursuit of opportunities “in little, high-volume things, where we can innovate and patent”. (Bob Dickie)



... from product design to consumer.

Spark offers one-stop shopping for the inventor/innovator. Solutions are tailored to the client, whether that client requires only help with product design, or assistance through the entire process from product design to consumer. The client comes first, and a strong working relationship is built to help that client take a creative idea and successfully turn it into a quality product for the consumer.

Products and services, tailored to the client’s individual needs, include:

- Research, with information gathered through brainstorming, focus groups, market research, evaluation, creative concepts and experimentation
- Concept Development, ensuring that all concepts and designs can be translated into viable solutions
- Design and Engineering, ensuring plausibility in both function and manufacture through the use of the most up-to-date technological tools available (for example, Catia V5 and Solid Works software)
- Prototyping and Manufacturing, using the Object 30 Poly Jet printer and/or the Dimension FDM printer, to provide clients

and consumers the opportunity to touch and interact with a concept design

- Creation of an ‘incubator environment’ for starting new companies that own and market new creations
- Establishment of working relationships with existing successful corporations
- Guidance through the patenting process, providing the innovator with protection for the intellectual property of the design and licence of the created product (Spark has filed over 200 issued patents during its 25 years of operation.)

Spark also offers assistance with packaging, marketing, and sales.

Spark not only helps clients who innovate and invent, but the company does its own innovating. In the creation of something, an idea can be recycled for the innovation of something else. The company has created innovative tools for the medical and dental sectors. The manufacture of these products can be a challenge, as not many companies have the capability to manufacture such small items. One such product was a small wrench with three different features, and was created for dentists to use for implants.

The Omni Matrix has been developed in conjunction with dentists. The articulating head swivels easily in a single movement resulting in a faster and easier cleaning.



The Performance

The size of projects is kept to a manageable size, in order to maintain a high standard of quality and integrity.

Spark starts up companies to take on the manufacture and distribution of a product. **Flat Plug** realized a profit for its investors within 18 months, and continued to operate successfully for 15 years. Elumina Lighting Technologies Inc. was created in 2001, with investors, to manufacture and market the first electro-luminescent safety nightlight;

and it continues to operate successfully in the industry. **Kitchen Innovations Incorporated**, a partnership manufacturing and marketing the patented Pastry Pro and Gourmet Blender, sells to specialty retailers around the world. **Brushpoint Innovations**, the fourth largest power toothbrush company in North America, is managed from the Spark Innovations building in King City. The company manufactures and markets the patented electric toothbrush technology, and oral care products developed in partnership with Spark. The products are sold to major retailers for private label sales.



The electric toothbrush, patented by Spark Innovations and manufactured by Brushpoint

Technology has greatly facilitated communication and research capabilities, allowing for expansion into markets like the United States. Sales of products outside Canada are done through sales representatives, while the Canadian market is served in-house.

Spark Innovations demonstrates that it is interested in the entire business cycle. Looking ahead, “we are just going to keep doing what we do”. (Bob Dickie)

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