

[Print Page](#)

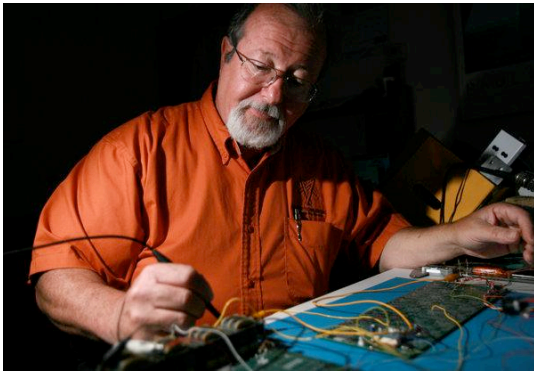
Real News • Really Local

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Real News • Really Local

THE CALIFORNIAN

Last modified Monday, May 18, 2009 10:36 AM PDT



Inventor and businessman Adrian Pelkus works on a multichannel frequency generator at his office in San Marcos. (Photo by Jamie Scott Lytle - Staff photographer)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Inventors club turns ideas into jobs

By BRADLEY J. FIKES - bfikes@nctimes.com

Politicians try to stimulate the economy by throwing cash at it.

San Marcos businessman Adrian Pelkus starts stimulating at the source: the ideas of fledgling entrepreneurs.

Pelkus is president of the San Diego Inventors Forum, a group that helps people develop their ideas and get them to market. In short, the forum helps turn inventors into entrepreneurs ---- and employers.

"We motivate people by bringing in successful inventors, and we educate them by every month having another topic that's relevant to becoming an entrepreneur," Pelkus said.

San Diego County is famous for its entrepreneurial spirit. After the end of the Cold War 20 years ago, when defense spending declined, a throng of biotech and high-tech startups with names like Invitrogen, Biogen Idec and Qualcomm eventually filled the gap with new, well-paying jobs.

The forum provides an entry-level introduction to this process. By attending the monthly meetings, inventors can find professional partners and learn the business skills they may lack.

Pelkus encourages members to share their skills with each other.

"People stand up and say, I need a designer, I need a patent attorney, or I need a manufacturer," Pelkus said. "And we hook them right up in the room."

Members also get plugged into an extensive network of local organizations that help new businesses grow and get funding, such as Connect, San Diego Venture Forum and the San Diego Tech Coast Angels.

Pelkus is part of this network. He's an entrepreneur-in-residence at Connect, a nonprofit that encourages technology-based entrepreneurship.

There are about 100 entrepreneurs-in-residence at Connect, who evaluate the potential of companies and serve as mentors to their executives.

Realizing dreams

Nearly 60 people attended the monthly inventors forum meeting Thursday. One was April King, founder of Hypnoz Therapeutic Devices, a San Marcos medical device company with a product under development.

"He helps us fulfill our lifetime dreams," King said. "If you are a small entrepreneur looking to grow a business or succeed with a new invention or idea, he's the person to see."

King said she has been attending Inventors Forum meetings for about a year and a half, starting when she first met Pelkus.

Hypnoz' product, the Jaw Elevation Device, keeps the airway open when a patient is sedated and breathing might be difficult. It is on the cusp of getting approval to enter clinical trials.

"It can be used in MRI scanners, in the operating room, outpatient clinics, in ambulances," King said. "We have just completed a working model, and distributors want the device to (begin clinical) trial with MDs around the country."

Firsthand experience

Pelkus and his wife, Amy, work with inventors daily through A Squared Technologies Inc., a 24-year-old product design and development company they own.

The company has made hundreds of product prototypes, but most are no longer on the market, Pelkus said.

"Most of them didn't plan to fail, they just failed to plan," Pelkus said of the inventors.

A few years ago, Pelkus formed another company, Iyia Technologies, to commercialize his own invention, a medical device to speed healing of diabetic foot ulcers that don't respond to other treatments. Called the O2Misly Wound Treatment System, the device bathes the wound with an antimicrobial mist along with oxygen.

The company has had limited success so far; Iyia has treated a few patients with documented evidence of significant healing of intractable ulcers. But getting insurance companies to pay for

the treatment has been an obstacle.

Pelkus said the company has managed to get insurance approval for one patient, whose wound was reduced by nearly half in three months of treatment. That precedent should help Iyia get further approvals.

Contact staff writer Bradley J. Fikes at 760-739-6641.

Read his blogs at bizblogs.nctimes.com.

San Diego Inventors Forum

Meets: 7 - 8:30 p.m. the second Thursday of the month. Cost is \$5 per meeting or \$50 for a one-year membership.

Location: Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP, 12275 El Camino Real, Suite 200, San Diego, 92130

Web site: www.sdinventors.org

Contact: 760 591 9608 or asquared@cts.com