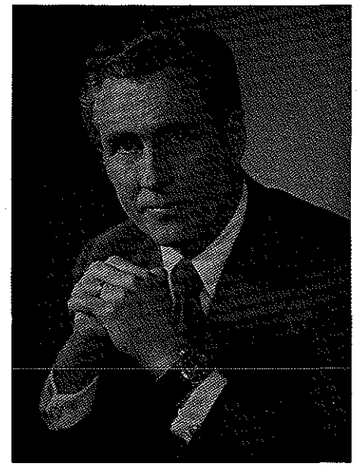
BDC DEVELOPMENT/ LICENSING ASSISTANCE



R. F. Dickerson
Vice President and
General Manager, BDC

BDC prefers to be given first opportunity to evaluate an invention. If an invention has been previously submitted to other organizations, BDC would appreciate knowing the reason for its rejection.

When an invention has favorably passed initial screening, the task of predicting the ultimate scientific and commercial success of the final product is attempted. There are three major factors that are considered in assessing the success of an idea or invention:

(1) Opportunity for the ultimate development (potential market).

(2) The degree of patent protection that can be obtained (ability to achieve and retain a strong proprietary position).

(3) Technical soundness of the concept (the potential of successful development of the invention within the scope of reasonable technical effort).

Also, the development of peripheral technology that could strongly influence, positively or negatively, the commercial success of the invention must be carefully followed.

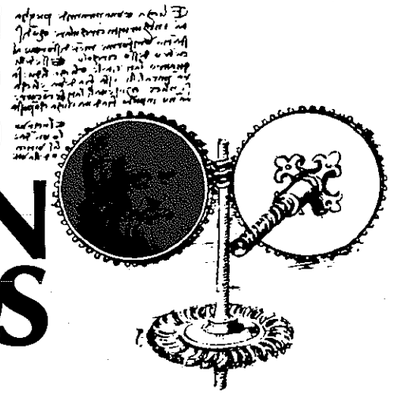
A critical consideration at this stage of the evaluation is the market potential of the product or process, and in most cases, the license planning begins before an idea is finally accepted for development.

Development programs are initiated, generally, but not necessarily, at one of the Battelle laboratories for those inventions that pass the evaluation. As the technical development proceeds, the potential market is further defined. Patent activities are maintained through the development program to assure the formation of a patent structure that will offer the greatest protection for the invention.

One of the most important steps in BDC's operation is the licensing of its inventions. All inventions being developed by BDC receive continuing marketing evaluation. The actual licensing process begins after there is sufficient research data, market information, and patent protection to convince an industrial organization that it is worthwhile to invest in the commercialization of the specific invention. Each invention is considered individually and its licensing strategy established on the basis of the particular market area and industrial organizations which would be involved. Efforts to maintain and strengthen a patent position continue after a license has been granted.

For Further Information — Inventions to be evaluated and questions about the services of BDC should be addressed to the General Manager, Battelle Development Corporation, 505 King Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

LINKING INVENTION TO HUMAN NEEDS



Battelle
Development Corporation

PUTTING INVENTIONS TO WORK

Inventions and ideas for technical and technological advances can be of great value—but only if they are put to work. An invention, to be successfully directed to human needs, must be properly evaluated, protected against premature disclosure, supported with adequate funding, patented, and competently marketed. Rarely does the inventor have the facilities or the money to move his idea to the stage where it may be marketed or licensed. Battelle Development Corporation (BDC), recognizing this opportunity for assisting inventors, provides an experienced and effective resource for developing inventions and putting them to work.

WHAT IS BDC?

BDC is a wholly owned, not-for-profit, subsidiary of Battelle Memorial Institute (Battelle). Established in 1925, Battelle has as its overall objective the advancement and utilization of science for the benefit of mankind through the processes of technological innovation and education. Since its incorporation in 1935, BDC has been performing its assigned function to fulfill this objective of Battelle. It does this through the encouragement and development of discoveries and inventions for economic utilization by existing industrial enterprises. In the process BDC expects to realize an appropriate financial return to permit continuation of the activity.

ACTIVITIES OF BDC

The identification and encouragement of sources of discoveries and inventions is a vital, and necessary, activity of BDC. Inventors are invited to submit their discoveries to BDC for evaluation. If the evaluation shows that the invention has merit, BDC may acquire an interest in the invention. When this is done, BDC funds are invested in research and development, patenting activities, market studies, and the licensing of the invention. Once licensed, continuing assistance is provided to the licensees to insure that an advantageous patent position is maintained and that the invention is brought into use for the benefit of the public. The implementation of the above BDC activities involves a number of functional operations.

SOURCES OF INVENTIONS

Various sources of inventions must be encouraged and cultivated by BDC since this function provides the foundation necessary for the fulfillment of its objectives.

Battelle Laboratories. A program of assistance is maintained at each of the laboratories of Battelle for helping staff members identify new inventions and obtain support for their development.

Independent Inventors. Individual inventors are invited and encouraged to submit their patentable ideas to BDC for evaluation. If the results of the evaluation show that an idea has potential value, BDC may wish to negotiate an agreement with the inventor. The usual agreement with individual inventors provides for sharing the income received from licensing or selling the invention with the inventor. BDC assumes responsibility for all necessary patent work; the research and development needed to bring this invention to the point of licensing or sale; and the marketing and legal effort required to consummate a suitable arrangement with industry. In return the individual inventor gives BDC title to the invention.

BDC's service to inventors can be most helpful and expeditious when the explanatory data on the idea is submitted as a complete description, together with sketches or photographs, signed by the person whose ideas are presented, and witnessed by competent persons who are familiar with the subject of the idea. In the event a patent application has already been filed, or a patent issued, a copy of the application or patent should be provided.

BDC prefers that a copy, rather than the original, of the above be submitted. This copy is retained by BDC. If the sender wishes to have the data returned, BDC will do so upon request. Forms for use in submitting inventions are available from the General Manager, Battelle Development Corporation, 505 King Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

University Program. A continuing activity is conducted to assist universities, colleges, and similar institutions with their invention handling. Through agreements and contacts with these organizations, BDC encourages the submission of ideas for evaluation.

Industry. Many corporations generate and control inventions that, for their own reasons, they do not wish to develop, or manufacture, or market. BDC is interested in evaluating these inventions and welcomes the opportunity to do so.

BDC'S EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Prior to acceptance by BDC, each invention is evaluated for technical feasibility, patentability, and marketability. The evaluation is quite rigorous and is designed to determine the state of technical development of the invention and its patent and market potential, as well as to estimate the extent of research and development work that may be required to make the invention marketable.

The following criteria are used in the screening of all ideas and inventions received by BDC. Those ideas of greatest interest to BDC provide an opportunity for a significant improvement to a device, mechanism, or process through additional research and development effort. Inventions having potential for a strong patent coverage are sought. Inventions without security classification are preferred. Ideas requiring a relatively large-scale pilot operation before licensing are least desirable for BDC participation. Finally, BDC carefully considers the nature of the ultimate market for those inventions that have been conceived and/or developed with the aid of U.S. Government funds before deciding on further evaluation or participation.