



Q&A with Jane Applegate

Inventors Digest:

What's in this third edition that was not in previous editions?

Jane Applegate: The technology section is completely new. So much has changed in the past five years. I needed to include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media platforms. Doing business 'in the cloud' is also new and important for small business owners.

By Edie Tolchin

With tips from the zany (send a pizza to potential clients) to downright ballsy (hire an ex-con), Jane Applegate's arrow hits the bull's eye with *201 Great Ideas for Your Small Business*.

The book, in its third edition, is a must for those contemplating developing new products.

Readers should pay particular attention to Chapter 4: Develop and Launch New Products and Services. This chapter contains 14 tips, including how to get started with your new invention, how to turn your hobby into a successful business, licensing readiness, working with prototypes and how Dave Kappel's Magnetic Poetry Kit sold millions.

Money Matters (Chapter 2) includes Applegate's personal experiences with launching a business, writing a book and owing huge federal taxes – with payment due within 24 hours! This anecdote is set during a Las Vegas vacation, where her two young children "were splashing in the groovy, in-room hot tub." Madness, to be sure. But it's an entertaining way to introduce 39 money-saving tips that follow.

"Leave the technology to the experts," says Applegate, a former Los Angeles Times small business columnist. "Do everything you can to position yourself as an expert in your field."

However, that's not to say you can't use technology. Your website can be a powerful advertising and retail vehicle. She also advises blogging on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Applegate leaves few stones unturned when it comes to nurturing a small business.

Her marketing tips include checking out the competition, proper product packaging and creating a cool business card. Company names, brands, logos and contact info should be placed on everything.

Strapped for cash? "Rely on temps and freelancers," she says.

Laced throughout are interviews with little-known but successful entrepreneurs ("The Telephone Doctor," Nancy Friedman), as well as household names, including magnate Mike Bloomberg.

Whether you're thinking about starting your own company or already have one up and running, *201 Great Ideas for Your Small Business* is a must read.

ID: Out of the *201 Great Ideas*, what would you say would be the #1 tip for inventors just starting out, whether it's for starting their own business, launching a new product or locating investors?

JA: Make sure there is a market for your product or service. You need to do some streetwise market research to make sure there is nothing already out there. You don't want to waste your time and money if someone else has a similar product on the market...unless yours is so much better.

You don't need to spend a lot of money on market research. Set up an information focus group at a local church or community center. Ask people you don't know to review your concept and give you honest feedback.

It's important to show potential investors a working model, if possible. Show, don't tell is the way to go.

ID: What elements in your background qualified you to write this book?



"Discovery consists of seeing what everyone has seen and thinking what no one else has thought."

- Jonathan Swift

Bemis is Actively Seeking Safety-Focused Product Ideas for the Health Care Field.

Contact us today for our Non-Disclosure Agreement and begin the evaluation process.



Direct all inquiries to Tad Hartlaub | 300 Mill Street, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085 | Tad.Hartlaub@BemisMfg.com | 920.467.5438

JA: I have been covering the small business market since 1988 and learn something new every day. Entrepreneurs are always willing to share their stories and lessons learned.

I began my career as an investigative reporter and have applied those skills to figuring out what separates super-successful business owners from those who work really hard, but never quite get it together.

I've also founded three companies, so I'm one of the few business journalists who has small business experience.

I gave my consulting practice to my partner and sold SBTV.com (Small Business TV) in 2003 to another media company. My core business, The Applegate Group Inc., has two divisions. We create custom print, video and audio content for websites devoted to serving small business owners.

I also do a limited amount of high-level consulting with corporations creating products and services for business owners. My current clients include Cox Communications, Pitney Bowes, American Express and Montecito Bank.

ID: Any parting thoughts?

JA: Do your homework and don't operate your business in a vacuum. Attend tradeshows, conferences and professional meetings. Keep your overhead low and spend money where it counts.

Visit www.theapplegategroup.com;
contact Jane at
Jane@theapplegategroup.com

WE ARE PRODUCT RENEGADES BUILDERS / DESIGNERS ICONS OF INNOVATION

We listen to you. We collaborate. We'll do whatever it takes to transform an idea into a provocative, wanted product. Working with six companies is overrated. Meet your one, true love match in innovation.

☎ 704.333.5335

✉ 520 Elliot St.
Charlotte, NC 28202

eventys.com





**MARIANNE R. TIMM-SCHREIBER
AND DANA P. JOZEFczyk**

work at Denver office of Merchant & Gould, a national intellectual property law firm. They boast expertise in the fields of medical devices, food technology, mechanical devices, biotechnology, genetics, nanotechnology, computer software and hardware and telecommunications. They offer timeless advice on how to save money and time when filing a patent application.

Visit www.merchantgould.com



EDIE TOLCHIN, aka "The Sourcing Lady," runs international trade company EGT Global Trading. She holds a U.S. Customs Broker License and is on the board of the directors of the United Inventors Association. She's also an expert in the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act's requirements for testing and product safety. In this month's issue, Edie pens a book review *201 Great Ideas for Your Small Business*.

Visit www.egtglobaltrading.com



ROBERT FINFER president & CEO of Integrity Capital Partners, is an active advisory board member and class instructor at Washington, D.C.'s Kogod School of Business where he offers advice to the next generation of our nation's entrepreneurs. In this issue, Bob tackles the top tips for young entrepreneurs. Visit www.Integrityp.com