

NASA Offers Help to Small Businesses

You may not be a rocket scientist, but if you're a small business owner you can get free engineering support from one.

The Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program (SATOP), a NASA-funded initiative, offers advice and access to space technology to help small businesses.

Since 2003, SATOP has worked on 11 projects for Hoosier small businesses. That total includes multiple projects for Brazil-based Technifab Products, says Ryan Greenough, SATOP senior program engineer.

Technifab, which designs and manufactures vacuum insulated plumbing used for cryogenic liquid transfer, is currently implementing the latest SATOP assistance. The company requested help to reduce vacuum pump time when eliminating water from the insulated pipes, says Technifab Vice President Philip Redenbarger.

"Pump time is a huge piece of cost reduction," he points out. Businesses with fewer than 500 employees that have a



technical challenge can request up to 40 hours of guidance from a scientist or engineer. The company must also have a prototype, specific drawing or a patent for the product that needs technical assistance. NASA contractors donate about 40 hours over a 90-day period to help solve the small business technical challenges.

SATOP paired Technifab with a mechanical engineer who already solved an almost identical problem for the International Space Station. The engineer provided a process used in the space station to remove water vapors from the insulated pipes.

Resources: Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program, at www.spacetechsolutions.com

Philip Redenbarger, Technifab Products, at (812) 442-0520

New Name Gives Business a Shot in the Arm

What's in a name? For Floyd County high-tech engineering business Techshot Inc., formerly Space Hardware Optimization Technology (SHOT), a new name means access to a broader customer base.

While some companies seek help from NASA, Techshot historically has offered assistance to the space program. After years of focusing on space technology (hence the former name), Techshot wants potential clients to know it also provides solutions for commercial companies.

SHOT became Techshot in July to show companies it doesn't just focus on space technologies.

"A lot of commercial companies just couldn't get past the word 'space,'" says Rich Boling, vice president of corporate advancement.

When possible clients learned the company started by working on projects for NASA, they would assume hiring Techshot would be expensive. They also incorrectly associated delayed NASA launches with the company, thinking Techshot wouldn't meet deadlines, Boling explains.

While the company spent its first 13 years exclusively developing NASA technologies, Techshot has added customers such as Procter & Gamble, the Coca-Cola Company and universities in the last six years.

Since Techshot's inception focused on contracts with NASA, the company's marketing was kept to a minimum. Now the 19-year-old business has launched an e-mail newsletter and direct mail marketing. Its first print advertisement is on the horizon.

Resource: Rich Boling, Techshot, at (812) 923-9591

State Dental Association Celebrates 150 Years

In the mid-1800s anyone could decide on a whim to become a dentist and start offering oral hygiene care.

Fortunately, the Indiana Dental Association was founded. Now celebrating 150 years, the association serves about 2,800 members, representing 83% of the state's dentists.

"It was an effort to create standards and actually make it (dentistry) a profession," association executive director Doug Bush explains of the group's beginnings.

The Indiana Dental Association was founded in 1858 – one year before its national counterpart, the American Dental Association, started.

Today the group focuses on issues such as policy review of the entire dental office team, examining trends in preventative care and offering community outreach such as its annual Give Kids a Smile program. A new initiative called Born to Smile will help educate parents of newborns on how to start dental care early on, Bush says.

Few Hoosier associations have withstood the test of time like the Indiana Dental Association. Other long-lasting groups include the American Statistical Association Central Indiana Chapter (169 years), Indianapolis Medical Society (160 years) and Indiana State Medical Association (159 years).

The Indiana Dental Association will celebrate its 150th anniversary during its annual session in April where Indiana University basketball fans will have reason to smile – former coach Bobby Knight is scheduled as the keynote speaker.

Resource: Doug Bush, Indiana Dental Association, at (317) 634-2610

Protecting Orphaned Software From Abandonment

When Indianapolis area web and software company owner Jack Wilson talks about orphaned software, he usually is greeted with quizzical looks.

Once he explains he means outdated applications that are no longer supported by the vendor or developer, most business owners can relate to the problem.

Wilson's Fishers-based company Solutions4ebiz offers resolutions for this problem that he describes as very common.

Frequently businesses have a specific program developed for them and either the person who developed it left the company or the developer has stopped offering support. "So they are stuck," Wilson explains. "They need support and they don't have it."

While Solutions4ebiz first offered solutions for orphaned software in 2000, it wasn't until more recently the company

decided to market the service after realizing it's not widely available, Wilson says.

"This little niche is something that's kind of unique," he relates. The company focuses more on web site design and development, custom software development and managed hosting services.

Services for outdated software include maintaining the application by removing errors, modifying it for online use and other options.

"(Fixing the application) can be a lot less expensive than rewriting an application," Wilson asserts.

Resource: Jack Wilson, Solutions4ebiz, at (317) 915-1625 or www.solutions4ebiz.com

Can I Get a Second Opinion?

A new health care benefit offered by a Boston company may be catching on, but a local health care consultant says it might not be necessary. Companies are signing on with Best Doctors to offer employees access to a second opinion from medical specialists.

The company says the added health benefit can lower costs by catching misdiagnoses and eliminating superfluous treatments.

Before adding a second opinion benefit to the company health plan, make sure it's not already built into the coverage. "Most health plans have a panel of specialists that can be utilized for second opinions," explains Vicki Perry, president and CEO of Indiana health plan provider ADVANTAGE Health Solutions.

And there's value in obtaining that second opinion.

"It certainly provides another medical perspective and review that can increase confidence at the patient care level," Perry asserts.

Seeking a second opinion for serious conditions and surgical procedures can avert unnecessary treatments. By getting a second opinion of a specialist's diagnosis or recommended intervention, you can potentially identify where there may be more conservative options available, she explains.

Those alternative options may be economically better or may produce better clinical outcomes. "It's not necessarily a cost savings situation," Perry says. "The ultimate consideration should be 'can we improve the clinical outcomes?'"

Resources: Vicki Perry, ADVANTAGE Health Solutions, at (317) 573-6571

Best Doctors at www.bestdoctors.com

Driving Sales — Literally

Moving advertisements such as cars semi-permanently wrapped with company slogans and products are making waves in metropolitan areas. Tens of thousands of motorists signed up to deck their car in these ads with promises of up to \$800 a month or a free car to use, according to a recent *New York Times* article.

Indiana consumers looking to make a buck don't have reason to jump in line yet, a local advertising executive says.

"The cost-value tradeoff has not really been deemed effective (in Indiana)," Young and Laramore President Tom Denari says.



Marian College (soon to be university) showcases itself on this vehicle.

In advertising, the question becomes: What is the client trying to do and are there more efficient ways to get that done? So far in Indiana, the wrapped vehicles have not become the most efficient choice. "Mobile (advertisements) just haven't (caught on) in our market," Denari states.

While some Indianapolis buses sport the wrapped advertisements, transforming every inch into a mobile billboard, wrapped cars in Indiana markets are more likely to be driven by a company employee than a paid consumer.

Resource: Tom Denari, Young and Laramore, at (317) 264-8000

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