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My Position on Invent Help, the UIA and Inventors Digest



Written by **Gene Quinn**
Patent Attorney & IPWatchdog Founder
 Editor of the **IPWatchdog.com Blog**
 Posted: October 26, 2009 @ 5:22 pm
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Just 12 days ago I publicly **resigned from the Board of Directors** of the United Inventors Association over concerns I had with respect to the UIA becoming too familiar and cozy with Invent Help. Since that time I have received many e-mails and telephone calls regarding my resignation. Some have been extremely supportive, and some have questioned my decision saying that I should not have run out on the UIA and I should have stood and fought to prevent the UIA from making a huge mistake. I appreciate all the support I have received, and I truly do understand the contrary view and criticisms. I am not writing this article for the purpose of beating up on Invent Help again, although I suppose that is inevitable to some extent as I continue to clarify my position. However, I am writing this article because over the last 12 days it seems that many in the inventor community have been talking about my decision and then using my public resignation as an a way to bolster their own positions. I have no problem with that for the most part, but in relation to my resignation I am repeatedly hearing very negative things relating to **Inventors Digest**, which I think are unfair and inaccurate, so I would like to set the record straight with respect to what I believe.

Among other things, I believe:

1. The mission of the United Inventors Association, which is to dedicate itself to inventor education and support, is extremely laudable.
2. A strong national organization that can support and enhance the mission of the many local inventors groups is necessary.
3. Invention submission companies have a long and checkered history when dealing with independent inventors, and at many times have crossed ethical lines and engaged in fraudulent activities to the detriment of independent inventors.
4. Despite periodic enforcement activities and occasional legislation, the United States government does not do enough to protect independent inventors from invention submission fraud, misrepresentation and being misleading.
5. The United Inventors Association was formed in large part to look out for independent inventors and to attempt to insulate independent inventors from the many fraudulent operators in the invention community.
6. The main purpose of the United Inventors Association is as stated on the [UIA History](#) page; namely to refer independent inventors to local inventor groups and reputable service providers, which provides the greatest defense against fraud.
7. Inventors Digest is an excellent publication, with excellent writing, great reporting and they are NOT a part of the problem or in bed with invention submission companies.

The first six statements likely catch no one by surprise, but as strange as it may seem to some, the last statement will catch some in the inventor community by surprise. It may even lead some to say that I myself am part of the problem and I am a sell out. Obviously, that is not true and anyone who knows me knows that I speak my mind, tell it like it is based on the facts as I see them and no one tells me what to think or believe. Many who know me would describe me as stubborn, although I prefer to believe it is more about having a strong set of beliefs, an ethical compass and an unwavering set of guiding principles. Like many, I am willing to be persuaded and factor into my beliefs and decision-making things that make sense, but I stand up for what I believe is right, and I am here to state loud and clear that it is my opinion, based on all of the facts I know, that those who criticize Inventors Digest as being part of the problem because they accept certain advertising are either ignoring the facts, not privy to all of the facts, are overly emotional or simply have their own agenda.

First, allow me to recognize that the topic of invention submission companies is certainly one charged with emotion. There are many people who have lost their life savings pursuing a dream, the American dream of prosperity built upon ones hard work and ingenuity. Many of those people who fall into this category have also, unfortunately, been victims of one of the many invention scams that operate in the open. So it is understandable for these individuals and those who seek only to help them to come to the table with a certain set of beliefs and even prejudices. I understand that, and I certainly respect those people, who are obviously entitled to their own opinions, even if I disagree with them on somethings.

Second, the criticism I am increasingly hearing relating to Inventors Digest relates to the fact that Inventors Digest accepted advertising for [INPEX](#), which is a trade show that showcases numerous inventions, new products and innovations that are available to license, market or manufacture. To the extent there is justifiable concern relating to INPEX, it is because the show is sponsored by Invent Help. My position on Invent Help has been and remains clear and unwavering.

Based on the facts that I know I believe that Invent Help is a scam, period. Notwithstanding, based on the facts, I believe INPEX is a worthwhile trade show. In fact, I have been told by numerous people who I believe and respect that more inventors get licensing deals as a result of INPEX than they do from any other trade show. On top of that, the INPEX show targets sophisticated inventors who are well down the path toward commercialization of their invention. These inventors are not those who have "an idea" and want to get a patent. The inventors who go to INPEX are those with real inventions that have matured into real products. They have something to exhibit, and that separates them from the independent inventors that Invent Help preys upon.

Inventors who go to INPEX to display their inventions are not the type of folks who are going to fall prey to Invent Help. They are so far down the invention to commercialization path that Invent Help has nothing to offer them. So why should they or anyone else not attend INPEX? Yes, doing a deal with Invent Help is akin to making a deal with the devil, but for those who have their eyes wide open why would anyone begrudge a sophisticated inventor from using INPEX to their advantage? INPEX is not a path to direct the unsuspecting to the door of Invent Help, and I really couldn't care less why Invent Help sponsors INPEX. If they offer a platform for inventors that allows for success then inventors should not shy away out of unreasonable fear.

As far as I know Inventors Digest has never accepted advertising from an invention submission company or scam, and they thought long and hard about accepting advertising from INPEX. As I understand it, the editor of Inventors Digest, Mike Drummond, attended INPEX and did a thorough review and investigative story. There was no hiding anything, Inventors Digest was open and honest about where they were coming from, and Mike Drummond is a real reported and decorated journalist. For those who are unfamiliar with Drummond, he has been a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a war correspondent in Iraq and is the acclaimed author of a book profiling some of the larger than life personalities inside Microsoft. Criticizing Drummond for attending INPEX is like criticizing Woodward and Bernstein for associating with unscrupulous individuals in the Nixon Administration. Reporters are a vital part of what makes the United States great, and criticizing a reporter for engaging in investigative journalism is simply unfair and not something I wish to be a part of.

I am also intrigued by those who think Inventors Digest should not have accepted advertising for INPEX. First, as already stated a lot of inventors are able to obtain deals through INPEX, so who exactly gets hurt for not attending INPEX? Inventors who otherwise might get a deal. Second, do those who chastise Inventors Digest watch ESPN or CNN? Do they listen to Sirius XM radio? If you are going to come out against Inventors Digest for taking INPEX ads while refusing Invent Help and other invention submission ads then you absolutely have to refuse to watch **ESPN**, **CNN** and listen to **Sirius XM radio** because Invent Help advertises all over those media outlets, as well as numerous other Cable TV channels, local TV channels and radio stations. So where is the criticism of those media outlets?

I personally believe it is silly to criticize media outlets for the advertising they allow. I applaud those who have ethical standards, like Inventors Digest, and draw the line and do not deviate even when it costs them money by sticking to their ethical standards. However, without advertising revenue media outlets don't exist. If **FOX News** is willing to accept political ads of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, and **NBC** and **MSNBC** are willing to accept political ads of John McCain, why not just recognize the obvious; namely that advertising revenues are the life blood of media outlets and without advertising revenues the media outlet ceases to exist.

How does it help anyone for Inventors Digest to cease to exist? It doesn't, and in fact if that would happen the inventor community would be losing out in a big way. Inventors Digest is an excellent magazine. It is well written, very informative and should be applauded for bringing high quality information and writing to the invention community.

By way of full disclosure, Inventors Digest is not an advertiser on IPWatchdog.com. You see banner ads for their magazine throughout because I am a fan, I think they have a quality magazine and because we have similar focuses we collaborate from time to time on projects. I have not been asked to write this article, and everything expressed above are my feelings alone. I do not intend to speak on behalf of Inventors Digest, only myself.

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1. [IPWatchdog takes a bite at our critics | Inventors Digest October 27th, 2009 1:13 pm](#) [edit](#)

[...] said, I was elated today when I read Gene Quinn's recent post. I never asked him to defend me or the magazine, nor do I need his able defense. However, I want to [...]

2. [Stephen Key October 28th, 2009 6:42 pm](#) [edit](#)

Unbelievable. Gene, you have to be kidding me. Birds of a feather flock together. You don't see the USPTO having a booth at IMPEX do you? When you run these companies ads it's sending a signal of implied endorsement. Just like your ads with Lambert & Lambert or Inventors Digest. Would you run an IMPEX ad on your site? Or Absolutely New? Or Invention Home? Maybe that's why you left UIA. My question is, what took you so long? Hope to see you at the USPTO Inventors Conference so we can discuss further along with Mike Drummond and Louis Foreman.
Stephen Key, InventRight

3. [Gene Quinn October 28th, 2009 7:40 pm](#) [edit](#)

Stephen-

I do endorse Inventors Digest, and I do endorse Lambert & Lambert. I would not accept an ad from Absolutely New or Invention Home, and would never get to the point where I consider whether I endorse them because Lambert & Lambert is an advertiser and they are too close. Lambert & Lambert are the good guys, and I am sure you know that.

In terms of Absolutely New, I believe in the tried and true American way, which is everyone deserves a second chance if they admit wrong-doing and change. It is my understanding that Absolutely New has done exactly that. It is my understanding that they fired all those who were involved with previous scams and have a new business model. I don't know anything more about the company, and I recommend folks go to Lambert & Lambert instead because I know them to be ethical.

In terms of INPEX, I don't know whether I would run an ad for them or not, but given the Invent Help hatred of me I doubt they would ever inquire. I think what Inventors Digest did was appropriate, although it would appear as if you do not. Why would you begrudge inventors going to INPEX and getting a licensing deal? You do realize that those inventors savvy enough to have a product worth demonstrating at a trade show are not going to fall victim to Invent Help scams, right?

No need to wonder why I left the UIA, I have set forth my reasons. In terms of it taking so long, that is one way to look at what happened, although I certainly don't think it is the right way to view things.

I do indeed plan on being at the USPTO Inventors Conference, for at least some it. Perhaps I will see you there.

-Gene

4. [Stephen Key October 29th, 2009 12:06 pm](#) [edit](#)

Gene, let me see if I completely understand this. There is a point of difference between Absolutely New and Lambert & Lambert. Lambert & Lambert take on inventors as clients without an upfront investment and only take 35%+ if they license a deal. Sounds very ethical to me. They have a good track record and you can't find bad comments about them on the internet. Absolutely New bought IP&R which has a long history of having troubles in the industry, which is well documented. Absolutely New is providing the same services as IP&R, charging 10's of thousands of dollars to help license a product. Yes, since they are Absolutely New they have a limited track record. I wish them all the luck in the world. So you, as an attorney, would not accept Absolutely New as an advertiser on your site? But, you were on the board of UIA when you certified them a year ago. So you implied an endorsement of Absolutely New by their certification, as well as Invention Home.

IMPEX is very interesting. I always try to follow the USPTO's lead. Since they have never been to one of these events and given that IMPEX is part of InventHelp, I think that tells the story. So, if I completely understand what you just said you endorse IMPEX.

Given that I have been in the inventing community a few years and have worked with many attorney's and patent firms, large and small you are the first one I have noticed that recommends service providers. Along with taking ad money. I would like to discuss this further with you and everyone else at the USPTO about what is appropriate. This way I have my facts straight and not making any assumptions. I am sure you would agree that what has happened in our community is something that needs to be discussed. If there are any problems they need to be addressed.

Look forward to your response.
Stephen

5. [Gene Quinn October 29th, 2009 2:57 pm](#) [edit](#)

Stephen-

Allow me to be 100% clear and direct. I do not like your tone, and I find your insinuations insulting. You are really not one to talk about ethics given your misleading advertising and perpetuating the myth that ideas are valuable.

You advertise your "free" seminars by saying:

"Learn the secret techniques Stephen teaches his students to make millions from their ideas!"

The secret to be told is that there are NO secrets. Hard work, dedication, a good team, listening to advice and finding a market need are all it takes! No secret, just dedication and an INVENTION, not an idea are necessary.

You say on your website:

"A Simple Idea Can Be Worth Millions!"

Your website goes on to say that the products you have licensed make millions, but your advertising suggests that your clients make millions. I also find it ironic that someone who seems to be so holy finds it appropriate to perpetuate the myth that ideas are worth millions.

If you want to make this a fight, then be my guest, but you better be ready because I am not going to roll over like many others who allow you to bully them. If you want to question my ethics, be my guest. You should also be prepared for a

lawsuit if you step across the line. I will not allow my reputation to be questioned or tarnished by a pretender like you.

As far as recommend service providers, obviously you are not such an important big shot or at all familiar with the invention industry if you think I am the first attorney who has recommended a service provider. Attorneys recommend that their clients work with other reputable professionals all the time. I believe Lambert & Lambert to be ethical and offer high quality services. If you have not noticed, in addition to being a patent attorney I also own and run one of the most popular intellectual property websites on the Internet, and like any other media outlet or magazine I am allowed by law to sell advertising. I take no referral fees, which would be unethical.

You have made a career demonizing and acting like you are the only legitimate source for information. Newsflash... you are NOT. And you are one of the folks that I was worried was misusing my resignation from the UIA. My resignation was for the stated purposes. The fact that you do not care enough about the inventor community to step up and be involved and try and make a difference is your problem, not mine. Nevertheless, I will not sit back and allow you to play games or use me, my reputation or my resignation to promote your own agenda.

I personally find it offensive and unethical for anyone to market themselves in a way that suggest money can be made from ideas. If you really think that then you are a big part of the problem, and hardly someone that serious inventors should work with or take seriously.

-Gene

6. **Stephen Key October 29th, 2009 4:35 pm** [edit](#)

Gene,

First of all I must apologize. You know emails and posts can be misconstrued and are hard to set the correct tone. I called your office twice but could not get through to you. Even my partner Andrew Krauss has tried but has been unable to speak with anyone at your office. To tell you the truth Gene I was not aware of your site until recently. It does appear that you have some very good content though.

My goal for the last 10 years of helping inventors along with Andrew Krauss, has been to educate them on the ways to bring their ideas to market. You see for the last 30 years I have brought over 20 ideas to market and yes they were ideas. Most had no protection at all. No patents, copyrights or trademarks. Such as the Michael Jordan Wall Ball that sold for over 10 years in Wal-Mart, KMart and many others. It never had any protection what so ever.

The first thing an inventor does, because of fear, is to build a prototype and spend thousands of dollars or calls a patent attorney and files a very expensive patent without doing any market research first. It does take hard work. It takes really good information and relying on others to bring your idea to market I have found does not work. This is why we educate and do not provide services. I know we all wish there was an easy way to do this but there isn't. Clearly filing patents is not the answer because the majority of patents never make the money back that was used to pay for them. What I have found is that most people supplying services or advice really don't have first hand knowledge about how the process really works. Like yourself, you understand legally how to protect an idea but I am not aware that you have ever personally brought a product to market. Correct me if I am wrong.

You are right, there are not secrets when it comes to bringing a product to market. What I have found over the last 10 years of helping inventors is that they have no clue where to start and what to do. I have developed steps, secrets if you want, that takes someone step-by-step through the process. Showing them the correct order of steps to bring an idea to market. You can see that of course on my website and through my testimonials. We are very proud of it. We also provide one year of support with online training and phone support. Also, we have a 30 day money back guarantee. So, I do understand this process very well and feel fortunate that I can educate inventors and entrepreneurs not only in the US but around the world.

As I mentioned earlier I have licensed many products with no protection at all. Yes, there were just ideas. I know this does not sit particularly well with attorneys such as yourself. You are in the market of selling services such as patents, copyrights, trademarks and more. I completely understand. Don't get me wrong, there is a place for patent attorneys and good legal advice in my system just not right at the beginning. I have been in federal court suing one of the largest toy companies in the world, Legos. My topic at the USPTO conference next week will be the power of patents and how my patents helped me with my case.

I must have really hit a nerve with you given the tone of your email and threat of a future lawsuit. Also, being called a pretender and someone that inventors should not take seriously does seem like you are tarnishing my reputation.

As you know I am the keynote speaker at the USPTO independent inventor conference on Friday this year. I look forward to sharing my information and my story with everyone attending. I believe the old method of filing patents and building prototypes is not what works in the real world. Or for that matter contests.

I think there has been a problem with UIA. They had asked me to participate and I gladly accepted but I could not get

behind an organization with a certification program that has turned out to cause so much trouble.

I am sincerely sorry that we have gotten off on the wrong foot. That was not my intention but I am sure once we meet and get to know each other that you will realize that we are both on the same side of the fence.

Sincerely,
Stephen Key
InventRight

7. [No Holds Barred: IPWatchdog Addresses Ethical Charges | IPWatchdog.com | Patents & Patent Law October 29th, 2009 4:51 pm](#) [edit](#)

[...] with Invent Help, one of the most notorious of all invention scams. I found it necessary to write a follow-up article stating my position and disagreeing with how some in the invention community were using my [...]

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