

Canadian Patents Database—The Starflyer

Patent Summary

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A flying-saucer (flying disc) amusement device which is thrown by hand having greater stability and range than prior known devices. The device achieves superior performance by the addition of "pimple" shaped or other shaped discrete spoilers on the upper surface of the flying saucer which creates a thin layer of turbulent air over the entire upper surface of the flying disc reducing aerodynamic drag. The raised spoilers are arranged in annular rings which may cover part or all of the upper surface of the flying saucer. The annular rings can be placed at varying intervals. Each interval defines an "equator" which provides additional flight stability, helps to prevent "slicing" of the throw and also improves the range of the device. When one or more annular rings of discrete, raised spoilers are placed at or near the periphery of the device (but not at or near the centre of the device), the discrete, raised spoilers add a small additional weight to the device which serves to disproportionately increase its angular momentum and, hence, its range.



[This was a 'great' product introduced in 1983 to the marketplace. It had everything going for it:

1. The endorsement of the greatest hockey player ever (at least in my view)-- Wayne Gretzky.
2. A good design-- it had a patented aerodynamic shape (it used a dimpled surface on the flying disc which, much like a golf ball, produced a superior performance).
3. It used persistence of vision to create a halo effect so that the flying disc could be thrown and caught at night.
4. The small camera sized batteries were neatly tucked away and lasted a long time.
5. Throwing 'Frisbees' was 'catching' on in a big way.
6. The backers felt it could be the next hula hoop.

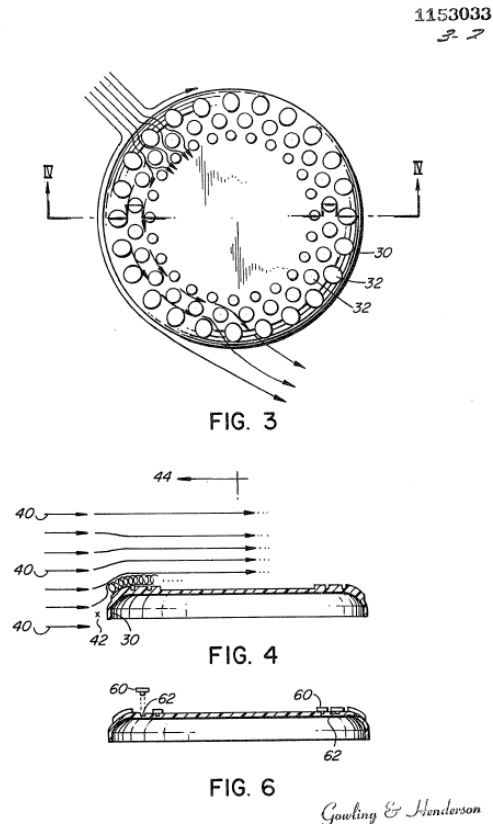
There was just one tiny problem. It turns out that *no one wants to play 'Frisbee' at night* and there was zero demand (or close to that) for the product. Student entrepreneurs need to know that the market is always right even when it is wrong. The planet is littered with neat products for which there is no demand. So, one of the simple rules of business is introduce products or services that the market actually wants. Most successful startups are not based on $e = mc^2$; they are usually derivative improvements of existing products or services-- someone has seen a niche not being filled now or a way of doing something that is already being done but they see a way of doing it better.

There are very few startups like Priceline.com (where the customer names his or her own price), eBay, Fed/Ex (Fred Smith invented a whole new category of overnight package delivery), Apple, ... where the founder(s) are really breaking wholly new ground and they are successful.

It is essential to understand whether you have a gadget or gizmo type of idea (mostly developing into marginal businesses at best) or something more substantial. Gadgets and gizmos make great hobbies but that's all. Entrepreneurs should be trying to create more value than that.

For more on Gadgets and Gizmos, please refer to: <http://www.eqjournal.org/?p=548>.

Prof Bruce June 2010]



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(54) English Title:

FLYING SAUCER AMUSEMENT DEVICE

(54) French Title:

JOUET EN FORME DE SOUCOUBE VOLANTE

Patent Details

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Data:

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