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David Simmons

We are a small to medium manufacturing business in Epping Victoria. This company has been operating since 1954 as Manufacturing Engineers. Over this period we have been involved in the design and manufacture of a wide range of products for either our complete products or as componentry for other people's products.

The areas we have supplied into include the food industry, materials handling and storage, farm machinery, power transmission industry and mainly for the last 30 years the transport industry. Over this period we have always aimed to design our product with a point of difference in design and operation to our competitors. When marketing we use this point of difference as our major marketing theme.

When designing product the points of difference are where we need to protect our intellectual property.

To achieve this using a full patent is time consuming and expensive, bearing in mind that quite often these innovations have a limited market and a limited life of manufacture.

We have used the innovation patent system on improvements to our tandem and single independent axle system.

We recently used the innovation patent system on changes made to our 'Simplicity Axle' system adding a coil spring option to enable us to compete with other axle systems of a similar set up. Our axle differs from the other systems as it uses a variable rate spring, making it unique and therefore we wanted to protect our set up as we have spent months on static testing and dynamic testing. Without the protection of the innovation patent we would not be able to undertake such time heavy testing not to mention we would not want to do all the ground work just to have another manufacturer come along and copy our system thus nullifying our time and costs.

From our experience in the market, once you have established in the market, that you have protection on your product, this protection still exists long after the patent has expired.

We used it in the early 90's when it was under the petty patent system to cover an agricultural axle system which has been used extensively in the viticulture marketplace.

On this axle assembly we have still not had any other entity manufacture this product for sale to date.

We feel in part that innovation patents fill an important role in small business giving us the ability to conceptualize design, manufacture and market product quickly whilst also giving us the confidence in knowing we will be able to profit from our investment.

Unfortunately many people in Government and Big Business consider Australian innovation is profitable in itself, but no profit exists until your product is manufactured and sold. Without cost effective protection there is no incentive at all to R & D product in this country.

Development and R & D of products employ very few people whereas product manufacture potentially employs many. Unfortunately most economists and social architects in the country don't agree. They would rather see people unemployed or underemployed.

Thanking you for your consideration in this matter.

Nevil Hauffe

Managing Director

Manufactured in Australia for Australian Conditions.