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an Entrepreneur

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A Toe in the Water



OCTOBER 13, 2008

RUNNING THE SHOW

My Brain, Your Brawn

Big companies are on the prowl for small businesses that will hand over their best ideas in exchange for a piece of the action

Article

Comments

By SIMONA COVEL

Decades after his father sold bagels and bialys on New York's Lower East Side, Gary Schwartzberg was convinced he had a product that could reinvent his family business.

With a partner, Mr. Schwartzberg had developed a tube-shaped bagel filled with cream cheese -- an all-in-one, portable breakfast for the on-the-go crowd.

The Journal Report

- See the complete [Small Business](#) report.



He called it a Bageler and managed to get the product into supermarkets and schools in the Miami area, where his company, Filled

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Patent Protection

Entrepreneurs who approach a big company with an idea should tread carefully and protect themselves, says Innovationedge's Ms. Perkins. If an idea is patentable, she says, get the patent. If not, something as simple as a trademark or even buying an applicable domain name can help persuade a big company that you have an intellectual asset that's worth buying from you.

"Once you own it, it's yours. It's very intriguing for a company to acquire a bundle of assets, rather than just a patent," Ms. Perkins says.

Entrepreneurs should agree to work with a big company only if they're sure the company has a clear goal for their product or idea. If executives seem uncertain, or not very committed, "it's better to go where you have some pull," she says. In most cases, it's best to go with a company that has made a concerted effort to look outside for new ideas.