



Someone you should know:

Inspirational idea

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Many folks get a new cell phone every couple of years or so, and with it comes a learning curve — the time and effort required to gain expertise. Previous proficiency with the old phone can create frustration, and folks often want their old phones back or want to give up on the new ones. That same frustration can be channeled into creativity. All people have the ability to be creative to one extent or another. Creativity is the ability to do old things a new way, to see new solutions to old problems, or to figure out different ways things can work together.

Becky Logue, a hygienist from Idaho, started using computers in the treatment room more than a decade ago. Her office completed periodontal charting on the computer, but it took two people. During the morning team huddle, a dental assistant was assigned to help Becky chart. It was obvious the assistant already had so many duties that it was a major challenge for her to squeeze in more. Understanding office and people dynamics, Becky felt guilty for taking the assistants away from their other duties. She tried multiple computer-based systems, from controlled force probes to voice-activation systems, and none were satisfactory with the accuracy she desired. Becky was at a crossroads; she could continue the old way, give up altogether, or be creative. She has long

by Patti DiGangi, RDH, BS

been an entrepreneur looking for ways to create beyond her clinical career, so she got creative.

Creative inspiration can come not by looking directly at a situation, but by taking a new view. Clinical hygiene involves the entire body, as we know from the wide variety of repetitive motion injuries hygienists experience. Charting involves only the hands.

The computer hand mouse was invented in 1963, and someone thought its shape looked like an actual mouse.

About the Author

Patti DiGangi RDH, BS, is a vision-driven person finding strength and direction from her inner convictions. Like most true visionaries, she views obstacles as learning experiences that can be used for self-development. As life-long learner, her energetic, thought provoking and successful program development and mind bending view of what can be shines a bright light for others to preview the future and find their place in it. She can be contacted through her Web site at www.pdigangi.com.

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There have been changes and improvements to the original product, but it is still basically the same and often recognized as a contributing factor in repetitive injuries.

One day while watching her children play with a video game dance

pad, Becky took a side-step view of her charting frustration and had an inspirational thought — why not chart with the feet?

The Dental R.A.T., a simple foot-operated mouse, was born. R.A.T. stands for Remote Access Terminal.

Many people told her the name wasn't good, while others said it was memorable. No matter the name, when a NASA scientist approached her, Becky knew she was on to something.

To her, simplicity was the key to success. She sees what practitioners face daily, understands clinical pressures, and wanted the tool to plug in and play simply. If it was too complicated, it wouldn't solve any problems. Becky created the R.A.T. so that practitioners wouldn't need an IT person to get it going. From idea to having the product ready to sell was a journey accomplished only with the support of her family, friends, and patients.

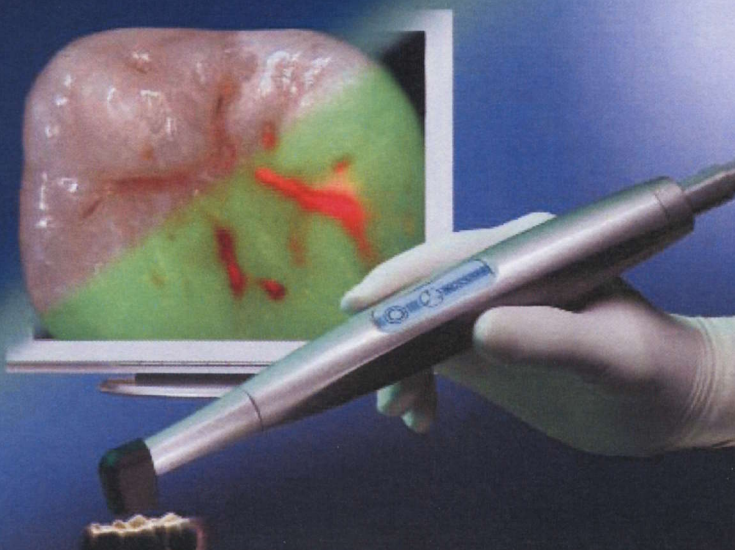
Becky presented her idea to an engineer patient, who immediately told her to hire a patent attorney. But the attorney laughed at her "kindergarten concept," and said someone had probably already done it. But his approach was more humble when he learned no one else had come up with the idea, and he told Becky she could have a patent for "all foot data entry."

The Dental R.A.T. is simple to operate, improves perio charting efficiency and accuracy, and eliminates cross-contamination. The R.A.T.'s ergonomic design helps people with hand, arm, or shoulder stress/injuries, and helps prevent injury as well. This product improves the quality of patient care while increasing productivity, and was recognized as one of the top 10 products in 2008. The cost of this hygienist's inspirational creation is low enough to make it affordable for most clinical dental hygienists. Challenging frustration to turn into creativity and productivity is possible for everyone. Becky Logue is a prime example of this, and is someone you should know.



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