



AMERICA'S 'BEST' INVENTION CONTEST

Orca Communications has launched an annual competition dubbed "America's Best Invention," where inventors across the nation can present their inventions to a judging panel with more than 75 years of collective experience working with inventors.

The winner will walk away with a three-month media campaign.

"We're very excited about this

opportunity to generate excitement and interest for new products and innovative ideas," said Julia Hutton, Orca's founder and CEO.

The competition, which began in January, runs every month until the end of the year.

Each month a semifinalist will be selected from the entries and win Orca PR services. At the end of the year, a

grand prize winner will be selected from the semifinalist pool and win a three-month national public relations media campaign.

Contestants are required to submit a brief video showcasing their product, which must be patented or patent pending. ■

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TURF WAR

Advanced Sensor Technology (AST) of King of Prussia, Pa., is suing lawn giant Toro Co. for alleged patent infringement. AST claims Toro used the patented system for covering wireless remote soil monitoring on its golf courses.

The wireless soil monitoring system is known commercially as Turf Guard, which Toro recently acquired. AST says it holds the exclusive license to the patent when it comes to using the system in commercial settings.

Minneapolis-based Toro previously filed its own lawsuit accusing AST of false and misleading advertising.

The cases underscore how technology can disrupt even old-school industries.

According to a news release issued by AST, it requested an injunction against Toro's continuing sales of the infringing product as well as monetary damages, including reasonable royalties.

In a written statement responding to the lawsuit, Toro's Branden Happel said: "We're aware of the lawsuit filed by Advanced Sensor Technology against Toro. The suit stems from our recent acquisition of Turf Guard and a lawsuit we filed against AST for false and misleading advertising practices in an attempt to interfere and disrupt the launch of the Turf Guard system."

Toro bought Turf Guard on Dec. 6 of last year. Turf Guard's systems measure soil moisture, salinity and temperature through buried wireless sensors.

Toro executives said that the Turf Guard technology is important to Toro's irrigation and growth strategy. ■

JAMMIN' ON THE JOB

Good music in the workplace improves morale and productivity, says Dr. Russ Riendeau, author of *The CEO's Guide to Talent Acquisition*.

Riendeau says, "Listening to music or playing an instrument increases the presence of endorphins, allowing us to process information differently, enhance our memory, and improve recall and retention of newly learned tasks." Endorphins also are instrumental in stimulating regions of the brain and nervous system.

He suggests:

- Mount speakers in the parking lot to begin and end the workday with music.
- Hire a band or solo act for your next company event.
- Add some music to your Web site.
- Replace those old motivational posters with rock 'n' roll signs. ■

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