



# What makes a good idea?

When is a brilliant invention also a commercially viable 'good' idea?

## **Size, Scale and Scope**

Does the idea address solving other people's real problems? Or is it a clever solution looking for a problem to solve?

If it is original, can it be made and sold profitably, and does it have a market? How big is the market? Will everyone need one frequently and regularly, or will it sell only occasionally to specialists? Could it become a range or series, or is it a one-off?

## **Timing**

Have you heard about the man who invented the Gas Meter? Brilliant idea, but he died in poverty. The trouble was that he invented it a hundred years before domestic gas was commercially available, and his problem was poor timing.

## **Evolution or Revolution**

Does it simply modify or improve something already in use so as to make it easier, or cheaper, or quicker, or better? Or, even though it is brilliant, will it mean that consumers will have to change their habits and manufacturers change their production lines? How brilliant would it have to be for this to happen?

## **Protection**

Has the idea been had by others before? If so, it might really struggle to be exploited and even if it succeeds the others might claim a slice of the pie.

Is the idea similar to something else, so that it could be challenged? And don't forget that the 'something else' might not be on the market - big companies have hundreds of thousands of patented inventions stored away defensively, to protect the sales of their other products.