



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### Patents

#### What is a patent?

A **patent** is a right granted for any device, substance, method or process that is new, inventive and useful.

Not all entrepreneurs are inventors or enter into the market with a new or novel idea. However, when they do, protecting that idea is essential. Patents, because they can be bought, sold or assigned, carry with them a commercial value and are an asset to the entrepreneur. A patent is also an effective way of staying ahead of the competition, because you deny them the right or privilege to use the same idea. In the process of applying for a patent, an entrepreneur may have to reveal the complete details of how the invention or idea works, and cannot prevent a person or organization from using these details for further research.

#### Being New and Useful

In almost all cases, a patent is granted only to an idea that is both new and useful in application. In order to qualify for a patent, it has to meet both these criteria and stand up to scrutiny.

#### What can be patented?

**Processes.** These include production methods, research designs and technologies that have new applications.

**Machines.** Unique tools, machines or physical objects that are useful.

**Manufacture.** Combination of physical matter that has a unique application and is not found in a natural state

**Compositions of matter.** Chemical compounds, molecules, and other chemical compositions of matter that have a unique application. These should not be available in a natural state and should have a new use and application.

Patenting is important, and in the long run, it is an asset to the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur has to take precautions to ensure that in the course of work, he is not infringing upon the patent of another individual and organization. In the eyes of the law, ignorance of the existence of a patent is not an excuse. There are a host of cases where an entrepreneur has had to settle out of court and suffer losses for infringement of patents.