

# Making a Clear Difference

Occupational therapist's rolling ink stamp instantly creates lined paper to improve writing legibility **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

**P**olly Benson is a school-based occupational therapist and entrepreneur from Gainesville, Georgia, who invented a hand-sized device to help children of all learning levels improve the legibility of their writing.

Throughout my career, I've worked closely with kids who struggle with handwriting—whether it's due to fine motor delays, sensory processing challenges or learning differences.

When working with older students, I noticed they often had no guidelines on their paper and had developed habits like inconsistent sizing, spacing and letter formation, which made their writing illegible.

In occupational therapy, we often focus on the underlying skills for fine motor strength and control—and sometimes those test within normal ranges—but students still struggle with legible writing. LegiLiner was born out of this daily challenge.

I needed a simple, practical tool that would empower teachers and therapists to make lined paper on the fly, giving kids the structure and consistent practice they needed. I thought: What if there was a rolling ink stamp that draws handwriting lines?

I couldn't find one, so I made a prototype. The teachers went crazy for it and encouraged me to patent it. So, I did!

**EGT:** How does the LegiLiner work? Can all children use it, or is it just for special ed?

**PB:** LegiLiner is a simple but powerful tool—a rolling ink stamp that instantly draws handwriting lines, shapes, patterns, math equations or even a music staff on any blank paper.

Teachers, therapists, parents and even kids can roll it across a page and, like magic, you've got perfectly-spaced lines ready to use.

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**Edith G. Tolchin (EGT):** Please tell us about your background in special education and how it led to LegiLiner.

**Polly Benson (PB):** I'm a school-based occupational therapist with over 30 years of experience, specializing in helping students with special needs succeed in the classroom.



**“When working with older students, I noticed they often had no guidelines on their paper and had developed habits like inconsistent sizing, spacing and letter formation, which made their writing illegible.”—POLLY BENSON**

We recommend it as a tool (not a toy), but kids love drawing their own lines, too. It engages them in hands-on learning, and even if the line isn't perfectly straight, the parallel structure helps them focus and practice neat writing.

**EGT: Is there an age range or grade range where children will get optimal benefits from the products?**

**PB:** LegiLiner is most helpful for kids in Pre-K through about third grade, when they're developing and refining handwriting skills and need the most support with line placement, sizing and letter formation. But we also have stamps that benefit older students and adults.

**EGT: How many different types of LegiLiners are there? Please share your manufacturing experience.**

**PB:** We now offer 21 different LegiLiner stamp designs, from standard dashed lines in various sizes to lines that match specific curricula, music staff lines, shapes for sound boxes, dotted grids for journaling and graphing, and number lines for math. Many have multiple uses, which makes it easy for teachers and therapists to find the right fit for each child.

Getting LegiLiner manufactured has been quite a learning curve! I work with overseas partners to produce the custom rubber stamps and refillable ink rollers at scale. Managing quality, shipping, barcodes, packaging and timelines has taught me so much about supply chain and prototyping, and the importance of finding the right partners to grow from an idea

into a product line that now helps thousands of kids every day.

**EGT: Do you have any patents? If so, please tell us about that experience, any obstacles and advice.**

**PB:** I'm especially excited about what's next. I'm patent-pending on a new multi-ink color stamp, which will open so many new possibilities for patterns and designs. Using multiple ink colors means we can better match curriculums and give kids visual cues that help them understand line orientation and placement more clearly.

Speaking of patents: The first time around, I did it myself without an attorney and got some bad advice, which led to the patent expiring. That opened the door for copycats, and I went from 100 percent market share to 12 percent overnight. It was painful but taught me a lot.

Now, my advice to other inventors is to hire a good attorney! The cost of doing it right is so much less than the cost of not protecting your work.

And I remind myself daily: People can copy the idea, but they can't duplicate the expertise and support that comes with LegiLiner. I'm not just selling a stamp; I'm offering a therapeutic approach to handwriting progression that's been developed over decades.

**EGT: From where are you selling?**

**PB:** LegiLiner products are available through our website (LegiLiner.com), Amazon and at





There are 21 different LegiLiner stamp designs, including standard dashed lines in various sizes; lines that match specific curricula; music staff lines; shapes for sound boxes; dotted grids for journaling and graphing, and number lines for math.

select educational conferences where teachers and therapists can try them in person. We also partner with a few school supply distributors and catalogs that offer our stamps to schools and therapy centers.

Most LegiLiners are priced around \$15 each, with bundles and special pricing for schools and districts. Keeping them affordable is important to me.

**EGT: Is your project self-funded, or have you done any crowdfunding?**

**PB:** LegiLiner has been 100 percent self-funded so far. Early on, I ran a presale of 100 stamps in a school-based OT/PT group online to see if anyone would be interested. They sold out in a weekend!

That early test gave me the confidence to invest my own savings and start small-batch manufacturing. It showed me the power of validating your idea before you pour everything into it. You don't always need a big crowdfunding campaign; sometimes testing with your actual audience is the best "green light" you can get.

**EGT: What types of media exposure have you gained?**

**PB:** Recently, I was honored to appear on "Legacy Makers," a TV show that spotlights entrepreneurs who turn ideas into impactful

businesses. My episode shows how I transformed a simple, therapy-inspired concept into a practical tool that helps kids feel successful.

It's always rewarding to see teachers post about using LegiLiner. That genuine word of mouth continues to be our most powerful media.

**EGT: Any advice for novice inventors?**

**PB:** Stay laser-focused on who you're helping, and stay connected to the people who'll use your invention every day. Get their feedback early and often!

I worked with an ambassador group that tested new stamps in exchange for samples, and their feedback was amazing. Many of my patterns came directly from requests and ideas from real users.

**EGT: What is ahead for the product and you?**

**PB:** I have three new patterns in production now and plan to add at least two more next year. My biggest goal is to keep growing and make LegiLiner a household name—not just in special education, but in every classroom and home where kids are learning to write.

Giving back is just as important to me. I have a huge passion for serving special-needs individuals and donate 10 percent or more of my profits. I partner with local organizations for packaging, which creates meaningful work opportunities, and I love to randomly bless teacher wish lists or fulfill requests for stamps in underprivileged areas.

I'm also excited about launching a mastermind program to mentor other up-and-coming entrepreneurs who have products in the therapy or pediatric education space. If I can help someone else get a jump start and avoid some of the bumps I hit, that makes it all worthwhile. 📌

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Edith G. Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000 ([edietolchin.com/portfolio](http://edietolchin.com/portfolio)). She is the author of several books, including "Secrets of Successful Women Inventors" (<https://a.co/d/fAGIvZJ>) and "Secrets of Successful Inventing" (<https://a.co/d/8dafJd6>).

# 1-2-3 Common Invention Questions Answered

BY BEN GREENBERG, FOUNDER OF INVENTIONS UNLIMITED (INVENTIONUNLIMITED.COM):

## 1 What is the most significant mistake inventors make right after they get excited about an idea?

They confuse excitement with evidence. Invention starts with emotion, but success comes from proof. Before spending money, you need to validate the problem by talking to real customers and studying complaints, not compliments. Markets reward pain, not passion. If people aren't actively frustrated about the problem the invention solves, they won't pay—no matter how much you love your idea.

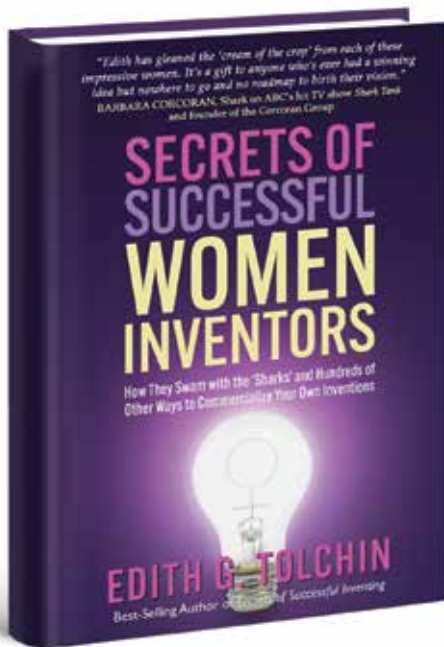
## 2 Why do so many inventors build prototypes too early?

Because building feels productive, even when it's premature. A prototype doesn't prove demand; it only proves something was built. The correct order is problem, validation, then prototype. When inventors skip validation, they often create expensive, beautiful objects for issues no one truly cares about. Prototypes should answer questions, not replace market proof.

## 3 How should inventors think about competition?

Competition is a signal, not a threat. If similar products exist, it means customers are already buying. That's good news. The opportunity isn't to be different, it's to be better. Reviews and complaints show exactly where competitors fail. That's where your invention wins. No competition often means no market at all.

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**Edith G. Tolchin**  
(photo by Amy Goldstein Photography)

### Edith G. Tolchin knows inventors!

Edie has interviewed over 100 inventors for her longtime column in *Inventors Digest* ([www.edietolchin.com/portfolio](http://www.edietolchin.com/portfolio)). She has held a prestigious U.S. customs broker license since 2002. She has written five books, including the best-selling *Secrets of Successful Inventing* (2015), and *Fanny on Fire*, a recent finalist in the Foreword Reviews INDIE Book Awards.



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