

Success Story Title:

ATAC's 'Innovation Coaching' helps AU student win \$6k first-place prize in business plan competition

Profile:

Coaching received through Auburn Technical Assistance Center's (ATAC's) Innovation Engineering program helped an AU Masters of Business Administration graduate win first place in a business plan competition sponsored by Auburn's Thomas Walter Center for Technology.

Haitham Eletrabi, who graduated last fall with an MBA degree from AU's Harbert College of Business and currently is a doctoral student in AU's civil engineering program, won the contest for his business plan to develop and launch a "smart phone" application that monitors athletic performance. Eletrabi's program is specifically designed to monitor tennis playing activity.

Situation:

Eletrabi's design uses sensors to monitor the athlete's performance.

"My business plan was about a digital personal tennis coach that will help the tennis players improve their game," Eletrabi said. "The device uses an innovative combination of sensors to capture the player's movement."

In addition to earning a \$6,000 prize used toward the development of his product, Eletrabi became eligible for a one-year free membership in the Auburn Business Virtual Incubator at the Auburn Research Park.

Solution:

ATAC's Innovation business growth coach, David Mixson, coached Eletrabi during the development of his business plan. Innovation Engineering, as the program is called, is a system designed to help companies learn to and establish a process for accelerating new product and other innovative ideas. The program is built on four stages of Define, Discover, Develop and Deliver.

"It is based on the idea of 'fail fast, fail cheap,'" Mixson said. "Most new ideas do fail. By following the Innovation Engineering process, a company can effectively pursue and develop new innovations and ideas in a scientific manner, with an accurate prediction of the success potential, before investing large sums of money and resources into the project."

Testimonial:

“I could not have don’t this without your help and guidance,” Eletrabi said about ATAC’s assistance.