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— Mike Strand,
StrandVision Digital Signage

STRANDVISION DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Marketers dream of a captive audience — and Mike Strand invented a new way to deliver. StrandVision Digital Signage, started in 2003, manufactures digital signage systems that deliver marketing messages and information directly over the Web to displays in a waiting room, office, or lobby. The product reaches a previously unaddressed market segment — people waiting for appointments or events. “It’s a very captive audience and they’re looking to pass the time,” Strand said. His company won the 2005 Governor’s Business Plan contest in the Information Technology category for its system, which helps businesses promote their products or sell advertising space to their suppliers.

Strand, a serial entrepreneur, already had a long-standing relationship with the UW-Eau Claire Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The SBDC connected him with several WEN professionals when he sought advice on expanding his business. He met Ayla Annac, Southwest regional director for WEN, at a Wisconsin Technology Council workshop and she helped him to refocus his business and protect his intellectual property. “I hadn’t thought at all about patenting the technology but after talking with WEN, I started the patent process and expect to have full patent protection for my intellectual property.”

Strand also worked with the SBDC for financial assistance, connections to angel investors, and a referral to the research team at the Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC) at UW-Whitewater. WISC helped him define his key market segments and better understand the market opportunities and limitations. Strand ultimately landed \$250,000 from the Chippewa Valley Angel Investors.

“WEN was very helpful. The network provided valuable outside points of view that helped me refine my thinking about both the StrandVision product and our markets,” Strand said.



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