



## Small Business Category Finalist

# Flexible Innovations Ltd.



Flexible Innovations, Ltd. team from left to right: Partners Matt Malone and Cheryl Marshall, and General Partner Fred Antonini, proud founders of egrips®.

Most people who use a cell phone or PDA have dropped them at some point or another. If they are lucky, the unit survives with a few dings and scratches. If not, the device is broken and the information is lost forever, leaving a person with a great sense of frustration and disappointment. It is exactly what happened to Fred Antonini when he destroyed his handheld by carrying it in his pants pocket on a tubing trip down the Comal River. The handheld slipped out of his pants pocket and dropped into the water, destroying all information stored. The difference, however, between this story and others is that Antonini turned his unfortunate experience into the starting point of a small company now doing business with several countries in the world.

Flexible Innovations Ltd d/b/a egrips® Technology was established in 2002 by Fred Antonini in Fort Worth, Texas. The company is built upon Antonini's 20-year experience

—worldwide— in the field of flexible materials, including work with Motorola, Compaq, Dell, HP and Iomega.

Flexible Innovations designed and developed egrips® Non-Slip Strips®, a unique material for which several patents have been filed. It took over 3 years to perfectionate the manufacturing process. Shortly thereafter, the company established its vision statement; which is to make the egrips® brand of products as globally ubiquitous as Post-It® and Velcro®. A "natural" and much needed application for the cell phone and any handheld electronic device. These devices need a "grippy" surface that prevents them from easily slipping out of one's hand or sliding off any surface. In fact, it is proven to place a cell phone with an egrips® strip is placed on the dashboard or seat of a car it will not slide off onto the floor.

The company assembles egrips® strips from

a very thin film of specially formulated, dimpled soft silicone rubber coated on a pressure-sensitive proprietary film which creates a very high coefficient-of-friction—about 5.5 on steel and close to 8 on glass. The egrips® technology material's high coefficient of friction is what prevents the devices from sliding.

Currently, the company is "getting a grip" on commercializing different uses for the material "whether this is as a stand alone product or as a component of another product," states Antonini, developer of egrips® technology.

Egrips® strips and customized device kits are already being used with a wide variety of handheld devices including Palm Treos, BlackBerrys, virtually every brand of cellular phones, portable CD/DVD players, remote controls, cordless phones, GameBoy and PSP units, GPS devices, iPods® and other MP3 players, notebook computers, photography equipment, portable medical equipment, professional grooming products, etc.

The material can also be applied to sporting goods, such as the grips for tennis rackets, ping pong paddles, golf clubs, and baseball bats. One of the first commercial applications apart from handhelds is Tank Tredz, a custom cut pattern of egrips® material that provides extra safety grip on motorcycles during road and track racing.

For healthcare applications, the material can also be applied on walking canes, walkers, door handles and many other surfaces to aid arthritic patients as well as on equipment used by individuals who are wheelchair bound.

Flexible Innovations, Ltd. is currently working with private companies in Africa, Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Greece, Germany and New Zealand to customize products and create unique services.

Flexible Innovations, Ltd. is located inside Tech Fort Worth, a nonprofit business incubator. A public-private partnership of the University of North Texas Health Science Center, the Fort Worth business community and the City of Fort Worth.

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**"The strength of the company rests with the intellectual property it owns and the innovative people at Flexible Innovations," states Fred Antonini, creator of egrips®.**

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