

InnovateHER 2016 Nomination Package

Cover Page

(i) Winning Individual or Team

Name: **Marissa Siebel- Siero** (team lead)

Company Name: **IntelliWheels, Inc.**

Product/Service Name: **Tinker**

Address, city, state, place of incorporation if applicable:

IntelliWheels, Inc.

60 Hazelwood Dr.

Champaign, IL 61820

IntelliWheels, Inc. is incorporated in the state of Illinois.

Website: **<http://www.intelliwheels.net>**

Telephone number of individual or team lead: **855.889.9019**

Email address of individual or team lead: **marissa@intelli-wheels.com**

(ii) Host Information

Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County EDC

1817 S. Neil Street, Suite 100 – Champaign, Illinois 61820

www.cusbdc.org

Point of contact:

Don Elmore, Director

don@cusbdc.org

Office: 217-378-8535 – Cell: 217-778-0105

(iii) Two-sentence Description of Product or Service

Tinker is the first ever 3D product configurator in the wheelchair marketplace. By giving customers unparalleled levels of feedback and control over the product they are ordering and serving as an incredible communication tool between customers and manufacturers, Tinker's goal is to create transparency in the wheelchair industry and empower wheelchair users, their families, and caregivers to ensure their voice is clearly heard in the wheelchair ordering process.

(iv) Total number of applicants that participated in our InnovateHER competition: 10

Statement of Support

Winning Individual or Team: **IntelliWheels, Inc.** (team lead is Marissa Siebel-Siero)

Host Organization : **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County EDC**

The Small Business Development Center in Champaign, Illinois solicited business plans for the InnovateHER Business Challenge for review by an extremely strong panel of fourteen women in leadership roles in Champaign County. The panel included a mayor, business owners, economic development specialists, executive directors of community organizations, and leaders from the University of Illinois Research Park and Parkland College. Response was strong from across the state, even though Illinois offered eight host locations.

Support from our community was also very strong, not only via participation from the judges but also through financial sponsorship that allowed us to provide cash awards for three finalists.

We devised a scoring system that accurately reflected the competition criteria while still encouraging the judging panel to present and consider qualitative input. In a lively meeting the panel chose a clear winner – IntelliWheels, Inc. and their Tinker online wheelchair configurator.

IntelliWheels is a young company but it already has a very strong track record in wheelchair technology. Its founders are a world-class wheelchair racer, a kinesiology/exercise physiology researcher, and a mechanical engineer who have a fine-tuned understanding of their market and customers. With Tinker they address a very important need in the marketplace – the ability for wheelchair users to extensively customize their wheelchairs using online tools, tutorial videos, and measuring guides. Tinker also makes it very easy for customers to communicate with manufacturers and dealers about custom specifications.

The impact of this product on the lives of women and families relates to the well-documented primary role of women in caregiving and decision making in health care matters:

“Recent research shows women provide the majority of informal care to spouses, parents, parents-in-law, friends and neighbors, and they play many roles while caregiving such as hands-on health provider, care manager, friend, companion, surrogate decision-maker and advocate (Waliser, et. al., 2002). An estimated 66% of all caregivers are female (AARP, 2009). The average caregiver is a 49 year old woman, caring for her 60 year old mother who does not live with her, she is married and employed (AARP, 2011).”



Tinker provides a valuable service not only to wheelchair users themselves but also to the women and families who provide care for them. Tinker versions for children (Tinker for Kids) and seniors (Tinker Platinum) allow customization to extend even further to address the needs of all age groups.

Tinker's potential for commercialization is strong and the company's business model is very attractive. By partnering with wheelchair manufacturers and customizing Tinker for each partner, IntelliWheels earns licensing and setup fees while providing an innovative product that drives sales for those manufacturers. Marketing is very efficient because the company already knows and has relationships with the manufacturers. IntelliWheels and its founders have attained a high level of visibility and credibility in the marketplace in a relatively short time; this is an important strength as they attract Tinker partners.

With Tinker, IntelliWheels clearly addresses an acute need in the marketplace. By providing an extremely useful product to end users and identifying the company's target market – manufacturers – the company has developed a profitable business model that benefits both the manufacturer and the end user.

IntelliWheels and Tinker emerged as the clear winner in a highly competitive process. The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County EDC shares the community's pride in this local company and we are very pleased to offer our support as they move on in the InnovateHER Business Challenge.



Don Elmore, Director
Illinois Small Business Development Center
at Champaign County EDC



Date