



## OPENING SHOT

Jack Champaigne | Editor | *The Shot Peener*

# The Power of Patents

### Why Patents are Important

Companies can spend a lot of time and money to bring a new product to market and this investment may be protected with a patent. Patents are granted by governments to encourage inventors to share their intellectual knowledge. In exchange, the inventor is granted exclusive use of the technology for a limited time—usually 20 years.

Patent attorneys are often used to file for a patent due to the complex nature of the rules and regulations. There are three main sections of a patent: The abstract, the description, and the claims. Full disclosure of the idea is required in the description to support the claims of the patent and the drawings must completely and clearly illustrate the nature of the device or method being patented.

The claims are the most important part of the patent. Someone practicing any aspect of one or more of your claims is in violation of infringement and you may bring a lawsuit to prevent his/her continued infringement.

### My First Attempt to Obtain a Patent—Learning the Hard Way

I appreciate the effort and determination it takes to receive a patent. Electronics Inc. and I have received 14 patents in shot peening control technology, but this was after a very rocky start for me personally. My first submission to the United States Patent and Trademark Office failed to achieve “allowance.” To make matters worse, I barely salvaged a nearly disastrous demonstration of my prototype to a shot peening OEM. I modified my claims in the patent application and finally received US Patent 4,523,146 titled “Mass Flow Indicator for Metal Particles” in June, 1985. It essentially stayed dormant since trying to commercialize this concept proved too difficult. But I do have a nice walnut plaque on my office wall.

### Dr. Yuji Kobayashi’s Patents and His Contribution to Shot Peening

I was impressed with not only the number of patents granted to Yuji Kobayashi, our Shot Peener of the Year, but also the diversity of the projects. (Dr. Kobayashi authored and co-authored 12 patents in the United States and 24 patents in Japan.) I especially like his US Patent 10,022,839 B2 where eddy currents are used to detect if a nitride layer exists. If there is no nitride layer, then the part is exposed to the shot peening process.

And here’s what I know after my own experiences with patents: The patents awarded to Dr. Kobayashi represent hard work, perseverance, and an in-depth understanding of the shot peening process.

That’s why we were so pleased to recognize Dr. Yuji Kobayashi as the 2018 Shot Peener of the Year. ●



*At the US Shot Peening workshop, the Electronics Inc. staff surprised Dr. Kobayashi with 12 commemorative plaques—one for each of his US patents.*

## THE SHOT PEENER

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