Jeff and Justin always liked the idea of owning their own businesses and being their own boss. “We really wanted to take an idea that we thought of and designed, and make it into a real tangible item that people could buy in stores,” said Justin, President of Key Inventions.

Business ideas come about in a variety of ways. Key Inventions was started because a professor challenged his students to come up with a way to replace the key ring. “The Key Organizer was the result of the idea Jeff came up with during the challenge,” said Justin.

Justin, an entrepreneurship major and Jeff, a mechanical engineering major decided to turn the class project into a business idea. “Three and a half years later we have successfully turned that simple drawing on a piece of paper into a tangible item that will soon be available in stores,” said Justin.

Starting a business takes a lot of time and is a learning experience. Jeff and Justin believe they have learned much during this process. “Although it has taken three and a half years to get this far we have learned more in the last twelve months since we have been working with the Center for Research and Development,” Henderson said.

“We have learned how to take an idea, turn it into a prototype, create a business plan, and effectively pitch that business plan to potential investors.

We learned how to start a business and turn it into an LLC, negotiate with distributors, and work with sales representatives. We have learned how to do market research, cost analysis, and a break-even analysis.

We have had experience with international business and manufacturing variances and most recently we learned about logistics through overseas customs,” said Henderson. “Overall, many things have been encountered and as time goes on, and our business grows, we will continue to learn more and more.”