



Richard Korbyl, left, and Terry Syvenky display their "gag" gift called the "RUG"ged Man Advanced Hair System, while waiting to take part in auditions to appear on the CBC entrepreneurial show Dragons' Den, in Edmonton City Centre Mall Tuesday

DAVID BLUME/EDMONTON SUN

# Investors dazzled by lure of Dragons' Den

By QMI AGENCY Last Updated: March 17, 2010 1:19pm

Terry Syvenky and Richard Korbyl were full of hope as they waited at Edmonton City Centre with patches of carpet strapped to their heads.

The pair was among at least 50 people who lined up Tuesday to pitch their inventions and business ideas to producers from popular CBC show Dragons' Den.

Syvenky, 44, and Korbyl, 40, came to flog their invention called "Rug"ged Man, a piece of rug attached to elastic and worn on the head, which Syvenky described as an "advanced hair system."

"It's a gag gift," he explained. "It's an opportunity for people to gently tease and make fun of their bald relatives."

Producers from Dragons' Den are on a 40-city tour looking for people with ideas good enough to

pitch to the "Dragons" — a panel of wealthy Canadian business moguls looking for lucrative investment opportunities.

Syvenky and Korbyl plan to ask the tycoons for \$50,000 for distribution of their product and redesigning the box.

Giorgio Lupinacci, 42, wore a suit and gold sneakers as he came out to pitch his Filtro Max — an attachment for the end of a car's oil filter.

"It attracts the particulate that an oil filter cannot," he said.

Lupinacci said his invention is already being sold at Canadian Tire. He wants to convince the Dragons to pony up \$250,000 for 40% of his company, which would allow him to get into bigger retailers in the U.S.

Executive producer Tracie Tighe, who was vetting the hopefuls Tuesday, said there are always people with "wild ideas" at the auditions.

"We're looking for a range of deals for the Dragons — great innovations, unique, never seen before, addresses a need," she said, adding the show's popularity might be due in part to the recession as people get more interested in becoming self-employed.

People who make the cut at the Edmonton tryouts next go to Toronto to make their pitch in front of the Dragons themselves — and possibly get on TV.

"It's not only about the money — you can't buy that type of publicity," said Felicia Dewar, 34, who wants \$75,000 to turn her online company, thesinglegirl.ca, into a physical store on 104 St.

But it's no easy feat getting the support of the notoriously ruthless Dragons. Tighe said out of the 240 pitches the Dragons saw last year, they made only 40 deals — 17%.

Auditions continue Wednesday at CBC Edmonton in City Centre mall.

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