

Innovation First International Appoints STEM Education Veteran Joe Astroth as Executive Vice President and Chief Education Strategist

Former Chief Education Officer of Autodesk Seeks to Expand Global Reach of co-curricular VEX Robotics Program in Classroom & Afterschool Competition

GREENVILLE, Texas – Sept. 22, 2011 – Innovation First International (IFI) announced today that it has named senior global executive and non-profit education entrepreneur Joe Astroth, Ph.D., as executive vice president and chief education strategist. A recognized leader in the world of STEM education, he joins the company from Fortune 1000 company Autodesk, where he served as a senior executive for more than a decade.

In his new role, he will provide executive leadership for educational initiatives across IFI's businesses, and will focus on gaining additional support from public and private partnerships that further the integration of VEX Robotics in the education market – both in the classroom and as an extracurricular activity. He will report to Tony Norman, co-founder, president and chief executive officer of IFI.

"Joe Astroth brings an extraordinary blend of industry, academia, management and senior leadership experience that will help guide our aggressive growth goals for VEX Robotics and its related programs," said Tony Norman, president and chief executive officer of IFI. "He has a unique combination of business and educational experience, and most importantly, a proven track record for launching innovative platforms on a worldwide scale that make him a one-of-a-kind asset as we continue to expand our national and global programs, partnerships and co-curricular robotics footprint."

Dr. Astroth has more than 20 years of executive management experience, with success in consumer and enterprise software focused on the design, engineering, mapping and navigation markets. A proven entrepreneur and visionary leader, he has an established track record of creating successful new business ventures. He has extensive international experience having carried out effective business activities in over 30 countries, with an emphasis on China and India.

He comes to IFI from Autodesk, where he re-established the company's presence in the global education market. Under his leadership, his team built an online Education Community that has grown to over 3 million members, and developed a scalable, online, secondary STEM curriculum.

Earlier in his career he was a part-time technology consultant and full-time professor at the University of Missouri, where he co-founded a research institute focused on computer cartography, remote sensing and geographic information systems. Dr. Astroth completed his doctoral work at The University of Chicago. He is a highly visible member of several industry organizations and current member of five Board of Directors and Executive Advisory Boards including *Project Lead the Way*, The Olin College of Engineering and the College of Design and Innovation, Tongji University, Shanghai, China.

About Innovation First International, Inc.

Innovation First International was founded on the belief that innovation very early in the design process is necessary to produce simple and elegant product designs. Innovation First began developing electronics for unmanned mobile ground robots and is now an industry leader in research and development for the hobby, competition, education and toy markets.

Innovation First International's three main subsidiaries, VEX Robotics, Inc., Innovation First Labs, Inc. (makers of HEXBUG® Micro Robotic Creatures), and RackSolutions, Inc. span the education, consumer and business-to-business markets. The VEX® Robotics Design System is the leading platform for middle school and high school education and competitive robotics. Leveraging the company's core competency in electrical and mechanical engineering, the RackSolutions® division works closely with all major computer OEMs to provide custom mounting solutions and industry-wide rack compatibility for data installations of all sizes.

In the 2009 the company added offices in Hong Kong, China and the United Kingdom to better serve the global marketplace. This network was expanded to Canada in 2010 with the addition of an office, warehouse and distribution center located in Toronto. With an advanced in-house metal fabrication plant, distribution center and corporate office located together in a 13-acre complex in Greenville, Texas, the company is poised to continue on a rapid growth path. Please visit www.innovationfirst.com for additional information.

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