

# Ivanko Introduces The First “Fully-Functional” Urethane Grip Plates!



By Tom Lincir, President and Founder, Ivanko Barbell Company

If you have read my previous articles, you might be under the impression that I am anti-urethane. That’s not entirely accurate. Urethane is a member of the rubber family, and Ivanko has marketed rubber encased weight plates and dumbbells for almost 20 years. Both rubber and urethane have their strengths and weaknesses, but I have preferred rubber for a variety of reasons that I have mentioned in earlier articles.

***“Urethane is a member of the rubber family, and Ivanko has marketed rubber encased weight plates and dumbbells for almost 20 years”.***

However, in most successful companies there is a person whose job it is to make sure no one ever gets complacent in their thinking, or takes vacations that are too long. He’s called the Vice president of Sales and Marketing. I won’t name names, but when this person makes a daily habit of coming into my office and telling me, “Another customer has asked me when we will have urethane”, that’s when I know it’s time to become a little more open minded.



Ivanko’s Vice President of Sales and Marketing

What kind of urethane products are customers asking for? The stories I hear daily in my office form an increasingly clear picture. “Tom, I have a customer that wants x number of urethane plates, with...”

- a) “...Ivanko quality” (because some customers know that Ivanko is a perfectionist)
- b) “...the Ivanko name on them,” (because some customers claim it’s the only brand with name recognition, strong enough to attract new members when used in advertising).
- c) “...a matte finish” (because some customers “don’t like the puke-shiny look” — a direct quote!. We don’t share this opinion — we like both finishes)!
- d) “...grip slots entirely around the plate” (because some customer recognize that multiple slots makes it easier to lift from any position, therefore safer, and also better looking).
- e) “Urethane plates without an attitude” (because some customers know that urethane is a nice coating, but not on the short list for the Nobel Prize).

And our ALL TIME favorite:

- f) To know if we make plates in a “fully-functional” design (round) instead of a “semi-functional” design (out of round or with flat spots). When the user tries to do repetition power cleans or dead lifts with the “semi-functional” design, he

suffers from “performance frustration”, and there’s no little blue pill for that.

We like this particular customer’s term “fully-functional” because we feel it accurately describes our plate. Our multiple grip design makes it a functional loading plate, but its round shape also makes it functional for floor exercise such as repetition power cleans and repetition deadlifts. With these exercises, you don’t want the bar to jerk forward or back due to the plate landing on a point between two flat sides.

***“So, I was now committed to designing an Ivanko quality, Ivanko branded, “fully-functional”, multi-slot, matte finish (non-shiny) urethane grip plate, without an attitude.”***

After hearing one customer request after another, I finally came to an understanding with the Vice president of Marketing whose name shall remain anonymous. I promised that I would design and manufacture a urethane grip plate that gave our customers everything they were asking for, on one condition: that he would keep out of my office and stay on his side of the Ivanko building, at least for awhile!

So, I was now committed to designing an Ivanko quality, Ivanko branded, “fully-functional”, multi-slot, matte finish (non-shiny) urethane grip

plate, without an attitude.

As many of you know, I cannot just throw something together that's "good enough" and toss it out into the marketplace. My passion is to make everything I do as good as I believe it can be, and to constantly seek ways to make it even better as new information or technologies come along. The challenge with urethane, I soon realized, was that while I had a 45 year knowledge base in iron and steel, I knew next to nothing about manufacturing skills and techniques required to cast a great urethane grip plate. Sure, I understood the characteristics of urethane, its coefficient of friction, specific gravity, durometer readings, etc. I knew enough to create something that was "good enough", but I didn't know the "tricks of the trade" to make something that was the best..

***"As many of you know, I cannot just throw something together that's "good enough" and toss it out into the marketplace"***

Well, that was three years ago, and my initial efforts were just "good enough", but nothing to brag about. During this exploratory period, I gained an appreciation for how Thomas Edison must have felt experimenting with hundreds of materials for the light bulb filament until he settled upon tungsten. Then, I got lucky. Last year, quite by accident, I met Lou Fike, the premier mold manufacture for Goodyear Tire. Goodyear is working with Amerityre to develop the first urethane automobile tire.



Thomas Edison experimented with hundreds of materials for the light bulb filament until he settled upon tungsten.

Lou Fike made the molds according to the design I gave him, but he added a lot of improvements based on Amerityre's recommendations and Lou's own experience. Another tire company introduced me to high impact urethane, and to proprietary chem-fused bonding technology for affixing the urethane to the iron plate in a way that is stronger than the urethane itself. In every critical area, they worked out all the bugs and brought me a perfect sample that met the customer request criteria: an Ivanko quality, Ivanko branded, "fully-functional", multi-slot, matte finish (non-shiny) urethane grip plate. I, of course, was responsible for the "without an attitude" part of the equation.

***"Another tire company introduced me to high impact urethane, and to proprietary chem-fused bonding technology for affixing the urethane to the iron plate in a way that is stronger than the urethane itself."***



The first "fully-functional", multi-slot, matte finish (non-shiny) urethane grip plate without an attitude. Available all black or black with white lettering.

***"So if 100,000 people can be wrong, imagine how wrong, say, 10,000 people could be".***

One of the things I like about working with tire people is that they believe things should be round for reasons that have stood the test of time. If a tire company introduced tires with flat sides all around to prevent rolling down hill, you might think that such an idea is absurd.

But as Charles Mackay chronicled in his 19th century book "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds", hundreds of thousands or

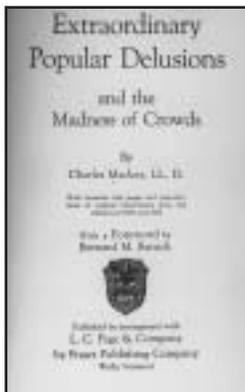
people have fallen for schemes more preposterous than flat sided tires. So if 100,000 people can be wrong, imagine how wrong, say, 10,000 people could be.



Tire people and Ivanko people share the common belief that things should be round for reasons that have stood the test of time.

It is true that tires with flat spots would prevent accidental rolling down slopes, but you would experience rotational dysfunction. That's why the vast majority of people prefer tires that are round and weight plates that are round.

**“Based on customer interest and demand, the next decision will be whether to make our production line semi-automatic or robotic.”**

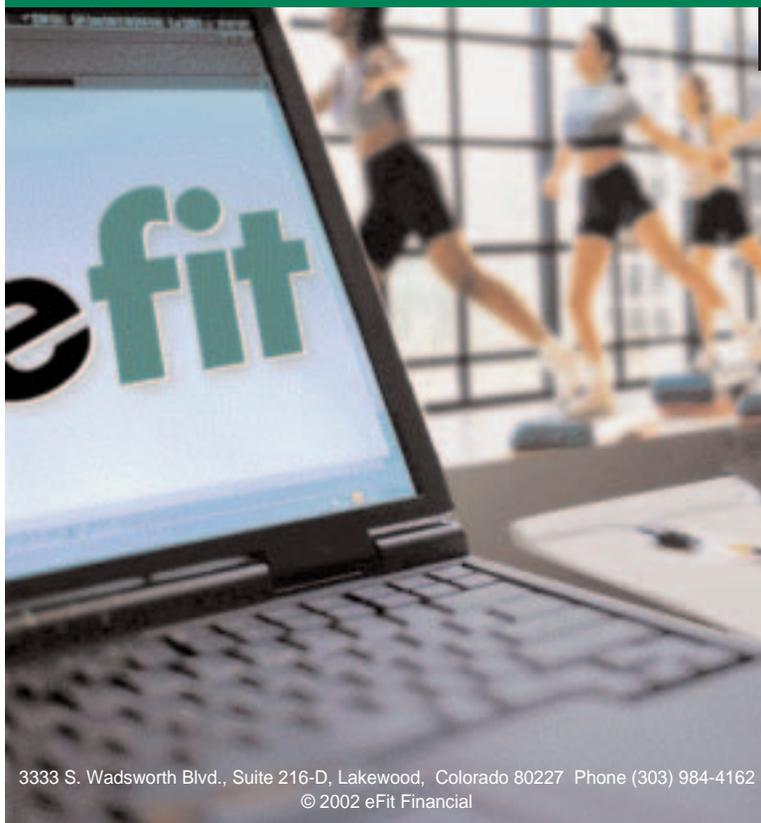


As Charles Mackay chronicled, if 100,000 people can be wrong, imagine how wrong 10,000 people can be.

We're in production now on a very limited basis. We now know we can do it because we are doing it. Based on customer interest and demand, the next decision will be whether to make our production line semi-automatic or robotic. This will require a large capital infusion so we want to make sure we don't over estimate the market. Please give us your thoughts.

*Ivanko Barbell Company was founded by Tom Lincir in 1967, and it is the leading provider of professional and commercial grade barbell and dumbbell products worldwide. Your comments or questions are welcome. Write Tom Lincir at Ivanko Barbell Company, P.O. Box 1470, San Pedro, CA U.S.A. 90733.*

## The Power to Control Your Club.



## Anytime. Anywhere.

**With eFit Financial Club Advantage,™ you are in complete control.** We've made it as easy for you as possible with 24/7 eFit online access. From membership agreements to payment processing and follow up service, to management reports and member check in, state-of-the-art eFit technology helps you manage your finances from start to finish. And at the lowest overall price. We've thought of everything, including One-Source Customer Service, Multi-Club Networking and Automatic Software Upgrades. For an online demonstration, consult our web site or give us a call.

**Toll Free: 877-772-3348**



3333 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Suite 216-D, Lakewood, Colorado 80227 Phone (303) 984-4162  
© 2002 eFit Financial

[www.effitfinancial.com](http://www.effitfinancial.com)