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Phil's Patent Post

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Top Tips for Protecting your IP Assets

Here are my top 5 suggestions to ensure you are well protected and get the best value from your IP assets:

1. Clearly identify the IP assets that you have – use the UK patent office IP Healthcheck (see useful links) to help with this. You will be surprised, you may have more IP than you think.
2. File patents, designs or trademarks in good time before you go public with them. Prior to going public make sure you have non-disclosure agreements with those people/companies you do need to talk to.
3. Understand your competitors IP – (e.g. be aware of what patents are owned by others who operate in a similar technology space to your own) so that you do not infringe or so that you can negotiate licences if it becomes necessary.
4. Be alert for others who might be using trademarks, logos, designs or technology which you have a legal right to use. A gentle reminder may be sufficient to stop them but be prepared to take legal action.
5. Keep a close watch on your IP portfolio so that you know what needs renewing, but avoid the trap of automatic renewal (it normally gets more expensive each time) and reassess the value of the IP to you. Consider whether licensing or selling might be a better alternative.

Understanding Patents - Part 4: How to read a patent

Continuing the series that answers some of the frequently asked questions I receive from clients. (Please refer to my website for earlier topics)

Patent documents can seem very daunting if you are not familiar with them. They can appear overly complex because of the use of phrases that have been developed by patent attorneys to describe a device or process in terms which are chosen to be unambiguous and stand up to a legal scrutiny.

Because patents are legal documents they are actually very logical in their construction. There are clearly defined sections and you can always tell when someone is familiar with patents because they will look immediately at the claims section. The claims (which appear at the end of the main description) are the set of defining statements which begin with the broadest definition of the invention and through additional sub-claims or further independent claims continue to define the invention in increasing detail. The additional claims usually narrow the specification down to the materials and preferred levels of the component parts of the invention.

The main sections of a patent are generally as follows:

- Abstract (a paragraph summarising the patent or main claim)
- Field of the Invention (short statement defining the technical area)
- Background (a description of prior art or similar patents usually pointing out where they have disadvantages that this invention solves)
- Invention Summary (a statement of the invention, often this includes the advantages that it has over the prior art)
- Detailed description (as implied a very detailed description so that a

person can reproduce the invention and verify that it works)

- Claims (the legal statements that define the invention, each claim is a single sentence)
- Drawings (sometimes these appear after the Abstract and reveal the construction or other aspects of the invention)

In a well written patent you will be able to start with the claims and then use the detailed description to put "the flesh on the bones" and understand how to reproduce the device or process being described. You can see that such information is very useful as a way to find out how a competitor's product is made and how they might have achieved any advantages that they claim. For the patent owners it gives a clear indication of what has been done and provides them with the right to prevent anyone else achieving the product advantage in the same way.

Phil's Patent Picks

You may remember that I regularly post articles describing current patent applications that are particularly related to printed or plastic electronics. Here is an extract from the latest post on *Phil's Patent Picks*.

Aqueous Conductive Silver Ink

Posted by Phil C on May 16, 2014

Printed electronics is continuing to grow as more and more applications are developed and commercialised. One of the key stumbling blocks continues to be the practicalities of printing narrow conductive tracks and the ease of use of the materials and processes involved. One of the key system components, often taken for granted, is the ink. The majority of conductive ink compositions in use today are solvent-based thick film systems designed for low speed screen printing. Water based conductive inks and coatings offer significant ecological advantages over solvent-based compositions, as the latter release solvents into the atmosphere on drying. Aqueous conductive inks, however, have so far not offered the high conductivity, or low electrical resistivity, achievable with solvent-based formulas.

Sun Chemical Corp. have just been granted a patent for an aqueous ink with high conductivity and good printing properties. This invention more specifically relates to an aqueous conductive silver ink suitable for use in RFID and other electronic technologies. The composition is highly conductive and requires reduced drying energy. In addition, it may be applied to low cost substrates via high speed printing processes. The key components of the ink formulation include: (meth)acrylic copolymer or salt thereof; conductive particles; an anionic surface wetting agent; defoamer and water.

See the full article here: blog post

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Note: You are more than welcome to send the contents of this post to colleagues and friends; please forward it in its entirety, rather than "cut-and-paste".