CASE STUDY

A supply chain innovator optimizes its patent filing process and improves inventor engagement

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Client industry:

Supply Chain Management

Client location:

Canada

Consulting Services:

- Management Consulting
- Business Transformation
- Workflow Efficiencies
- Process Improvement / Process Redesign
- Process Mapping
- Facilitation
- Design Thinking

Client challenge

Kinaxis, a large supply chain management company, planned to dramatically increase its patent filings. The inventor team was already stretched with current workload and a recent survey highlighted the inventor's pain points with the patent filing process. Kinaxis needed to improve the efficiency of the patent process to reduce the burden on their inventors and achieve scalability for growth.

The solution

Kinaxis engaged the BLG Beyond Consulting team to drive this process improvement initiative. In parallel, they also investigated and implemented technology solutions to incorporate into the new process.

The Consulting team conducted interviews with key stakeholders to document the current state of the patent process, from the development of a new idea through to the filing for patent protection, and to capture the pain points and inefficiencies throughout the process. Findings were categorized in the areas of people, process, and technology, and included feedback from inventors as well as Human Resources to ensure a thorough understanding of the environment within which innovation was occurring.

The Consulting team then led the design of the future state process, specifically addressing pain points and, whenever possible, incorporating the use of new technology recently licensed by Kinaxis. The team worked closely with Kinaxis' lead patent agent and leveraged the subject matter expertise of BLG Beyond's IP Strategy practice group to document a future-state process map, eliminating wasted effort and minimizing wait times and process breaks. The team evaluated every step in the process and answered questions regarding the best person to address each step, what supports could be provided to minimize impact on inventors, the best timing and sequence of each step to reduce rework, and what technology should be leveraged. The process map provided clarity regarding accountability and applicable technology for each step.

A key requirement for scalability was also to reduce the time spent on patent applications that were not likely to be approved. Technology was leveraged early in the process to assess this likelihood based on other patents in the market.

Client results

Through this process, approximately 20 improvements were identified within the patent filing process and in the areas of learning, inventor recognition and technology. With a new patent filing process defined and the additional recommendations approved by leadership, the client has enthusiastically begun implementing a substantial portion of these solutions into their workflow and culture, resulting in an improvement in inventor recognition and a change in the way the patent process is perceived. Additionally, they have implemented specialized software designed to address key process pain points, further reinforcing the client's commitment to enhancing efficiency and facilitating an easy-to-work-with process.

Client testimonial

"Our partnership with BLG Beyond Consulting has resulted in vast improvements in our patenting process - from mining ideas to successful prosecution, to rewarding inventors. We are far more efficient, collaborative, and confident of bringing new ideas forward. Thank you BLG Beyond Consulting."

Sheema Khan, Kinaxis