

Innovation Capture

The research and development (R&D) process can require considerable investment in both time and money. But, in the rush to market, it can be difficult for R&D teams to identify those innovations that are of most value for protection as patents. Novagraaf's Innovation Capture service and our new dedicated portal 'Novaneo' have been designed to help achieve this goal.

How does a busy R&D team focus its efforts in order to methodically extract innovations for protection as patents, while avoiding those areas where little gain is to be found? While all businesses want to find 'nuggets' of value for the future, in the rush to deliver, it is all too easy to overlook potentially valuable, but non-core, innovations – or to focus R&D in the wrong areas.

The ability of a business to deliver on its goals of building a strong and defensible patent portfolio will often depend on the guidelines and processes it puts in place at the very beginning of the R&D cycle.

An independent view

To successfully capture innovation, in-house patent teams or their external advisers need to have mechanisms in place to identify, extract and analyse inventions. Ideally, this is achieved via an organised dialogue between patent experts and the R&D teams (and/or inventors) in line with a pre-agreed and structured methodology. To be effective, this methodology needs to guide technical teams, enabling them to detect and/or improve innovation within the company.

Novagraaf has created such a methodology in 'Innovation Capture', a service that we deliver in association with innovation specialist Neo Factory, a company that focuses on the creation and industrialisation of innovative products.



Our teams work together with customers' internal stakeholders (R&D heads, inventors, technicians and project managers, and so on) in order to review existing projects and procedures so as to detect, identify and extract technical solutions likely to be protected. Our 'Innovation Capture' methodology also covers:

- Ongoing improvements that detail, develop and enrich technical solutions, as identified via feasibility study;
- Evaluation of the patentability of solutions;
- Compilation of technical and legal issues in a single report that allows the business to make an easy and direct filing decision while summarising the potential reach of the innovation identified;
- Overall gain in innovation management by allocating the right resources at the right time; and
- Access to Novaneo, our multi-user portal, that facilitates and captures exchanges between team members.

Steps to success

One of the strengths of Innovation Capture is to be found in the immersive nature of the solution. The methodology and portal ensures the customer's R&D department provides direct access to information; while, in return, Novagraaf ensures the in-house team receives timely advice (or 'interventions') on the patentability of innovations, and possible improvements or alternatives.

Such 'interventions' are managed according to criteria pre-decided with the customer; for example, in line with the technical field of inventions, geographical proximity or the availability of resources. It could involve a one-time intervention as part of a specific project, a review of ongoing projects or a total immersion of our dedicated team within the company.

Innovation Capture maximises the output of R&D efforts from the very beginning of the innovation life cycle

A fresh pair of eyes

Businesses will often look to their external patent counsel to sit in on planning sessions or R&D review meetings in order to encourage in-house teams to keep the potential patentability of inventions front of mind. Innovation Capture takes this practice one step further, helping the business to maximise the output of its R&D efforts from the very beginning of the innovation life cycle. This includes ensuring that any invention is worked according to technical and legal prior art, so as to ensure the broadest possible patent protection is obtained. There are costs benefits too of avoiding potential impasses or unnecessary workarounds early on in the process.

We find that the methodology also helps to generate new ideas as it requires inventors and R&D teams to discuss the invention from the outset, using technical, industrial and creative language, and highlighting any constraints in advance that might impact the patentability of their output.

In addition, our new multi-user portal Novaneo allows fluid exchanges between the different members of the innovation and R&D teams, through the addition of comments and the download of documents. The portal also makes it possible to docket the contributions of each inventor and to clarify the roles of each stakeholder (inventors, coordinators, engineers, patent attorneys, management, etc).

As both IP and R&D budgets continue to be squeezed, the implementation of a tailored and structured methodology, and a dedicated management portal, could be the difference between patent headaches and patent success.

Who we are

Novagraaf is a global patent and trademark consultancy that advises clients on IP strategy and management. With offices in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK, and in China, Japan and the US, we provide on-the-ground support in Europe to FTSE-100 and Fortune-500 companies, international corporations and manufacturers, research institutes and small-to-medium-sized enterprises in a wide variety of sectors.

Our consultants are experienced in supporting R&D and patent protection strategies in commercial organisations and in the public sector, and have extensive experience in prosecution and post-grant proceedings before the EPO. That's why we are the preferred European IP partner of some of the top patent owners around the globe.

Why work with us?

- We understand the strategic and economic challenges that you face: The growth and success of your IP assets are at the heart of our business, and we will work with you to identify and efficiently protect your patents rights globally.
- We provide tailored support: our consulting services and management tools have been developed to assist you throughout the entire life cycle of your innovations, whatever your needs or industry.
- We have operated in Europe for more than 130 years: You will benefit from our heritage, experience and know-how, as well as our strong and long-standing presence in key territories, such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK.
- We are a world leader in patent protection: Our patent professionals have the technological and scientific knowledge to understand your needs and support your growth, whatever your industry, with particular expertise in the life sciences in the UK (seat of the life sciences specialist court) as well as qualified experts in chemistry, mechanical engineering and IT.

Get in touch

For more information about our Innovation Capture service, please contact Novagraaf at mail@novagraaf.com or Neo Factory at contact@neo-factory.com.

