

Procter & Gamble Increases Foreign Filings without Increasing Cost

In 2001, Procter & Gamble (P&G) was faced with a major decision: cut costs or reduce the number of foreign patent filings to meet its budget. P&G files hundreds of patent applications annually in more than 30 countries and holds approximately 35,000 patents, making its portfolio one of the largest and most valuable patent portfolios in the world. However, with translation costs rising, markets and foreign jurisdictions expanding, and management complexity exploding, dramatic changes had to be made.

One vital, yet major, expense of the international patent filing process is translation, which accounts for nearly 40 percent of P&G's international prosecution costs.

Historically, P&G had handed its patent applications to foreign agents or independent translators across the globe for translation. This decentralized process for translation contributed to the high cost, which is often associated with the sensitivity of translation projects and the difficulty in obtaining qualified translators. Replicating this process with multiple law firms added to the administrative overhead, as well as to the risk of increased error and inconsistency in translation.

Solution Strategy

With the goal of reducing cost, risk, and complexity of the translation process, P&G conducted a comprehensive search for a translation provider with the following requirements:

- Translators must be in-country, native-speaking, and vetted for subject-matter quality
- Translators must have patent-specific experience and technical knowledge in the applicable subject matter
- P&G must own and control its language IP glossaries, and terminology must be managed from a centralized location across all languages
- P&G must reduce overall patent prosecution costs by 20 percent

Other search factors for a translation provider included the need for a centralized point-of-contact, ease of daily business transactions, translation memory for the reuse of previously translated text, and coordinated quality assurance.

At the end of an exhaustive search and an intensive vetting process, P&G selected MultiLing to manage its IP translation. P&G valued MultiLing's uniquely efficient centralized model, which incorporates five elements vital to multinational IP translation: specialized teams, project management, quality control, advanced technology, and terminology management.



WITH RESEARCH FACILITIES IN NORTH AMERICA, EUROPE, AND ASIA, PROCTER & GAMBLE (P&G) SPENDS BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ANNUALLY DEVELOPING NEW PROCEDURES, CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS, AND PRODUCTS SUCH AS SOAPS, DETERGENTS, CLEANERS, AND COSMETICS.

Headquarters:
Cincinnati, Ohio

Size:
110,000 employees worldwide

Net Sales:
\$76.3 billion (2015)

Business needs:

- Cut costs or reduce the number of foreign patent filings



Working with MultiLing to streamline its internal processes, P&G found it could cut translation costs and improve quality. The multinational company was also able to reduce the associated risk of translation errors, substantially decreasing internal administrative costs and increasing human efficiency throughout the entire process.

Integration

As MultiLing became a trusted partner, P&G gave the company online access to its patent docket, eliminating the need for P&G staff to notify MultiLing when a patent is ready for production. Now, as soon as a translation request is electronically submitted, MultiLing staff can immediately start the translation process. With its proprietary technology and 24/7 online access, MultiLing schedules and tracks the lifecycle of each project—and P&G receives status updates in real-time.

Today, a team of 300 dedicated MultiLing-certified translators support P&G. Each year, MultiLing translates approximately 29 million words related to more than 2,800 cases filed in 30 countries. Since 2002, MultiLing has also captured more than 100,000 unique concepts in its language database, which ensures consistency of key terms across all P&G filings.

Outcomes

MultiLing was involved in a multi-year, large-scale plan to streamline P&G patent translation and foreign filing process. Since then, P&G has:

- Doubled the number of international filings with little or no increase in spend (a direct result of increased efficiencies — 40 percent of this efficiency can be directly attributed to MultiLing)
- Reduced administrative, maintenance, and data-handling costs
- Shortened turnaround time on translations — P&G has never missed a filing deadline due to a late MultiLing translation
- Reduced risk of translation errors
- Increased employee satisfaction — The need for translation docket management was eliminated, and two full-time employees were reassigned to higher-value work
- Fewer soft costs such as translation-related office actions
- Reduced time-to-grant
- Reduced litigation risk
- Streamlined reviews of translated claims — P&G determined that if the English source document is correct, the target-language translation will be accurate.
- Lower overall patent prosecution costs, which dropped by 20 percent

Today, P&G files more patent applications internationally with reduced risk and less administrative burden. Plus, the company enjoys significantly lower costs per filing.



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