

Patents

Ensure your patents are relevant to your business

It is a good idea to make sure that your patents support and enable your business objectives, and are relevant to your competitors and market. This usually takes the form of a patent strategy. A good patent strategy will provide reason and focus that can be invaluable when making patent decisions and managing costs. This should be done at the outset and regularly updated to remain relevant.

An invention is not the same as a product

A patent protects an invention, but an invention is not the same as a product, let alone a commercially successful product. Most products will have many patentable features, but you should consider what your key innovations are – the ones your customers value and your competitors would like to copy – and focus your patent protection on those innovations. They may not be the cleverest or most technically advanced features, but they are probably the most important ones to protect.

Enforcing your patent

The threat of enforcement underpins the deterrence to competitors, so many SME's worry that not being able to afford litigation diminishes the value of their patent. However, patent enforcement takes many forms and court litigation is usually a last resort. A warning letter to the alleged infringer is often enough to deter them, or for them to offer royalties. Another option is to purchase insurance to cover the legal costs of pursuing infringers. It is worth remembering that if you don't have the patent then you won't even have an option to enforce, regardless of what might happen over the next 20 years.

 [#worldipday
wipo.int/ipday](https://www.wipo.int/ipday)

