

Woodcock Washburn Ensures Quality, Reduces Editing Time With PatentOptimizer™

Woodcock Washburn

Overview

Location: Atlanta, Philadelphia, Seattle

Industry: Intellectual Property Law

Customer Profile:

Woodcock Washburn is a national firm specializing in intellectual property law. Since being founded in 1946, the firm has provided personal service and trusted advice to clients across a wide range of industries and technologies. Woodcock's full range of legal services includes litigation, patent procurement, IP strategies, trademarks & copyrights, licensing, open source software, standards and interference.

Woodcock Washburn has grown to nearly 100 attorneys since the firm was founded in 1946, and the counselors provide personal service and trusted advice on a full range of intellectual property services across a wide array of industries and technologies. The firm's client base includes national and international organizations that heavily depend on and value intellectual property.

Included in the May 12, 2008 edition of *Fortune* magazine's "Guide to Go-To Law Firms®," Woodcock Washburn has been rated as one of the top IP law firms in the United States by *IP Law & Business* and was named the top intellectual property firm in Pennsylvania by *Chambers USA*.

Business Situation:

Like any firm or corporate counselor focused on intellectual property, quality and consistency, Woodcock Washburn needed to find ways to improve efficiency and implement a critical quality control check before applications are shared with a client or filed with patent authorities.

Solution:

Woodcock Washburn relies on LexisNexis PatentOptimizer to draft high-quality patent applications by helping its attorneys check claims, suggest alternative terminology, and search and identify terms and phrases. The firm uses PatentOptimizer to add fully formatted citations and hyperlinks, and automatically renumber claims and references during final editing.

Benefits:

PatentOptimizer helps Woodcock Washburn:

- Develop internally consistent, concise, and well-tailored patent applications.
- Create comprehensive reports that identify claim issues, drawing reference anomalies, improper term and phrase usage, and more.
- Check claim language for prior adjudications and prior art references and link to related cases and patents.
- Spot ambiguous or missing antecedents and lack of support in drawings or descriptions.
- Search, retrieve, and capture comparable claim language in the prior art.

Woodcock Washburn, a national firm concentrating exclusively in intellectual property (IP) law, is known for bringing extraordinary technical depth and attention to detail in order to protect its clients' intellectual property.

When constructing patents, quality and consistency are of utmost importance. Accordingly, Woodcock Washburn turned to LexisNexis® PatentOptimizer™ to help it reduce the amount of time its attorneys spent checking antecedent basis for claim language, and consistency of reference numbers and descriptions.

"LexisNexis PatentOptimizer improves the quality and consistency of our patent applications. Before PatentOptimizer, we needed to devote a lot of time to check consistency of reference numerals and claim terms. Now, PatentOptimizer quickly scans and identifies areas of inconsistency, allowing me to spend more time on the substance of the application."

Hal Fullmer, Partner, Woodcock Washburn

The Challenge: Quality and Detailed Applications without Significant Time

Woodcock Washburn attorneys help their clients determine and implement the best IP strategy to maximize the value of various intellectual assets. One of Woodcock Washburn's specialties is procuring patents, trademarks or copyrights.

Hal Fullmer, partner, and Hilary Reinhardt, associate, at Woodcock Washburn know the importance of drafting high-quality applications. Both Fullmer and Reinhardt spent hours double-checking patent applications to ensure consistency of reference numbers and antecedent basis for claim language. These manual checks were time-consuming and took attorney time away from the substantive aspects of the application.

“Since the PatentOptimizer interface is so easy to use, a person can pick it up quickly.”

Hal Fullmer, partner,
Woodcock Washburn

The firm determined it needed to investigate an option that would help it improve the quality of its patent applications, and allow its attorneys to work more efficiently.

“Checking patents for consistency and errors before was a very tedious, manual process,” said Fullmer. “We wanted to find something that could streamline this process and improve the quality of our applications.”

Finding the Right Fit

Already a LexisNexis® customer, Woodcock Washburn relied on research tools like *lexis.com*® and CourtLink®. Upon learning how the PatentOptimizer service could help the firm improve quality and efficiency, Woodcock Washburn established a short pilot to test the software.

The pilot allowed attorneys to test the software to determine its ease of use, effectiveness and efficiency. The attorneys kept an analysis of how much time they thought PatentOptimizer could save.

“Initially, during the pilot, I estimated I could save at least two-to-three hours per application using PatentOptimizer,” said Reinhardt. “I now think I save four-to-five hours on patent applications. I use PatentOptimizer for my initial review of the application, before an application goes to a client, and before it is filed with patent authorities. PatentOptimizer allows quality checks along the development path of the application and improves confidence that I’ve been able to deliver a high-quality, error-free patent application.”

After the conclusion of the pilot, Woodcock Washburn decided to implement the software throughout the firm’s three offices. The software was easily put into operation by the firm’s IT team. Since the installation process was simple and without complications, Woodcock Washburn’s IT department didn’t need to call on the LexisNexis team of professionals standing by to help with any installation issues.

LexisNexis provides customer support around the clock to PatentOptimizer clients, but according to Fullmer, the software was “very intuitive, so I didn’t need to go through any training. Since the PatentOptimizer interface is so easy to use, a person can pick it up quickly.”

The firm now provides PatentOptimizer access to all transactional attorneys. As new associates join the firm, PatentOptimizer is introduced as one of the tools provided and the software is pre-loaded onto their computers.

“I like PatentOptimizer because all I need to do is click a button, and quickly it shows me potential areas to check.”

Hilary Reinhardt, associate
Woodcock Washburn

“We chose PatentOptimizer because there are no real competitors,” said Reinhardt. “We didn’t review other software programs, because nothing else like this exists in the market.”

Developing High-Quality Patents Efficiently, Effectively

While it is difficult to calculate the cost savings from improved quality, the firm indicated that the time PatentOptimizer saved in quality control checks by associates was substantial.

“Writing a patent is a collaborative process—your client, your supervising attorney and your colleagues all may provide input. Inevitably, numbers get changed, different numbers are added to figures, and the number of part numbers can increase or decrease. Add this to new claims that are included and/or discarded, and the level of complexity increases,” said Reinhardt. “I like PatentOptimizer because all I need to do is click a button, and quickly it shows me potential areas to check.”

“In an era where everyone is sprinting to complete an increasing amount of work, saving an hour of time is critical,” continued Reinhardt. “PatentOptimizer does that.”

The PatentOptimizer software is integrated into Microsoft® Word, Internet Explorer, Adobe® Acrobat® 8.0 and Adobe® Reader® 8.0. Woodcock Washburn attorneys can use PatentOptimizer within the software he/she is using to construct the applications; for example, PatentOptimizer appears as a toolbar in Microsoft Word.

Quality and consistency are key items for Fullmer.

“Complex patent applications often get reviewed and changed a lot,” said Fullmer. “Using PatentOptimizer to double check antecedent basis helps identify potential issues before the application is reviewed by patent examiners. It’s much better to submit claims without errors in antecedent basis than to fix them after the examiner points them out. After PatentOptimizer helped me minimize formality errors in my applications, I’ve encouraged all our attorneys to use it regularly.”

Additionally, using the unique content found on PatentOptimizer, including full-text patent information, post-issuance data, federal case law and administrative rulings, and Matthew Bender® treatise information with specific relevance to identified issues with language usage, enables attorneys to help detect and mitigate high-risk issues in patent construction.

“PatentOptimizer helps Woodcock to produce efficient and polished work product, which helps us protect our clients’ intellectual property.”

Hal Fullmer, partner,
Woodcock Washburn

In ensuring quality and consistency, attorneys can use PatentOptimizer to verify:

References—attorneys can identify patent citation references in the application related to bibliographic information and view a comprehensive post-issuance activity report for cited patents.

Parts—PatentOptimizer allows attorneys to double-check accuracy and consistency of reference figures and related part numbers and labels—and identify repeated parts for correction as necessary

Terms—attorneys can generate a list of cases referenced and interpreting key terms from a patent application and export customer term glossaries for insertion into applications

Measurements—PatentOptimizer detects and converts common English measurements into metric and identifies inaccurate user-entered conversions.

“PatentOptimizer is an automated tool that helps streamline the formalities of filing applications,” said Fullmer. “PatentOptimizer helps Woodcock to produce efficient and polished work product, which helps us protect our clients’ intellectual property.”

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