

MATSUI MFG. CO., LTD. (Osaka, Osaka Prefecture)

Utilizing our experience gained in a patent dispute to build a comprehensive intellectual property management system

1. Strengthening intellectual-property-related activities due to a patent dispute

MATSUI MFG. CO., LTD. was founded in 1912 as a maker of medical devices as well as physics and chemistry devices. From the early 1960s onward, the Company entered into the field of plastics, developing and manufacturing various plastic molding devices for optimization of production processes, including products for transport, drying, mixing, temperature regulation, and recycling of plastic materials. Over time, MATSUI expanded its operations on a global scale.

MATSUI's entry into the intellectual property field was due the filing of a patent violation against the Company by a Japanese subsidiary of a European company 26 years ago. Although the suit ended in a settlement, it took an enormous amount of effort and spending to reach that conclusion. In response to this experience, the Development Department added a prior art search as a required item in its development theme application forms, and the Intellectual Property Office began collection of relevant patent documents and providing them to the Development Department as an integral part of the prior art search process from the development phase onward.

2. Initiatives concerning the acquisition and maintenance of “live” patents

The General Manager of the Development Department became responsible for patent management six years ago, and after reevaluating the Company's patent rights acquisition status at that time and determining that MATSUI's patent rights did not pose any barriers to entry for other companies, began undertaking various initiatives to step up intellectual-property-related activities. For example, as regulations concerning the acquisition and maintenance of “live” patents, three conditions were established: (1) Whether or not the patent is being used (or will be used in the future), (2) whether or not the patent has sales value, and (3) whether or not the patent may inhibit other companies. Also, the Company created a “patent map” to analyze and monitor patent-filing trends at other companies. These measures all help protect and secure the leading-edge qualities of MATSUI's technology.

3. Strategies for filing overseas patents applications

The ratio of overseas-to-domestic sales proceeds for MATSUI is 1:2, and the ratio for number of units sold is similar. In consideration of sales figures and cost effectiveness, the Company is continuing in Japan with applied patent applications made from a defensive standpoint, while filing patent applications for basic patents overseas, primarily in China and the United States but also in Europe, Taiwan, and other locations as necessary. Because overseas patent filing is expensive, the approval of the Evaluation Committee is required—this committee comprises eight members, including the managers of the Manufacturing, Technological Development, and Sales Departments, an implementor from the Sales Department, a member of the Marketing Department, a member of the Sales Promotion Committee, and a member of the Intellectual Property Office.

Furthermore, as part of its branding strategy, the Company attaches the “plas-aid” brand name to all products, including those manufactured by Group companies in China, to show that the products are manufactured under worldwide standardized specifications (platform). Because each product with the plas-aid brand name carries a maintenance guarantee (within Japan), this initiative elevates the Company image of trustworthiness and reliability.

4. Results of managing rules and regulations for occupational inventions

In addition to existing compensations for applications and registrations of patents, the Company also created a system of compensation for implementation. A summary of relevant inventors and inventions receiving such compensation is presented by the president in a “video letter,” broadcast throughout the MATSUI global network to all 15 business locations (10 in Japan, 2 in China, and 1 each in Taiwan, Thailand and the United States).

In this way, all MATSUI employees are able to gain an understanding of the patents held by the Company. This helps encourages the use of such patents and, for development staff, gives not only incentive to acquire more patents, but provides a morale boost to the successful inventors who are made known company-wide.

●Examples of products built based on patent rights held by MATSUI



Fig. 1: Low-speed granulator (whole unit)



■特許登録
 1) ハウジングの減速構造 (特許No.3965892号, 3928269号)
 2) 右ネジ, 左ネジダストワイパー, ロックプレート
 3) ヒボットリンク閉鎖機構
 4) 防振機構を内蔵したトルクアームによる減速機の防振
 特許申請中 (公開中)
 1) 中心に寄せた支点ピンとタイロッド式閉鎖
 2) ダブルベアリング+トルクアームによる特受配重方式

Fig. 2: Low-speed granulator (cleaning mode)



Fig. 3: Decompression dryer (main unit)



Fig. 4: Decompression dryer (interior)

●Company Profile

Name	MATSUI MFG. CO., LTD.	Hironobu Matsui, president and CEO
Location	OBP Plaza Bldg. 17F, 1-4-70 Shiromi, Chuo-ku, Osaka 540-000, Japan	
Founded	March 1912	
Capital	200 million yen	
Employees	900 worldwide	
Products and Services	Development, manufacture, sales, installation, and engineering of plastic-molding-related products, including molding material dryers, forced-air transporters, compounding devices, and mold temperature control devices	
TEL	+81-6-6942-9555	
URL	http://www.matsui-mfg.co.jp/index.html	