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OCTOBER 2015

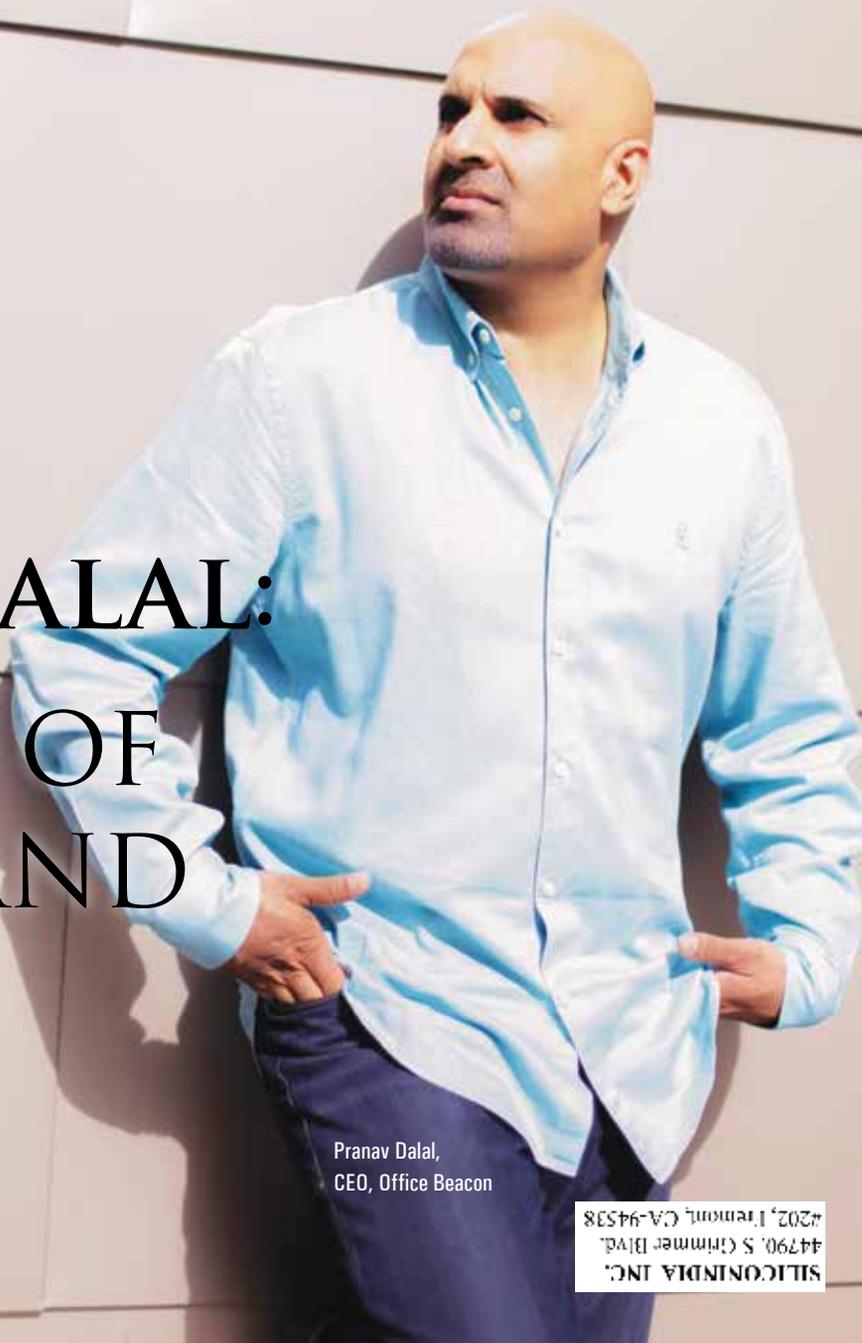
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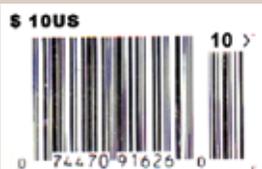


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# PRANAV DALAL: A PROFILE OF SUCCESS AND COURAGE



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# Managing Your Innovations Smartly and Accelerating Growth

Kameshwar Eranki, CEO, VajraSoft

As CEO, managing innovations and driving growth is your primary responsibility. But, the critical question is how do you go about achieving it? To drive innovations and improve profitability you need to understand the IP portfolio, spend in building and up-keeping the portfolio and most importantly the return on investment. Also, deploying continuous evaluation model to churn incremental and radical innovations improves effectiveness and accelerates growth.

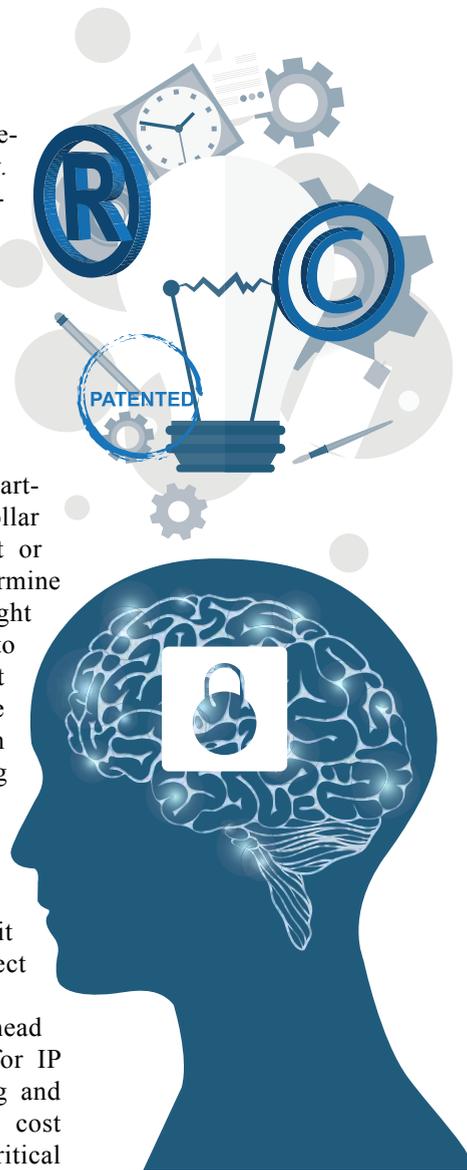
Another challenge Chief Innovation Officers or CXO's face is to align IP Strategy with Business strategy. One of the key aspects to focus is on assessing the IP asset base with the current corporate goals and objectives, evaluate gaps in patent families, and identify areas of misalignment. A quick analysis of key technology areas reveals high value assets and gives you opportunity to divest non-revenue generating IP assets. As part of the IP strategy chalks out steps to enforce global IP protection for defense. Gain insights into competitive intelligence to drive competitive advantage. Prioritizing these, boosts

organization success further.

Formulating such a comprehensive strategy is not easy. Only 12 percent of the manufacturers, for example are "very effective" at determining product profitability. This leaves the door for improvement wide open. Addressing the above aspects would accelerate the promotion of innovation and growth.

Now, looking from a start-up perspective, a million dollar question is to file for patent or not to? But, how do you determine this? A simple and straight forward way to deal with is to question as to why you want to file patent? Consider the benefits you are going to gain in terms of revenue, marketing advantage, industry control or influence or using IP as bargaining chips. Then, think of the patent costs. If benefits outweigh the constraints, it makes sense to invest, protect and monetize.

Assessing Patent Costs ahead of time is important factor for IP Financial planning, Budgeting and Forecasting. Based on the cost estimate you can make the critical



decision—to file or NOT to file. If you are a start-up you think twice, thrice or several times before you decide "yes". There is a strong tendency to drop or differ the filing, primarily because of cost considerations. But, such decisions come back to bite you. So, make decisions considering all facts.

By investing in patent filing – you are seeking IP protection to your inventions. You are blocking others from copying your innovations. Not only this, you are protecting strategic business assets from competitors. So, IP Protection is unique value proposition that you can make.

Another important criterion is improving valuation of your company. One way to achieve it to create IPs and increase the valuation of company. If the IPs holds lot of promise valuation can go up to few million dollars. So, focus on value additions and strategy differentiators.

Given such a scenario, will an investment for patent filing, which is, seeking IP protection for few thousands be cost prohibitive for business? Does this modest investment outweigh the potential benefit your organization gains? As CEO, it is your responsibility to set and execute the vision and protect the core "IP" which is center to your business. The strategic decision for the company and should not be dented purely on expense basis.

Before attempting to draft the patent application—think as to why you want to file patent? Is it for defensive or offensive purpose? Incurring modest patent costs should not be a hindrance. Remember, at the end of the day the buck stops with you. As CEO of the company, it is your responsibility to set and execute the vision and protect the core "IP" that is center to your business.

## Chief Innovation Officers are Catalysts for Road Mapping Success:

CIOs have critical role in enterprises to drive innovation and growth. That said, what are the critical items to address to lay a path for driving innovating and growth?

Scout for new ways to manage innovations to optimize R&D investments. As Chief IP Officer you must think big, but start addressing incrementally. Google is a great example in this category. They incrementally spawned into several new categories systemati-

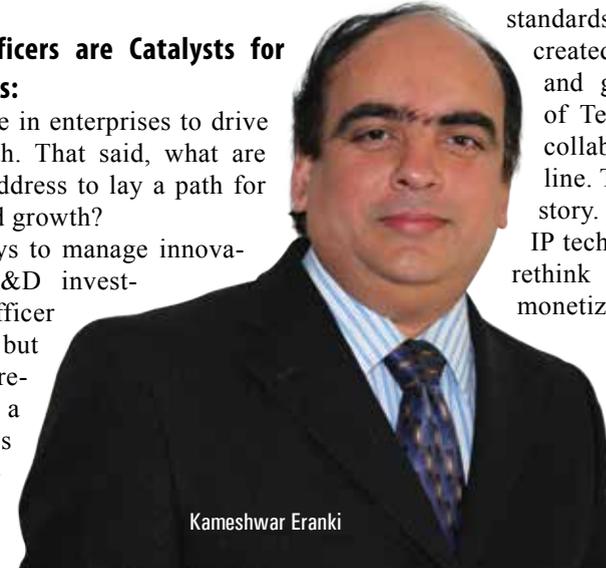
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cally with a game plan and achieved the goals. Another important factor to consider is to strive for continuous innovation, not perfection – nothing can be emphasized more than at this point. It should not be quest or obsession for perfection but providing incremental innovation and solve specific business issues. Ignite the thoughts, ideas – encourage employees, supplementing ideas with factual data. Provide management support and allocate resources. As Business executive, form bridge between business, technical and legal functions and work closely with all key stakeholders and constituents to foster innovation and growth. Get new products and services to market – support business units in translating the captured ideas into new products and services into Market.

Automotive leader Tesla, for example, formulated competitive IP sharing strategy that paid off brilliantly. Tesla forged partnerships and adopted collaborative business models to create synergies across the value chain, improving IP protection, and monetization. This win-win situation not only established industry standards in electro-mobility sector, but also created new licensing revenue channels and growth. So, what's the secret sauce of Tesla's success? It was innovation and collaboration that improved the bottom-line. Two more takeaways from this success story. First, Tesla lured competitors with its IP technology sharing and then made people rethink on IP and technology sharing and monetization.

So, in a nutshell, define IP strategy that's in line with the business objectives both long term and short term. Determine if you want to pursue offensive patent strategy or not. Ultimate goal is to focus on increasing strategic business value and accelerating growth. 



Kameshwar Eranki