Contributing to Corporate Advancement from Diverse Perspectives, Expert in Intellectual Property Rights

"We, as experts in the intellectual property field, will support our clients for realization of true benefits through protection and utilization of intellectual properties."

Santo International Patent and Trademark Office

Patent Attorney **Toyohiko Nagata**

Santo International Patent and Trademark Office

Kita-ku, the center of Osaka, is brimming with excitement with department stores, hotels, and other commercial facilities, and numerous office buildings. The Umeda area with JR, subways, Hankyu, and Hanshin Lines crossing together through major terminals, is well-known as a major commercial center in Japan; and near JR Osaka Station, the futuristic urban redevelopment projects, as represented by Grand Front Osaka, is now drawing a national attention.
The surrounding areas, on the other hand, including "Tenjinbashisuji Shopping Street," renowned as the longest shopping street in Japan, traditional Japanese shrines including Ohatsutenjin and Osakatenmangu, and a major local festival called "Tenjin Matsuri," one of three greatest festivals in Japan, still retain the atmosphere reminiscent of a traditional Japanese town in good old days.
In this historical, traditional, and developing area, near JR Osaka Tenmangu Station in Kita-ku, Mr. Toyohiko Nagata, a patent attorney, is fighting with a high aspiration for establishment and judicious use of intellectual property rights to realize his clients' growth as the representative partner of Santo International Patent and Trademark Office established in 2011.
He is incessantly requested by corporate clients seeking profitable markets not only in Japan but also around the world in the growing global market trend, for his simple and astute expert counsel on effective use of intellectual property rights.

Making full use of expertise and experience developed and accumulated in trading and manufacturing fields.

Embarking on an independent enterprise with a like-minded partner

Graduating from Faculty of Human Development of Kobe University, he joined a major trading company and accumulated valuable experiences in the business world. Mr. Nagata recalls his budding aspiration for a career as a patent attorney.
"When I worked for the trading company, I went to China as an engineer to provide technical assistance at a local factory.

There, I witnessed the local markets swarmed with our brand-new products, illegally, of course. Then, I wondered how we can protect our products, studied some practical ways, and realized the importance of intellectual property rights. I gradually became fascinated by the work of patent attorneys specializing in protection of intellectual property rights."
After leaving the trading company, he accumulated business experiences at a patent office and passed a national examination to be a patent attorney. Then, he met Hidefumi Takaki, another patent attorney. Although everything went well at the patent office, he gradually became interested in how he can enhance his unique strengths. Then, in 2011, he decided to embark on his own venture, together with Mr. Takaki, who shared his work ethics and business values.
Mr. Takaki, a patent attorney and the representative partner of the Office, finishing the Graduate School of Science and Technology of Kumamoto University, joined a machinery manufacturer, building his career as an engineer.
Commenting on his aspiration to be a patent attorney, Mr. Takaki recalls, "I developed a keen interest in how firmly we can assert rights for products we developed to the best of our ability, and how effectively such rights can be protected as I involved in manufacturing."
It is significant in the business world of patent attorneys, characterized by its rather advanced average age, that two aspirant young patent attorneys ventured a new office based on their spirit of enterprise and fresh experiences for the sake of future development of companies in Japan. In the midst of the lingering deflationary trend, with the dwindling manufacturing prowess which used to be Japan's strong point, it would also be a good news for the industrial world of Japan today to have this new asset, Santo International Patent and Trademark Office, initiated by the two young patent attorneys, inspired with strengths of flexible ideas independent of conventionalism and their abundant energy for actions.

Providing considerate supports made possible only through thorough knowledge in manufacturing

Strong support from "Manufacturing Specialists"

Santo International Patent and Trademark Office

With Mr. Takaki (right), a patent attorney and strong partner

The amazing advancement in IT (Information Technology) and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) has been accelerating the development of the information-based society, and it is possible to easily obtain various information in modern society. In rapidly changing social conditions, laws and regulations on intellectual properties are being revised almost annually.

Many inventors thus deplore, "We have filed patent applications, but we don't know what to do next." To respond to these pressing demands, Santo International Patent and Trademark Office has developed a support system in which each patent attorney is involved with sincerity and attention in each client consistently from beginning to end.

"In big offices, jobs are mostly divided into pieces. But, each of us is engaged in the entire operations of a client. Effective patents cannot be obtained merely by grasping an overview of a single technical aspect and mechanically preparing documents. Nor can they effectively implemented in that manner," Mr. Nagata emphasizes the merits of consistent services provided by each patent attorney at the Office.

Pointing out an essential point in patent acquisition, commonly known as time-consuming and cumbersome, both co-partners state, based on their extensive and abundant experiences, that unless meticulous steps are taken carefully, patents truly beneficial to corporate development cannot be acquired.

Mr. Takaki says, “I think it is crucial to present polite proposals to each client about what methods should be taken to secure better rights. The first thing we consider is what can truly benefit the client, and we provide supports necessary to utilize the acquired rights most effectively.”

As depicted in “Shitamachi Rocket,” a novel that won Naoki Prize, a prominent Japanese literary award, many Japanese small-to-medium ventures retain untapped reservoirs of extremely high technical prowess. However, due to their slim awareness about patents, they may frequently end up losing their valuable new inventions to major corporations or missing significant opportunities to acquire their proprietary rights.

Even after acquiring those rights, the more exceptional and innovative the technologies are, the greater the opportunities become that their exercises are hindered or their commercialization efforts are nipped out by major corporations trying to protect their vested interests.

As patent applications tend to be extremely expensive and require technical knowledge, the roles to be played by patent attorneys specializing in protecting the client’s engineering edge through intellectual property rights are becoming more and more relevant.

Many clients have highly acclaimed the meticulous supports provided by Mr. Nagata with marketing experiences as an engineer in a trading company and Mr. Takaki with technical experiences as a developer, both respecting and valuing each other’s expertise as “manufacturing specialists”.

Our motto is “To listen to each customer with sincerity and attention.”

Astute advice backing up clients' efforts in global expansion

Preventing problems with sound judgment and proper treatment

While the number of patent attorneys is increasing, the recent trend in patent offices is specialization in distinct fields. However, Santo International Patent and Trademark Office handles a wide variety of fields in both domestic and overseas patent applications.

"Our motto as experts in intellectual property rights is to support our clients' efforts in protecting and utilizing their intellectual properties to realize their true benefits," stresses Mr. Nagata.

Mr. Takaki says, "Clients' intellectual properties have, in fact, property values, but as they are intangible, they have to be securely protected and properly utilized. Because clients pursue their own true benefits differently, depending on their circumstances, we endeavor to provide our support to suit diverse and changing environments, always keeping flexibility in mind."

On the other hand, due to stagnating demands in the domestic market, more middle echelon/small-to-medium-sized enterprises contemplate expanding their operations into overseas markets in search of new market opportunities.

"Specifically, Southeast Asian countries are targeted by many companies for their future market development. With the current technological advancement and globalization trends, corporate strategies in intellectual properties are increasingly diversified and complicated. Under these circumstances, we are making specific efforts, among other things, in maintaining thorough communications with overseas agents and conducting detailed checks on revision status of overseas patent laws. We are now firmly determined, as experts in intellectual property rights, to be able to respond to our client's needs more promptly and properly with highly diversified views and enhanced visions," comments Mr. Nagata decisively.

Public policies for enhancement of protective measures for intellectual property rights are now promoted not only in China, the U.S., and Japan, the three biggest countries in terms of the number of patent applications, but also all over the world. Intellectual property rights, including patents, are now considered to constitute a major management strategy to survive the severe market competitions, in other words, a lifeline or a trump card for each company.

In addition, more and more companies are now threatened by patent-related overseas lawsuits. If they lose these cases, they may confront exorbitant amounts of damage compensations, etc. unimaginable in Japan, and be driven into a corner almost threatening their corporate existence. Practical advice of Mr. Nagata who used to be engaged in technical training in China, based on his hands-on knowledge and experience is highly evaluated by both domestic and overseas companies.

Time is now for strategic utilization of intellectual properties.

Consultation for promoting effective utilization of intellectual properties

With the advancement of the general trend of corporate globalization, the emphasis in intellectual property rights is now shifting from acquisition of rights to strategic utilization such as negotiations in licensing, infringement notices or lawsuits.

In conjunction with the national government policy promoting intellectual properties, local governments working on various subsidies, as well as reduction/exemption schemes, for patent costs, etc. are increasing. But, how about company efforts in this regard? It is regrettable to note that many companies lack in sufficient corporate resources for intellectual properties, including departments dedicated to operations in this field.

In order to enhance corporate intellectual property strategies, Santo International Patent and Trademark Office intends to put more emphasis on widening support areas, including such management assistance as consultation on strategies in intellectual property-related areas.

“Intellectual property rights are commonly believed to be utilized internally, but regrettably they are not actually put into effective use in many cases. Through lecture and seminar sessions, we would like to propose the most effective ways we have come up with for respective clients for effective utilization of intellectual property rights held by them in ever-changing situation,” Mr. Nagata speaks in a fervent tone.

In embarking on new business fields or introducing new products, intellectual property strategies play a crucial role. Specifically, they may be composed, for example, of “analyses of internal technological prowess,” “analyses of competing technological prowess” and “analyses of the general technological trends,” etc., which may require extensive knowledge and experience. Optimal intellectual property strategies have to be structured, based on sound business strategies.

Santo International Patent and Trademark Office

Offering prompt and meticulous services

"Once you can use intellectual property information to the fullest extent, you can use it as a crucial input to development of strategies. If you leave patent applications to personal judgment of researchers, engineers, or persons in charge, etc., effective intellectual property strategies cannot be established. We strongly recommend consulting specialists like us, who have handled a wide variety of cases successfully with abundant knowledge and experience accumulated in many years."

As Mr. Takaki explains, intellectual property rights cannot be linked to business opportunities unless their utilization methods are strategically studied based on the supposition of various business situations, including research and development, marketing, financing, advertising/sales channel development, etc.

It is their unique combination of Mr. Nagata and Mr. Takaki, who have built up practical experiences in a trading company and a machinery manufacturer, that makes it possible to enable their proper guidance and effective services suitable for diverse corporate needs.

Intellectual property strategies constitute a crucial challenge that can determine life or death of each company.
Patent attorneys you can trust to deliver customer-oriented services

While Santo International Patent and Trademark Office has successfully and consistently expanded its business with meticulous services since its foundation, Mr. Nagata and Mr. Takaki express ardent desires for more action.

Mr. Nagata speaks, "Our work as patent attorneys, specifically our competence and specific approaches, may determine our clients' success or failure in terms of their intellectual properties. As our client's fate may depend on our efforts, we are keenly aware of the gravity of our responsibility. It is our fervent desire to promote effective protection and utilization of each intellectual property that is each client's valuable asset, so that we can fulfill our social responsibility."

Mr. Takaki says in full expectation, "A word 'Santo,' meaning three metropolises in the name of our Office implies our sincere desire to be of service to diverse clients at various areas, as represented by the three great cities of Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan. We would like to work in more diverse business fields while constantly maintaining customer-oriented services."

There is another common aspect shared by these two expert patent attorneys; their love of children. Both Mr. Nagata and Mr. Takaki say that any effect of daily hard work will vanish when they play with their children on holidays.

Speaking calmly and exuding friendly and openhearted confidence, Mr. Nagata and Mr. Takaki continue their challenge assiduously for the lofty goal of "realizing true benefits for clients, as experts in intellectual property rights."

PROFILE

Toyohiko Nagata

Born in Oita Prefecture in 1973. Graduated from Human Environment Course of Faculty of Human Development of Kobe University, Hyogo Prefecture in 1997. Passed a national examination to be a patent attorney, after leaving a trading company and a patent office.

<Area of Expertise> Patent and Utility Model/Design/Trademark

Hidefumi Takaki

Born in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1980. Graduated from Course of Intelligent Machine of Faculty of Engineering of Kumamoto University, Kumamoto Prefecture in 2003. Completed First Semester of Doctorate of Graduate School of Science and Technology of Kumamoto University in 2005. Passed a national examination to be a patent attorney, after leaving a machinery manufacturer.

<Area of Expertise> Patent and Utility Model/Design/Trademark

INFORMATION

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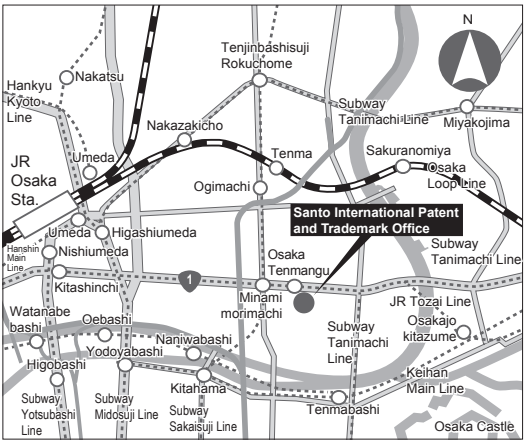

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