

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

For Mining Technology Company IMDEX, IP is at the Core of Innovation

The IP team at Australian mining technology provider IMDEX is not where you might expect to find them, firmly ensconced in the company's legal department like in many other organizations. Instead, they are embedded within the product management team, putting them at the core of innovation and product development. Helping the team, as they drill down into the IP implications of all this, is Anaqua's PATTSY WAVE® IP management platform.

Grainne Smith, Product IP Counsel at IMDEX, was instrumental in bringing PATTSY WAVE on board at IMDEX as she sought a trusted docketing software to replace the very rudimentary process that was in place when she joined the company. And Grainne, an experienced patent and trademark attorney who has worked both in-house and for IP law firms, has not been disappointed. In a recent interview, Grainne explained how PATTSY WAVE has already helped to transform the way the team works and looks forward to deriving further benefits from the system.

What are some of the key changes you've seen in IP management over the years?

Technology has been a great enabler and real game changer in the way that things are done. The tools that are available such as PATTSY WAVE and Anaqua's other IP management solutions, make the work of patent and trademark attorneys more manageable, with increased and more sophisticated levels of automation relieving them of some of the more mundane, tedious tasks so that they can focus on more value-added activity. The power of search engines has also definitely ramped up. With some of the highly advanced search services out there now and the increasing use of AI capabilities in search, I think we are going to see huge benefits for IP teams in terms of work efficiencies.

As an IP professional, how do you feel about sitting on the product side rather than within the legal department?

It's very interesting and I really enjoy it. We have engineers and teams developing products in different parts of the world, and we work with them right from the beginning of the project stages. So, we are very much at the core of the innovation lifecycle and product development, which enables us to identify from the start what needs to be done from an IP perspective, making sure NDAs are in place, checking on things that might have been missed, and trying to ensure the whole process is as watertight as possible.

We're only a two-person team and, naturally, we still work very closely with Legal as matters progress. Where we sit and how we are structured gives us a different perspective that I



think is valuable both from a product management and legal point of view. We're the link between the two.

With the IP team being so small, you must cover a broad range of responsibilities and activities in terms of managing the whole IP portfolio?

A Yes, we wear many hats - on both the patent and trademark sides. One of our biggest challenges is finding the time to do all the tasks we need to carry out more strategic activities, such as educational sessions to help colleagues better understand the importance and value of IP to a company like ours. We need to make sure that we keep things moving and that we meet all our deadlines. Of course, as I'm sure many people in our position find, the challenge is giving attention to all the critical things that require your time because you are busy meeting deadlines.

Are there any other challenges that come to mind?

As a small team within a global company, we rely heavily on outside firms. As a result, just keeping an eye on how work is progressing and ensuring that our execution is aligned across all the jurisdictions can be challenging. At the same time, tracking finances and budget to check that our agents aren't overspending can be tricky when you're depending on them to do a large amount of work, and need to decide when and where you need to rein them in.

Turning to your IP management technology, how is PATTSY WAVE helping you to meet some of these challenges?

When I joined IMDEX three years ago, we were managing a lot of our docketing activity in spreadsheets. We worked with an outside agent, and they were our source of truth. But that also meant that whenever we got a request from finance or our CEO for information about the portfolio, we'd have to go to the agent and ask them to run a report for us. We didn't have proper visibility. We couldn't easily generate that information ourselves.

One of the first things I did when I joined the company was to get a docketing system in house that we could rely on.

That's how PATTSY WAVE became our new "source of truth" - and it's been fantastic to have the information we need right at our fingertips. It's also saved us so much time and relieved us of many routine tasks that are now fully automated.

With PATTSY WAVE, we can just run regular dockets to make sure we don't miss any deadlines. We also use it a lot on the reporting side of the business, producing portfolio reports for different departments, for our finance teams, and when we have acquisitions. So being able to generate those reports quickly and easily is important.

Where is PATTSY WAVE being hosted for IMDEX, and are you using any other Anaqua products or services?

Initially, we were hosting it ourselves on-prem, but we've recently moved to the Anaqua server. This is making life

simpler and ensuring things run smoothly. It's great that updates happen automatically, rather than putting an additional burden on our in-house IT team to do the updates themselves.

We're also using Anaqua Services for our annuities and renewals, which is fully integrated with PATTSY WAVE. It's so helpful just to be able to jump in and check if something is scheduled or if something is being paid. Every now and then, I'll wake up in the middle of the night and be like, "Oh no, have I missed a payment?" Then I quickly look on PATTSY WAVE and realise that it's all under control.

I really appreciate that functionality - and being able to instruct from within PATTSY WAVE, there and then when I'm thinking about specific matters, rather than having to go away and log into a different system. That's very useful.

How do you think you might be able to better use PATTSY WAVE - and what enhancements would you like to see to PATTSY WAVE to further help you in your work?

We're currently underutilizing the reporting that's available through PATTSY WAVE, and that's something we'll be looking to improve. We're also interested in the links that are available through PATTSY WAVE to the AcclaimIP dashboards, and again, that's an area where we need time to sit down and take a proper look. We're hoping to get another person on board this year, and that will hopefully help free up time for us to do more of the strategic IP management that is enabled through PATTSY WAVE.

You've worked both in IP law firms and in-house roles. What for you are the differences and which do you prefer?

I've enjoyed both very much. For me, though, when you work in a firm, you're given a certain amount of time to talk to an inventor, and then you go off and draft a patent. There's a little bit of back and forth, but it's very structured and you can only get so deep into a technology before you need to move on and do something completely different. And that's great in terms of exposing you to different technologies and broadening your experience.

However, when you're working in-house, you become more deeply immersed in the organization and really start to understand all the different aspects of the technology and how they come together. You build relationships with the engineers and the scientists and see the whole process through from start to finish. You also get more exposed to the business and can become more of a business advisor. It's not just about one patent or trademark. It's about the entire portfolio and how that supports the business and how you can use IP to help the business move forward.

Imdex Limited

IMDEX is a leading global mining technology company that enables drilling contractors and resource companies to safely find, define and mine orebodies with precision and at speed. IMDEX provides live data to allow for accurate, real-time decisions, enabling its customers to mine with confidence and precision. The company's product offering includes an integrated range of drilling optimization products, cloud-connected rock knowledge sensors, and data and analytics to improve the process of identifying and extracting mineral resources for drilling contractors and resource companies globally. IMDEX's technologies and products allow smarter and safer decisions for people, assets and the earth.

Grainne Smith

Grainne is an experienced patent and trademark attorney who has worked both for IP law firms and in-house with corporations and government departments. At IMDEX, she is part of a small IP team, with a global remit, covering the company's entire innovation and IP management, and supported by a network of agents around the world.

052024