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CASE STUDY

Accessing Hard-to-Find Intelligence

Landscape

A group of patent holders participates in a patent pool to facilitate the licensing of a popular audio technical standard. In this instance, the patents are licensed to device makers who implemented one, or more, of a variety of the technologies defined by the standard. The technologies deliver varying levels of compression efficiency and latency management for the distribution of audio over networks and within discreet products.

Key Business Issues and Challenges

Members of the patent pool understood that technical specifications and product information was often scarce and not easily accessible. This made it extremely difficult to identify the use of specific technologies within products in the marketplace. The patent pool needed the skills of seasoned consumer electronics experts and, as a result, commissioned DTC to conduct a study assessing the relative use of the individual technologies within this family of standards.

DTC Customized Solution

DTC analyzed 23 categories of consumer electronics, including adjacent media capture-and-deliver products. The result was an in-depth analysis of the use of multiple technologies (as defined by the technical standard) that were licensed by the patent pool.

The study included the following:

- **An estimation model** for calculating relative use within product categories, as well as backward compatibility inherent in products with multiple subject technologies.
- **A multi-tiered internal research plan** for identifying the audio technology used in products where there is limited information publicly available. DTC's institutional knowledge and deep-rooted relationships within the consumer electronics and audio technology industries played a key role in information gathering.
- **Detailed technical and licensing tutorial** for the nine DTC analysts and researchers involved in the study.

- **An analysis of each of the product categories** and the ways the products use the audio technology. Featured analysis and research included:
 - The use of standards incorporating the different technologies (i.e., various digital TVs, digital radios, wireless communications, and streaming media devices)
 - The use of the audio standard within proprietary systems/products, such as headphones, audio speakers, and mobile phones and tablets (generally not proprietary at the codec level)
 - The characteristics and reasons for use within individual product categories (provided qualitative inputs for technology penetration estimates)
 - Identification of major suppliers who adopted the audio standard in their products
 - Detailed accounting of the methodology and assumptions made for relative-use estimates

Client Benefit

The production of an objective, third-party assessment allowed the patent pool to better understand how to license and manage the audio technologies being used by device makers—even when the appropriate information was difficult to obtain. Additionally, this data provided the patent pool with a high level of confidence in their decision-making because it reflected accurate real-world implementation of the various audio technologies.

ABOUT DTC

Since 1997, the global DTC research team is highly sought after for both the depth of knowledge and practical know-how it brings to the industry. From the United States to Europe and Asia, DTC analysts travel the world to bring clients the most up-to-date intelligence on consumer digital markets, making the company one of the most trusted industry resources for its extensive expertise and experience.