

GlaxoSmithKline: Integrating IP Data, Streamlining Docketing Processes, Increasing Timeliness of Payments, Reducing Maintenance Fees, and Improving IP Management



Size £21.4 billion/\$35.2 billion
 HQ London
 NYSE Symbol GSK
 IP Lawyers 105
 Countries 117
 Size of Patent Portfolio 44,000

Summary

Mergers leading to the creation of today's GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) began in 1989. Since that time, company executives have faced the unenviable task of integrating IP data from Glaxo, Wellcome, Beecham, and SmithKline Beckman into a cohesive IP management platform that meets the varied needs of this thriving pharmaceutical company. GSK turned to MDC (Master Data Center) as its ultimate solution provider for accurate, reliable, timely IP management.

GlaxoSmithKline Organisation

GlaxoSmithKline is a world-leading producer of prescription medicine, vaccines, and consumer healthcare products with £21.4 billion/\$35.2 billion in total company sales (2003 figures). GSK is responsible for 7% of the global pharmaceutical sales annually and supplies 23% of all vaccines around the world. It leads the way in respiratory, anti-viral, central nervous system, and diabetes medications, manufacturing over ten million packs of medicine daily. There are over 101,000 people employed by GSK in 117 countries.

GSK maintains a complex patent portfolio, with over 44,000 live records in its database and more than 30,000 annuity payments made yearly. These rights are managed at three different GlaxoSmithKline sites: Brentford in the United Kingdom, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Raleigh, North Carolina, in the United States. There are 105 patent attorneys employed by GSK to maintain its portfolio globally. A UK Patent Administration team supports the European attorneys in Brentford, Harlow, Stevenage, and Verona, and there are two similar support teams for US-based attorneys.

Business Issues

Dr. Peter Giddings is Head of Patent Administration and Information in the Corporate Intellectual Property Group at GlaxoSmithKline. One of his responsibilities is to ensure that all GSK inventions are properly filed, tracked, and maintained by the three support teams.

It is GlaxoSmithKline's mission to be the undisputable leader in their industry. They are driven to:

- Have the most productive drug discovery pipeline of all pharmaceutical companies in the world
- Be the best at product development
- Be the best licensing partner
- Protect past and future R&D funding through excellence in intellectual property

To accomplish these goals, Dr. Giddings quickly realised the need for a comprehensive, reliable, central repository to manage all of GSK's patent rights. This was not an easy task to tackle, given the fact that GlaxoSmithKline is a culmination of four separate companies, each with its respective intellectual properties and portfolios.

Prior to 1989, there existed four unique pharmaceutical organisations: Glaxo, Wellcome, Beecham, and SmithKline Beckman. In 1989, Beecham and SmithKline Beckman merged to form SmithKline Beecham (SB). About six years later, Glaxo and Wellcome joined forces to become Glaxo Wellcome (GW). And, in 2000, these two organisations merged to form GlaxoSmithKline.

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*Dr. Peter J. Giddings
Head of Patent
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Corporate Intellectual Property Group
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Each organisation had its own way of handling its intellectual property and had different sized IP portfolios. SmithKline Beckman managed its innovation assets using MDC’s VS Master, an early version of the company’s current IPMaster product. The other three companies handled their intellectual property using other IP management systems.

With each commingling of intellectual property came the conversion of IP content to a new, unified platform. This involved time-consuming initiatives such as field mapping, data integrity checks, validations, and conversions. In addition to these issues, each team faced the challenge of tracking new filings and managing payments for the respective rights.

MDC Solution

Following the merger of SB and GW in 2000, GSK selected MDC as its IP solution provider. SB and SmithKlineBeckman had been using MDC’s VSMaster and annuity payment services since the early 1970’s; MDC’s excellent track record with legacy organisations was a significant factor in their selection.

Dr. Giddings and his teams at GlaxoSmithKline rely upon MDC as an established and experienced solution provider that:

- Provides an integrated software and payment service offering
- Has a global presence with offices in North America, Europe, and Asia
- Has a proven annuity payment service, paying more than 400,000 rights each year around the world
- Has the industry’s most comprehensive and current commercial Rules database
- Has a forward-thinking, competitive philosophy, and a track record for success
- Provides attentive, knowledgeable customer and technical support

Conclusion

Today, Dr. Giddings and the patent management team at GSK continue to benefit from their relationship with MDC.

“MDC’s IPMaster software is an excellent system for managing our complex intellectual property portfolio and meeting our business objectives,” said Dr. Giddings. “There are 44,000 live records in our IP database and we make anywhere from 500 - 1000 changes to this content each week. This is in addition to filing approximately 400 patent series each year (in over 70 different countries) and receiving in excess of 4000 grants annually (based on our 2003 data). GlaxoSmithKline needs a reliable, robust, trustworthy system and MDC’s IPMaster has provided us with a stable foundation to build our department. This, in conjunction with MDC’s exceptional annuity payment services makes them the best solution for our organisation. MDC’s products and services have assisted us in meeting our ever-growing strategic objectives and to assist GlaxoSmithKline in maintaining its IP management excellence.”

