

Murgitroyd & Company: Delivering superior intellectual property services with MDC annuity payment expertise and technology

Murgitroyd & Company trusts the expertise, IP rules management, and technology provided by Master Data Center (MDC), part of Thomson Scientific, to facilitate predictable, reliable, and accurate patent renewal payments.

MURGITROYD & COMPANY

Among the largest and most progressive firms of European Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys, Murgitroyd & Company (“Murgitroyd”) has extensive experience helping to manage and protect the intellectual property (IP) portfolios of leading organizations worldwide — across all industrial sectors. It has a staff of over 180, including approximately 60 professional staff operating from nine European offices with direct representation rights before the European Patent Office (EPO) and Community Trade Mark Office (OHIM) and many national patent offices and trade mark registries in Europe.

Murgitroyd has a deserved reputation for providing practical, commercially relevant, and technically accurate advice. As an ISO 9001 quality-certified organization, it places great emphasis on customer service excellence, anticipating potential areas of difficulty and resolving problems effectively.

To manage client IP portfolios efficiently, Murgitroyd utilizes a proprietary case management system that facilitates the sharing of information with clients, including providing secure web-based client access to case and file information and correspondence.

BUSINESS ISSUES

Assisted by ISO 9001 quality management system standards, Murgitroyd consistently strives to improve and refine business processes to achieve high customer satisfaction. The business has continued to expand as planned, and in 2004 Murgitroyd embarked on an exhaustive 6-month search for a strategic partner to help streamline the payment of over 4,000 client patent annuity payments annually. The effort was led by Keith Turner, the General Manager responsible for Business Development, and a small project team of experienced IP administrative staff, IT specialists and attorneys.

As a part of the evaluation and selection process, the Murgitroyd team developed a detailed require-

ments document and questionnaire that was sent to prospective service providers. “We looked at 4 vendors in the marketplace. Unlike the other providers, MDC didn’t simply give us a proposal with pricing on our requirements,” said Mr. Turner. “MDC came back wanting to learn more about what we wanted and needed to accomplish. They looked beyond our current situation and took the time to understand our business and technical systems and processes.

They showed a willingness to look at alternative ways of doing things. And they got the right people involved very early on in the project.”

CORPORATE PROFILE

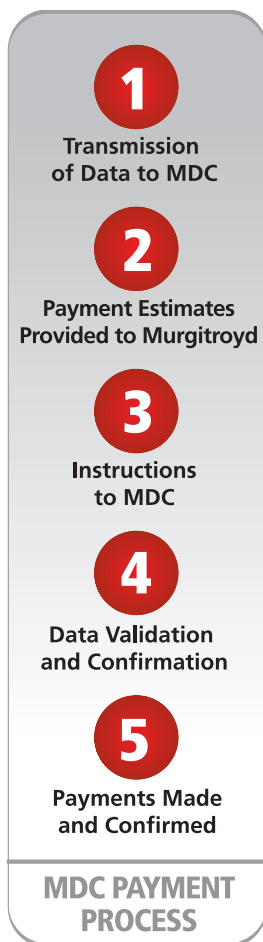
MURGITROYD & COMPANY

European Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys

Size £18 million, worldwide
 HQ Glasgow, UK
 Countries 9 European offices
 Patents 4,000+
 Professionals 60

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Keith Turner
General Manager
Business Development
Murgitroyd & Company



THE MDC PATENT ANNUITY PAYMENT SERVICES SOLUTION

To deliver the most effective solution that would meet the customized needs of Murgitroyd, MDC first planned and designed a pilot program that would test a select number of patent cases for renewal payments. The pilot program allowed for careful planning and quality assurance before a full launch. Throughout the pilot, both technical and business process interface procedures between the two organizations were tested and refined.

As Mr. Turner explains, “We were able to systematically test and review the renewals process on a step-by-step basis and build confidence. MDC’s front-end planning made it all go more smoothly. We grew confident that if problems did occur, they would be solved quickly and efficiently.”

Following the success of the pilot program, Murgitroyd engaged MDC to undertake all patent annuity payments on its behalf. The key steps that enable Murgitroyd to ensure a reliable, accurate patent payment process include:

1 Transmission of Data – Patent portfolio data listing cases due for payment is extracted from Murgitroyd’s database and sent electronically to MDC for processing.

2 Patent Decision Package Prepared – MDC creates a report listing the cases due for payment

and the cost of each. The reports generated are customized to Murgitroyd’s needs.

3 Report Review & Instructions – Murgitroyd imports the incoming cost data into e-mails and letters automatically generated by its proprietary IT system. For larger clients, Murgitroyd is able to generate annual schedules. Murgitroyd clients are then able to review each case and specify whether each should be paid, held, or abandoned.

4 Validation and Confirmation – MDC runs Murgitroyd’s data listing cases due for payment and associated data through a series of internal checks and balances to verify the validity of information and ensures that it meets specific country requirements for payment processing. MDC also reviews Murgitroyd’s data to verify whether retroactive IP rules changes or database updates at Murgitroyd require payment for a prior processing period. Once complete, the data is then processed per the instructions provided.

5 Final Confirmation – Following payment, MDC creates a final confirmation list of all cases paid and provides Murgitroyd with receipt of each payment.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately Murgitroyd required more than just a standard patent annuity payment solution; it required a customized solution backed by a responsive, forward-thinking team. In selecting MDC as its partner, Murgitroyd chose a peer offering equally high standards of quality customer service.

As a result, Murgitroyd is assured that its patent renewal payments are reliably and efficiently paid on time.

Mr. Turner concludes, “MDC has provided Murgitroyd with a combination of responsiveness, reliability, and flexibility in technology, and a willingness to adapt this to our business requirements. The transition to the new procedures took place as planned and within the expected timescales. The ongoing day-to-day renewals payment processes now in place between our renewals department and MDC are working well. It runs very smoothly.”