

French innovations deserve reinforced protection

Poor IP strategies may often be the explanation for the failure of French companies at international level.

To those who still doubt the ability of French technologies to conquer the world, I would suggest to look at what just happened with the iPhone 6 released this week.

Among others features, this brand new Apple device embodies secured payment and contactless data sharing, thanks to the implementation of NFC technology (Near Field Communication), as previously implemented by Samsung, LG or Sony.

Inside Secure is a French company that pioneered this NFC technology. Created in Aix-en-Provence (France), Inside Secure makes 95% of its sales abroad and is currently positioning itself as a major stakeholder in the market for embedded security systems in mobile and connected devices. Inside Secure's technology is present all over the world, confirming unarguably that France can export in the high-tech sector. One pre-requisite is that the necessary patent protection is taken, enabling a worldwide and long-term expansion.

French innovation is much sought after.

Poor IP strategies count among the main causes of failure in companies' international expansion. Other flaws have often been highlighted regarding investment and competitiveness - but French public debate keep focusing too often on failures, whereas our country has skills and knowledge. Thus, beyond our traditional strengths (demographics, infrastructure and education) we are a country of invention, innovation and creation in every area: technology, infrastructure, energy, tourism, luxury, marine technology, green chemistry, digital etc. We have large industrial groups, middle size companies and SMEs or start-ups that manage to perpetuate innovative activities thanks to smart and cutting-edge business models.

If our creativity is a valuable asset, it is coveted by others and is likely to be vulnerable. Whether small or large, companies are not fully aware of the danger and/or can neither handle technically nor financially afford the efforts that are needed to defend such assets, at least not by themselves.

What is needed is an expertise allowing us to develop a consistent and protective IP strategy, to define a sound program to monetize intangible assets (making the right choices in terms of geographical scope and the type of protection from a global perspective).

In this environment we can rely on big public allies. State backed investment fund France Brevets, an affiliate of the 'Caisse des Depots' (French public bank) and the French state which has been created in 2011, plays a unique role in accompanying us and other entrepreneurs in complex and often long-lasting processes to monetize our innovations.

France Brevets sent out a strong signal by signing in mid-August a worldwide agreement with LG on NFC technology – which is protected by Inside Secure's patents. Such a signal will echo even more strongly as such technology is implemented in the recently released iPhone 6.

France Brevets has just proved that French patent holders can protect advanced technologies worldwide, even against big players in a given industrial field. Inside Secure was able to have its rights enforced by France Brevets' experts, after they discussed with LG in a constructive, smart and determined manner. They convinced their counterparts of the interest in becoming a licensee, and encouraged them to reward us for our patents.

Thanks to this agreement Inside Secure enjoys a substantial return on its R&D investments, which benefit the entire value of the company... Such situation fosters further investment in research.

French innovators must be aware of this virtuous circle. Becoming fully accustomed to such mind-set is one of the key conditions for French innovators to maintain their position of leadership throughout the world.

Paris, September 10th, 2014 - Remy de Tonnac, CEO of Inside Secure

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