

Short interview with Mr. Sumit Luthra at the 6.ITTC meeting

Sumit Luthra was an invited speaker at The 6th International Technology Transfer Conference at the Brdo Estate that took place on 17th of September. In his talk he emphasized the value of the Intellectual Property for large and medium size companies. Sumit Luthra works for BTO as an Intellectual Property Manager. Born in India, he possesses diverse international experiences in Asia, Asia Pacific and Europe. Before joining BTO he worked as an Analyst for Auckland UniServices, IP Commercialization Company in New Zealand and as an IT consultant for 2 years at IBM in India and United Kingdom. He did his Bachelors of Technology Degree from National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra in India and Masters in Business & Intellectual Property Management from School of Intellectual Capital Management (ICM), Chalmers University\Gothenburg University, Sweden. He has completed his certification in European & Chinese IP law from School of Law, The George Washington University, USA.

Mr. Sumit Luthra thank you again for giving us an interesting talk about the IP Management and being a member of the evaluation committee for the Award for Innovative/Inventive Project. We have just listened to 5 presentations of innovative technologies with business potential that were presented by Slovenian researchers that see the opportunity for commercializing their innovations in the start up or licensing out to industrial partners. How did you find this presentations?

I was sincerely impressed by the presentations and I am not saying it just to be nice. I didn't expect the presentations to be that well prepared from the perspective of commercialization & Intellectual Property. Preparations for the pitch were excellent. We were thinking of doing something like that in Bergen too and would want the presentations to be at the similar level as your presentations and would like to have similar pitch preparations.

Could you please compare them with your office project cases?

Most of the inventions that enter our office are mix of early stages & midway between early\late stage ideas. Researchers have an idea what they would like to do. We evaluate their ideas and proceed with IP protection and commercialization.

Do you cover similar topics and similar level of development stage?

We cover various topics and the level of developmental stage varies from project to project.

Which presentation did you like the most and why? What were the strengths of your favorite presentations?

I liked the most the anti-corrosion presentation. If the presented numbers are correct, than the technology has a big market size and a good commercial potential. Also, the researchers seem to know what they are doing, they are serious and motivated guys. They filed a patent application and are dealing with their technology seriously. The pooling factor for this technology is definitely big market size.

If these technologies were to enter commercialization at BTO how would you evaluate them and by which criteria would you choose the technology for commercialization by BTO?

We evaluate different factors we examine prior art, analyze the inventive step ,perform market research and potential to commercialize the technology. Analysis of the prior art and the novelty of the technology is definitely not enough. To us the biggest decision factor that help us to decide whether or not to commercialize the technology is market potential. Even if technology is new and inventive, there is no point of starting the commercialization if the market doesn't look attractive.

How important is for you IP protection by patent application? And how much does the IP protection impact your choice to whether or not to commercialize the technology?

IP protection is definitely very important. After the evaluation process of the technology we decide how the intellectual property will be protected. The way the technology is IP protected depends on the nature of technology.

The researchers that enter our office and want to file a patent application are at various stages of the technology development. Often the technology is only at the idea level and would require a lot of development before commercialization. How do you deal with different stages of technology development?

For most of the technologies at early stage we do market & literature review to see if someone else has tried to do the same. For mid or late stage projects we do analysis (market, IP) and decide what all projects should enter commercialization phase. ..

Researcher with inventions are often overwhelmed with the idea of starting up their companies. How do you encourage researchers to start up a company?

We try different ways, especially with good examples of successful spin-out companies and by offering them equity. At end of the day we want them to be motivated & be on board to work on the idea in newly created venture.

How many technologies that enter your office are commercialized through start ups?

Maybe 5-6% percent, it is hard to estimate. We are still a young technology transfer office.

Mr. Luthra how do you enjoy your staying here in Slovenia?

I really like it, I will definitely return to Slovenia for vacation. I arrived 2 days ago and stayed in the nearby village, so had an opportunity to cycle around and I really enjoyed myself. Also, the Brdo Estate is very beautiful.



Sumit Luthra giving lecture at 6ITTC conference at Brdo Estate, September 2013