

The power of communication



When Research In Motion, the company behind the revolutionary BlackBerry, needed a dedicated system to manage its IP portfolio, it chose CPA Memotech 2004. The new system has increased automation, improved communication with stakeholders and established a platform for invention management, as RIM's **George Babu** explains to Elodie Brice



The Canadian company Research In Motion (RIM) shot to fame with the launch of the BlackBerry system. BlackBerry devices have developed into a complete communication

tool – a mobile phone with a web browser and the ability to send and receive e-mail on the move. It's a device that has revolutionised the world of wireless communication and brought RIM to the attention of the business world.

Established in 1984, RIM had already built up a large IP portfolio in the wireless communication industry even before it introduced the BlackBerry. Its team of 17 IP specialists maintains and protects a global portfolio of active patent applications and over 200 global patents. With such a busy workload, RIM needed an efficient IP management system, and, unsatisfied with its existing Microsoft Access database, the company started looking for alternatives.

RIM evaluated eight different products before deciding on CPA Memotech 2004.

'We felt it was the only package capable of monitoring our entire portfolio,' says George Babu. 'The fact that it was fully web-based also meant that the IP staff in our three North American offices could all access the same patent data at the same time.'

Meeting RIM's reporting needs

Importantly for a global company with multiple registrations and renewals, the software suite incorporates patent laws to ensure that vital deadlines are docketed and monitored. Thanks to its Crystal Reports system, it also provides a sophisticated reporting function which allows users to generate reports on request. As George explains: 'Our staff can produce the reports

themselves, rather than having to ask the IT team to provide them. This is a much more effective way to handle simple requests. It has made the whole process less time-consuming: it used to take a week to generate some reports; now it takes a few hours.'

Improving internal communication

The software suite has not simply automated RIM's internal processes and improved productivity; it has also allowed RIM to transform communication between its internal departments. 'IP is no longer at the disposal of the IP department alone,' says George. 'Licensing, as well as the finance, payroll and marketing departments, are all looking for increased collaboration and access to the company's IP portfolio.'

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'Our IP department used to be bombarded with questions from different business units, but it was unable to deliver information quickly enough or with sufficient detail because it lacked the right tools and technology. With CPA Memotech 2004, we are able to share access to IP data much more effectively with other business units.'

The software suite's reporting function can also provide RIM with information that it could not extract from its old database. 'When the licensing department needs to know what's in our portfolio within a certain technology area, we can easily meet their needs,' explains George. 'All the relevant data can be extracted

from the database, placed in a report and delivered to them on time.' RIM also makes certain custom reports available on its enterprise reports server, allowing other business units to run the reports themselves, rather than relying on the IP department to do it for them.

Invention submissions on-line

For a company with a reputation for bringing cutting-edge technology to the market, it's important that RIM has an efficient submission process in place. In the past, inventors had to complete a Word template and e-mail it to an internal patent mailing list. RIM is now using the Invention Submission module of CPA Memotech 2004 to facilitate each submission. The

Invention Submission module has been adapted to RIM's internal process, as George explains: 'We can now handle most of the process via the web, allowing inventors to submit and manage their inventions on-line.'

RIM is now looking to explore the software suite's on-line evaluation facility and use the e-mail templates it provides to automatically notify inventors of their invention's status at a given stage. This is an exciting time for RIM, and the best is yet to come.

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