



THE ROLE OF IP IN EUROPE'S TECH START-UPS

Survey preview

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**IDEAS
MATTER.**

SCIENCE | BUSINESS

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Introduction

Europe's talented researchers are the key to driving economic growth. To better understand what contributes to the development and success of young entrepreneurial technology companies in Europe, Science|Business, in collaboration with the Ideas Matter consortium carried out a survey of past candidates for the Academic Enterprise Awards (ACES), asking them about the role and value of IP in their company.

The ACES is a pan-European competition among companies spun out from universities – to recognise the best academic entrepreneurs from across all technology disciplines. To date, ACES has helped to put the spotlight on approximately 70 of Europe's most promising technology spin-outs. The winners are individuals who created companies based on cutting-edge research.

Yet, technology breakthroughs are no guarantee of success for spin-outs. While the challenges may be somewhat different for university based researchers when compared to those in other sectors, there remain some fundamental aspects such as a solid business model and market savvy that help to underpin success. Even though there is no one-size-fits-all approach that Europe can deploy to better ensure the commercial success of its entrepreneurs, impetus should be given to raising awareness and understanding about the early stage essentials.

In a survey carried out by the Science|Business Innovation Board in 2013 on 147 technology transfer offices (TTOs) around Europe, 51 per cent of TTO managers responded that their researchers lost the possibility of patent protection on a regular basis due to premature public disclosure. When placed in the context of the recent findings of a report carried out by the European Commission Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) and the European Patent Office (EPO) stating that approximately 35 per cent of all employment in the EU stems from IPR-intensive industries, it is easy to see how this is a loss for all. At a time when Europe is making its biggest push yet for SMEs, these findings provide new spur to tackle the problems.

The Survey

This preview of the survey carried out by Science|Business in collaboration with the Ideas Matter consortium aims to pinpoint current attitudes and experience with IP in starting a business. To do that, Science|Business surveyed all successful candidates in the ACES programme.

We received responses from a total of 35 candidates from 14 EU countries plus Norway and Israel. All of the companies are less than a decade old and most are continuing to grow while 3 have been bought.

Below are some highlights and charts of some of the more interesting findings. We intended to release the full report later this month.

Highlights

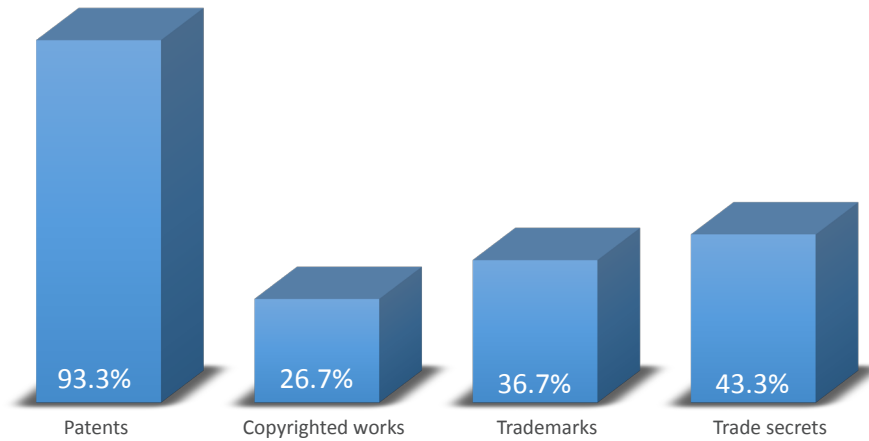
- Around 72 per cent of those surveyed said that IP played a significant role in the growth of the company.

Reasons given were that IP:

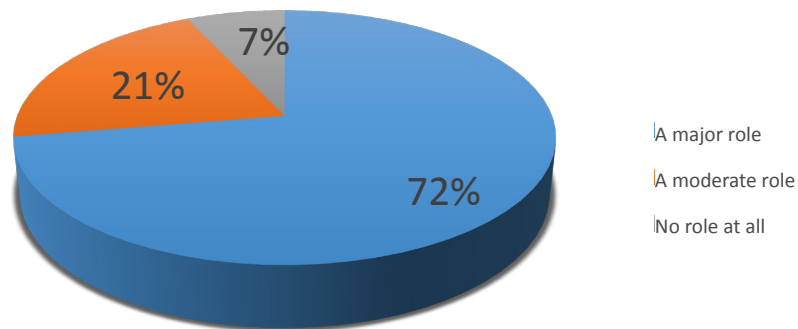
1. Attracted investment
 2. Protected against competitors
 3. Distinguished their businesses from others
 4. Increased credibility
- All respondents to the question about difficulties experienced when trying to secure IP through registration with an appropriate authority said it was expensive.
 - Of those, 28 per cent said they developed technologies that they did not file for IP protection, and now wish they had.
 - To manage their IP, 68 per cent of respondents have a stated business strategy for IP.
 - Around 54 per cent of respondents said that they were not familiar with IP matters when they started their company. Following that, 70 per cent said that they think IP training would be most useful for graduate students before starting a company, and only four per cent said no training is necessary because "IP can be left to experts".
 - Around 71 per cent of the respondents said that they see a need for more IP training for spin-out entrepreneurs with the same amount saying it would be more useful as a graduate student or young researcher before starting a company.

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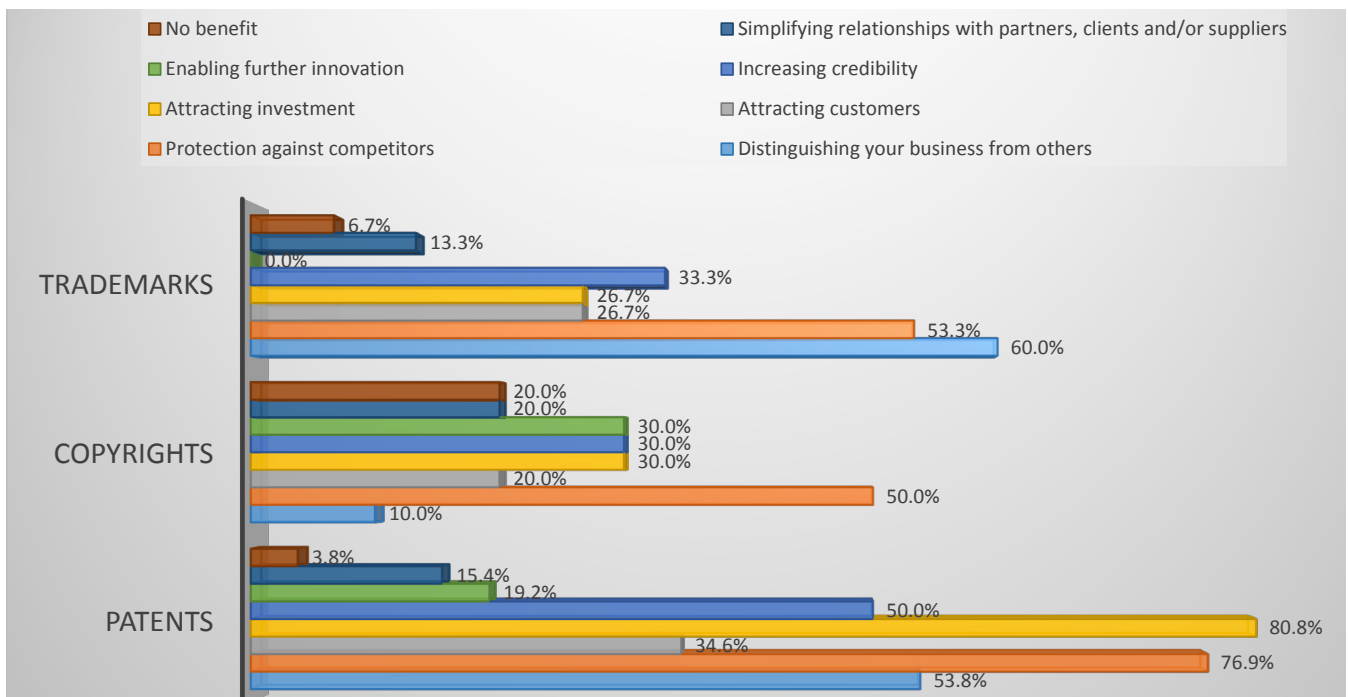
What types of IP do you create and own?



How important a role has IP played in the growth of your company?



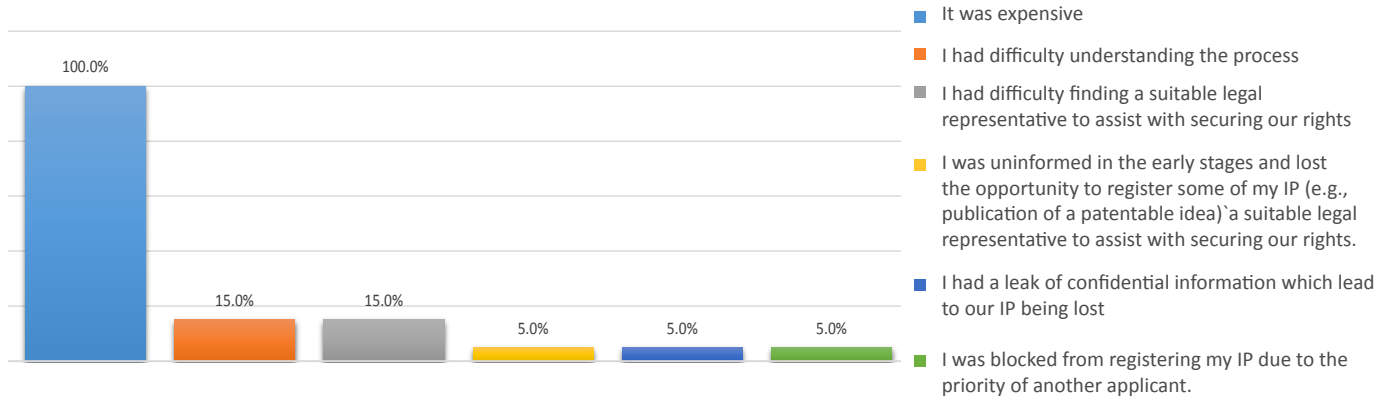
Benefits of IP



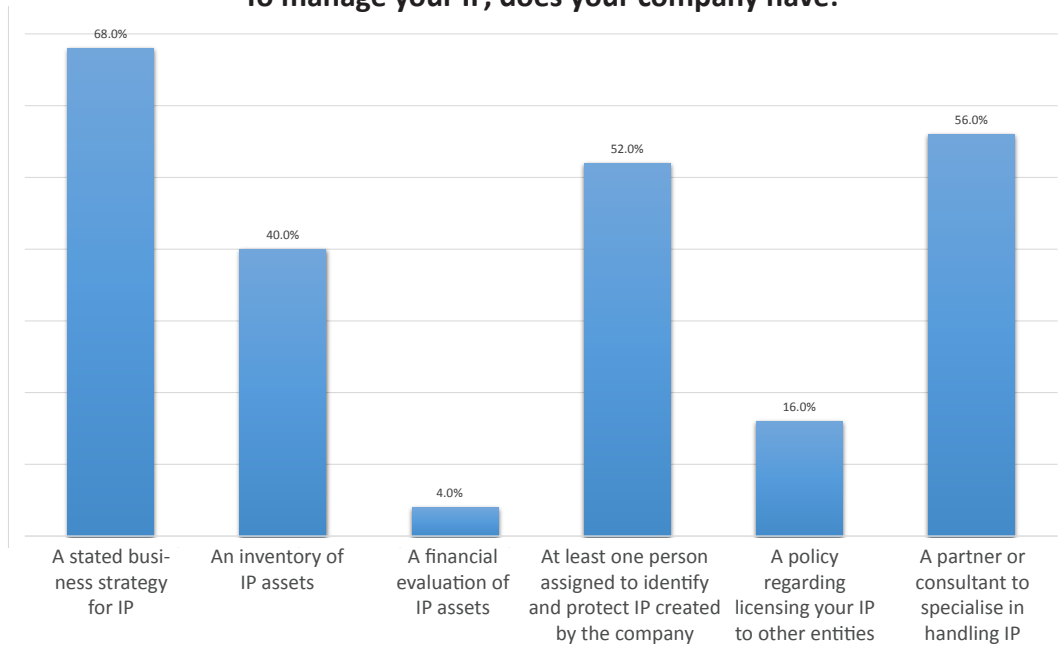
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When you decided to apply for IP protection, did you have any of the following difficulties trying to secure your IP through registration with an appropriate authority (like the European Patent Office, OHIM, or a national-level intellectual property office)? (Select all that apply)



To manage your IP, does your company have:



Do you see a need for more IP training for spin-out entrepreneurs?

