



## Applying the 4 P's to Get to "The Science of the Deal"

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Fuentek's proven methodology of applying the Deal-Making 4 P's can help position your Technology Transfer Office (TTO) to more consistently and predictably execute licensing and partnership agreements for your institution. The 4 P's can take your organization's deal making from an art to a science, improving your overall success rate of transforming technology disclosures into deals. The Deal-Making 4 P's are:

- **Planning.** Effective planning includes establishing a strategy with supporting goals that deliver the greatest return on investment (ROI) from limited resources. It is imperative to implement practices that position your organization to focus on delivering results in line with your institution's goals.
- **People.** While it may be obvious that your goals should include attracting, recruiting, and retaining qualified professionals for positions within your TTO, the challenge of doing so can often be considerable. Additional key tactical and strategic details and procedures demand your attention, including your on-boarding process, establishing mentors for new staff members, and developing the right sourcing strategy for personnel to support your mission.
- **Process.** Institutionalizing "just enough" process discipline (the extent to which you define and follow specific steps for activities) across your TTO will enable your office to be agile and efficient, positioning your organization to deliver consistent high quality services within stated time and resource constraints. Process institutionalization requires a conscious effort to define, document, communicate, and train your staff on key activities within your organization, such as evaluating commercialization potential and required documentation from prospective licensees before an agreement is signed.
- **Platform.** Your TTO can achieve tremendous efficiency and effectiveness by taking advantage of modern, low-cost, widely available technology solutions. These tools include IP asset management database applications (from online invention disclosure submission to docket tracking to recording licenses), calendaring and scheduling, instant messaging, websites, e-mail marketing,



Web conferencing, blogs, wikis, microblogging and other social media tools. It is important that the tools you deploy are intuitive and not overly complex and that they help rather than hinder your key professionals in performing their jobs effectively.

More about each of these appears below.

### ***Planning***

Planning requires a conscious commitment to reserve and invest the time to review the projects, trends, and key metrics for your office. This is certainly easier said than done, but is essential to providing effective leadership for your TTO. Several questions to contemplate in this area include:

- How do you keep your staff focused and not distracted by lower priority tasks and initiatives that prevent your organization from achieving stated goals (i.e., licensing deals)?
- For the technologies you are actively marketing at this time, how many resources (time and funding) have you already expended and expect to spend before a deal is signed? Is the expected revenue stream from the deal greater than the cost?
- Do your operational metrics reflect progress toward achieving your institutional and TTO goals, or are you just capturing and reporting on readily available metrics? For more about metrics, check out our paper “How’d We Do?: Establishing Useful Technology Transfer Metrics,” which is available on our Web site (<http://www.fuentek.com>).

If you find that you are spending a disproportionate amount of time on activities that are not directly impacting your goals, you should consider re-evaluating the current set of goals to ensure they are appropriate for your organization, or re-distribute priorities and responsibilities to make sure those who should be driving your goals have the time and resources to do their jobs. Planning who should do what and for which projects is most important and will help your office focus its resources appropriately and achieve your goals more effectively.

### ***People***

Managing the people in your organization is critically important and may often be your most challenging responsibility. It requires a considerable effort to attract, recruit, and retain experienced and qualified professionals for all positions across your organization. Additional processes that are essential to building and maintaining an effective and efficient team include your on-boarding process,



establishing mentors for new staff members, and developing the right sourcing strategy for personnel to support your mission.

Each of these elements is critical to building an efficient and effective organization. For instance, you will not succeed just by hiring well-seasoned entrepreneurs if you don't have a program in place to mentor them on the technology transfer goals and procedures specific to your organization. Several questions to contemplate in this area include:

- What key competencies are you missing today (from technical knowledge to negotiating skills) and what will you need in 6 to 12 months as your R&D organization grows or changes?
- How will you recruit associates with the appropriate skills and experience level, and what portion do you need fulltime versus on an as-needed basis?
- What personnel investments are you making to develop key organizational relationships across your institution? Are these relationships strong or do you need a different personality as your liaison?
- What investments are you making to improve your team's ongoing capabilities and competencies in order to impact your goals?

### ***Process***

Fuentek proposes institutionalizing "just enough" process discipline throughout your TTO to improve your agility and efficiency, and to deliver consistent high-quality services within stated time and resource constraints. Process institutionalization requires a focused and conscious effort to define, document, communicate, and train your staff on key processes within your organization, such as a specific set of criteria that must be met for a start-up to license a technology or the license application forms used for all negotiations. Like the majority of management and leadership responsibilities, the concepts are rather straightforward, but can be challenging to execute successfully.

While it is critical to design a well-conceived process, it is even more important to institutionalize the process to deliver actual results (i.e., licensing deals). Several questions to contemplate in this area include:

- Have you developed standard templates to support your evaluation, assessment, marketing and licensing processes?



- Do you provide all potential licensees with consistent instructions, application forms and base license agreement templates (with no specific business terms) when they request a license?
- Have you cultivated an internal culture that promotes feedback and continuous process improvement?
- Do you proactively consider the organizational impact that various changes may have across your operation?

### ***Platform***

Your TTO can greatly improve efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging modern, low-cost, readily available technology solutions such as IP asset management database applications, calendaring and scheduling, instant messaging, websites, e-mail marketing, Web conferencing, blogs, wikis, microblogging, and other social media tools. It is important that the tools you deploy are intuitive and not overly complex, helping rather than hindering your staff in performing their jobs effectively. Your platform of technology solutions should also be as synergistic as possible to maximize the productivity of your TTO associates.

Regularly evaluate the ROI your organization is receiving from your technology solutions. Solutions should be evaluated in terms of the delivery of positive results (based on both objective and subjective criteria), as well as an examination of whether they are streamlining or impeding your key processes. Several questions to contemplate in this area include:

- Has your office invested in technology solutions that support and encourage communication, collaboration, and teamwork throughout your office and across your institution?
- Do your tools facilitate workflow and project management? Do you know where each project currently stands and how much time has been invested in it?
- Do you have easy and intuitive access to your key databases, or have they become a “black hole” for your critical information? Can you retrieve the patent or marketing status in real time?

*If you would like to discuss the concepts presented here in further detail, please contact Fuentek at [info@fuentek.com](mailto:info@fuentek.com) or 919-249-0327.*