

Kinetic Concepts Inc (KCI) is a leading global medical technology company devoted to understanding, developing and commercialising innovative, high technology transformational healing solutions for customers and patients in more than 25 countries around the world. A pioneer in negative pressure wound therapy, the company's Vacuum Assisted Closure Therapy (V.A.C. Therapy) has been clinically demonstrated to help promote wound healing. KCI's proprietary technologies have revolutionised the way in which caregivers treat a wide variety of wound types with V.A.C. Therapy used on more than seven million patients worldwide.

KCI is committed to advancing the science of healing and positively impacting patient care by developing customer-driven innovation to meet the evolving needs of healthcare professionals. To protect its innovations and proprietary approach to wound healing, each year KCI files a significant number of US patent applications and nationalises a significant number of foreign applications using the corresponding Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) application.

### With growth, comes change

Prior to the 1995 introduction of V.A.C. Therapy, KCI had handled all of its patent preparation and prosecution work in-house. The tremendous growth and market adoption of V.A.C. Therapy as a standard of care for advanced wounds required that the company devote more resources each year to R&D, product refinement, expansion and intellectual property. By 2006, KCI's growth necessitated a review of its domestic and foreign filing procedures. KCI's team for handling international patent filings was looking for better ways to improve its business.

KCI knew it needed to consolidate the number of outside firms under engagement and to find a solution to help improve efficiency levels and reduce its administrative and overhead burden associated with foreign filings.

"We were being inundated with emails from all around the world. We simply couldn't keep up with the minute-to-minute communication requirements of the business," says Bill Mason, the associate general counsel of IP at KCI responsible for the management of the company's patent portfolio. "More importantly, we needed to free up the time our paralegals and attorneys were spending on admin tasks so that they could focus on more strategic, organisational matters."

KCI first heard about inovia by word-of-mouth—a former co-worker of a paralegal had suggested it check out the platform. To vet inovia further, KCI did a cost analysis exercise comparing the services offered by others in view of inovia.

"We quickly realised the cost benefit of inovia. We didn't need to look any further," says Mason.

### KCI takes a chance on a new solution

Since its founding in 2002, inovia has grown to become one of the largest foreign filing providers in the world. More than 1000 companies, law firms and universities have used its online platform, inovia.com, to reduce the cost and complexity of their PCT national stage entry, direct Paris Convention filing, European patent validation and patent translation work. The company combines a robust technology platform with a global network of foreign associates in more than 120 countries to create value for its clients.

"It was important to us that the platform be embraced by our outside counsel, that it could easily scale to meet the evolving needs of our business and that we could justify and show return-on-investment," shares Mason.

Throughout its 10-year history, inovia has been instrumental in changing the industry's way of thinking about outsourced IP solutions—putting an emphasis on cost, quality and efficiency. The introduction of cutting-edge functionality like the '1-click quote' tool and 'agent choice' have been quickly embraced by the industry and played an instrumental role in KCI's selection of inovia, as well as the subsequent long-term relationship that has followed.

At the beginning of the inovia deployment, the KCI IP legal team did routine measurement and cost analysis for upper management and its board. Inovia allowed them to generate accurate and detailed cost estimates for upcoming cases, itemising the service, government and translation costs per country. In instances where KCI selected its own agents, they could easily compare their fees to those of inovia's agents. This immediate cost comparison proved to be an effective tool for managing its outside relationships and for justifying IP legal costs within the organisation.

"The beauty of inovia is its ability to deliver information quickly, to improve communication with our outside counsel, and the flexibility to customise the inovia.com instruction platform by being able to use our own agents if desired. The ease-of-use, peace-of-mind, and accelerated ROI have been remarkable," continues Mason.

### A win-win for all: KCI, Dentons LLP and its European agent

As KCI began consolidating the number of outside US firms under engagement, Dentons LLP began working with KCI and inovia to help reduce the cost of foreign filing. Not only has inovia saved KCI on time, expense and productivity improvements, but Dentons and KCI's other US counsel responsible for the bulk of its foreign filings have also benefited.

Diane Godzisz, paralegal with Dentons, explains: "Receiving reminders about upcoming

cases removes a layer of stress and replaces it with a layer of productivity. Before inovia, handling a filing for KCI could take half a day to prepare. Filing a foreign application the old way involved preparing an individual letter for each foreign associate. With inovia it takes three minutes to place an order."

Daily communication between client and law firm has improved with inovia and billing practices associated with foreign filings have been simplified. Prior to inovia, Dentons had to set up a docketing and account number in their system for each filing, which proved to be very time consuming. With inovia.com, KCI receives the confirmation of the filing directly from inovia and provides payment immediately.

Before inovia, there was a lot of back and forth for Dentons with KCI on strategy—where to file, the cost associated with filings, confirmation of filings, etc. With inovia.com, these issues are handled with ease.

KCI is also an active user of the 'agent choice' feature of inovia.com, which was introduced in November 2011. With this feature, KCI has been able to continue to send work to its preferred European associate through the platform, while using inovia's agents in other countries.

As one of inovia's longest client relationships, KCI views the platform as essential to the execution and management of foreign filing. As budgets continue to be tightened, economic conditions shift and new laws and regulations introduced, inovia has proven to be a constant source of value.

"After the significant results and cost savings we saw in the first few years using inovia, we haven't had to continue to monitor costs or justify the spend," concludes Mason. "We are confident in the savings, productivity and efficiencies inovia.com brings and are grateful for the cost-conscious services inovia provides." **IPPro**



**Cara Verwholt**  
Marketing director  
inovia