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Annual Technical Report 2009 on Industrial Design Information Activities submitted by Sweden (CWS/ATR/ID/2009/SE)

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

The expression "industrial designs" covers industrial designs and models. Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in this series of Annual Technical Reports.

I. Evolution of registration activities

The Swedish Patent and Registration Office (PRV) play an important role in economic policy. This is also clear from the Office's official document on appropriations, where the output goal is to "promote sustainable growth and increased employment through measures aimed at increased competitiveness and more, growing companies". The output goal is then supplemented with an operational goal, which states: "PRV must supply efficient and appropriate systems for the registration of industrial rights, as well as work to improve the conditions for enterprise and entrepreneurship through appropriate and qualitative information and service on matters relating to intellectual property."

The operational goal clearly shows that intellectual property rights rest on two foundations: registration and information.

PRV has successfully managed the first of these by supplying efficient and appropriate systems for testing and registering applications for legal protection. The second foundation, which is also important from a growth perspective, has previously had to take a back seat, in particular on those occasions where the focus has been on redressing the balance of applications. During the past year, PRV has drawn up a strategic plan which clearly specifies that active efforts regarding increased awareness of intellectual property rights (IPR) are an essential element in achieving the output goal that applies to the operation.

The strategic plan also presents PRV's vision:

- PRV is the natural centre for intellectual property rights in Sweden.
- PRV is internationally respected and an energetic, customer-oriented authority.

In order to achieve this vision, PRV needs to focus on a number of strategic cornerstones. These are:

- PRV markets and makes IPR available
- PRV is customer-oriented
- PRV is an energetic authority
- PRV is an internationally recognised player

The fact that the processes and procedures maintain a high level of quality was documented through the ISO 9001 certification that the Office underwent during the year 2007.

The delivery times are specified as objectives in the official document on appropriations and are an important parameter in the internal planning and following-up. The objectives have been tightened up over the years, usually at PRV's own initiative.

The Designs and Trademarks Department handles PRV's assignment to be the central administrative authority for applications regarding trademarks, designs, personal names (surnames and first names), as well as keeping a register of periodicals and municipal coats of arms.

The output goals in the official document on appropriations mean that the activities within those areas that are organised within the Designs and Trademarks Department are targeted at:

- satisfying the operational goals according to the official document on appropriations
- providing high quality, rapid service within the relevant areas
- supplying information about the content of the operation's various registers in an effective manner
- monitoring international developments
- conducting a dialogue with users regarding how the department's various operations can be developed

By the end of the year, all the goals had been achieved within the fields of designs.

The number of applications for national design was a little bit less than the year 2008.

An internal process has been fulfilled to adopt the personal staff to the demand and a relevant production capacity. The designs and trademarks division has been merged together and the registration and examination are made by the same staff. This integration has been very successful. It has now been easier to meet changes in the demand with the new and flexible organization.

Industrial design, received applications

2000 2,340
2001 2,000
2002 1,840
2003 1,162
2004 885
2005 776
2006 721
2007 641
2008 710
2009 671

Industrial design, decided applications

2000 2,800
2001 2,320
2002 2,160
2003 2,695
2004 1,067

2005 1,146
2006 694
2007 690
2008 720
2009 697

Industrial design, balance

2000 3,100
2001 2,300
2002 2,000
2003 459
2004 540
2005 198
2006 225
2007 279
2008 266
2009 183

Production has been higher than demand, which has resulted in the balance falling by 83 applications during 2009.

II. Matters concerning the generation, reproduction, and distribution of industrial design documents and of secondary sources of industrial design information, i.e., official gazettes

The official Gazette "Industrial design Gazette" is published with 2 issues every month. This Gazette contains the announcements of the official data concerning new registrations, modifications, renewals, cancellations and corrections.

The Gazette is available in an electronic way on the homepage on Internet.

Word processing combined with scanned forms is used for producing the Gazette. This production has been developed and is including in our process for examination of industrial design applications.

An electronic newsletter is published. The newsletter contains information about official reports, reporting and development in the office.

III. Matters concerning classifying, reclassifying and indexing of industrial design information according to the classification systems applied

Industrial designs are classified according to the Locarno Classification, 8th edition. This is done by the employee in the division.

Applicants have to state the classifications according to the Locarno system. The specifications must be specified and not in general terms. The employees in the Department then convert the information into actual class. By doing this we use either the classification document or the information in the computer system.

Bibliographic data used for search purpose are application number, registrations number, Locarnaclasses, name of applicant/holder and name of counsel.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

The Department has built up an electronic database of Industrial design forms. The information is reachable by use of the computer-system. The manual work for searching has been eliminated.

This database is integrated with the examination system and the forms are searchable in an easy way.

All forms are scanned with good quality. The outgoing and incoming correspondence is not scanned. Paper documents are therefore still in practice, in the daily work. All paper documents for Industrial design applications are kept in a paper-built archive.

V. Activities in the field of computerized search systems for industrial designs

For nearly all correspondence with the agencies or applicants the Industrial design division uses templates produced by word-processing in the office-system.

The search system is designed to search for identical or similar forms in different Locarnaclasses. It is possible to search on nearly every field in the database. The forms are later on used for producing the Gazette and registration certificate.

The Department is connected to the system Internet and to E-mail. All employees have their own e-mail address and there are also official e-mail addresses for the Department.

Every employee has his own p.c., which is connected in a local area network with two local NTservers. By an ATM communication-line the Department in the city Söderhamn then is connected with the IBM mainframe and other servers in Stockholm.

External databases in use are dictionaries, design-newsletter and brochures and other office homepages.

The IT-system for trademark registration and examination (Ptolemy) expanded and made it possible to deal with the same processes also for industrial design.

VI. Administration of industrial design information products and services available to the public (relating to facilities, e.g., for lodging applications, registering designs, assisting clients with search procedures, obtaining official publications and registry extracts)

PRV's business development includes close and ongoing contacts with its customers.

All processes in the department have been charted, analysed and updated and are now available via PRVision under The way we work (VSAA).

A customer satisfaction index investigation was carried out with the aid of Statistics Sweden. A paper questionnaire was sent out to customers within all four business branches.

The results show that the customers are very satisfied. The areas of improvement are the same for all the business branches – information and processing. In the survey, it emerged that approximately 60 percent of the respondents would have submitted applications via PRV's website if this service had been offered, and that approximately 40 percent wished to monitor their applications via the website. During the year 2009 we have continued to work with these important areas.

During the year, intensive quality work has been conducted throughout the entire authority, resulting in ISO certification in November 2007. In 2009 an external organisation made follow-up revisions with good result for PRV. The system has been upgraded to the standard ISO 9001:2008 mostly because of improvements in the areas of development, education, taking care of reactions from clients, project management and document management.

The number of assignments within the Designs area is total 107 assignments, which is about the same as last year.

A new IT system was approved and commissioned for the processing of design applications. The business branches Trademarks and Industrial Designs therefore employ the same system, which has created good opportunities for co-ordination benefits.

The effects of the introduction of a common system can be seen most clearly in the development of cost productivity within the Designs area. Through adaptation, it has been possible to achieve personnel savings corresponding to 2.5 person-years, which is equivalent to approximately SEK 1 million.

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of industrial design documentation and information

PRV has drawn up a strategic plan for the period 2007–2010. Within the strategic plan, the focus has to a great extent been placed on marketing and on making intellectual property rights (IPR) available. The background to this is the conviction that IPR is a central competitive tool for the Swedish export industry, as well as the insight that awareness and knowledge of intellectual property rights systems in Swedish business are at a worryingly low level.

PRV is continually working to distribute general information about various industrial rights, about its own operations and about the content of relevant databases via various channels. The vision is for all innovators, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to be aware of the value of patent, trademark and design systems, and to make an active choice when it comes to using intellectual property rights.

PRV's single most important information channel is the external website www.prv.se. The site had approximately 0.6 million hits in 2009 divided between approximately 0.4 million hits individual visitors (for the whole PRV). A new version was recently launched. Both people visiting us for the first time and more professional users will benefit from the content, as well as being able to navigate clearly and logically to the desired information or services. For this reason, the users have also been involved in the development work through user tests. PRV's website has essentially also been translated into English.

PRV and twenty-six other patent and trademark offices have been partners in an EU project in the field of intellectual property rights that is targeted at small and medium-sized companies. In addition to authorities, research and innovation organisations with considerable experience of intellectual property rights are included. The purpose is to increase companies' interest in and knowledge about intellectual property rights, as well as to integrate intellectual property rights in innovation strategy and business processes.

PRV is also participating in trade fairs with the aim of increasing knowledge about IPR, primarily among small and medium-sized companies. By attending labour market days at the institutes and universities of technology, students have obtained information about both PRV and the value of IPR. The collaboration with schools and companies enables PRV to reach its customers with information about intellectual property rights.

Information about relevant areas of protection can also be found in a number of brochures that PRV produces and supplies.

PRV also has a library, which is a national source of expertise in the field of intellectual property rights. The library is open during office hours and has a reading room where the general public can obtain qualified assistance.

In order not to exclude customers who currently do not have access to the Internet or who require information or assistance in some other way, there is a separate, PRV-wide customer service operation that is staffed during normal office hours. It receives more than 68,000 calls each year. Common questions include identifying the appropriate form of protection on the basis of a described situation, gaining assistance in finding information in various databases, or obtaining information about the current status of various applications.

PRV has also introduced a systematic system for receiving and processing customer opinions. The system is administered by the customer service function.

VIII. Matters concerning education and training, including technical assistance to developing countries (please indicate URLs of web pages of the Office's website wherever appropriate)

Our perception is that knowledge about IPR is still worryingly low, particularly among small and medium-sized companies. On the basis of the strategic plan, PRV has currently establishing a market organisation that will be responsible for PRV's aggressive market efforts. The surplus that exists in the operation provides the economic opportunities. PRV will propose increased training efforts as well as assistance and support for innovators.

In the PRVLink portal, the trademark database has had a proper facelift including a number of new search services. Also worthy of mention are the potential to save monitoring profiles, search for figure classes, search for quotes and select between text and figure presentation. The trademark section is the last in the portal to be provided in English. All the databases in the portal have also been provided with a common login, which makes it easier for customers who use several of the databases.

It is now also possible for customers to view the balance in their deposit account via PRVLink.

The national education has been hard hit by the worsening economic situation. Although there are a number of courses conducted focusing on basic courses in the different sites.

Collaboration with the University has begun with a view to developing a web-based training in intellectual property.

Employees from PRV have participated in several national and international working groups, meetings and conferences during the year.

IX. Other general information related to the Office that is available on the Internet -- URLs of web pages of the Office's website that:

The office's website is:
<http://www.prv.se/>

At the end of the year the department had 94 employees, corresponding to 88 person-years.
3 person-years were exclusively working with trademark issues. Staff turnover (excluding retirements) amounted to 13 percent.

An annual survey of the physical working environment has been carried out. The purpose was to chart which measures were required in the physical working environment at various levels: individual, per section/unit/department and for shared premises. Action plans including measures have subsequently been drawn up.

The management group at the department was transformed into a strategic management team comprising departmental manager, unit managers, departmental attorney and business controller.

The combination of the commissioning of the new design system, the expansion of skills within the unit and the transfer of five individuals to customer services constitute the basis for a reorganisation of the Trademarks unit. This unit now comprises three sections, two of which handle both international and national trademarks while the third handles RAD applications and design applications. The outcome is a more flexible and thereby more cost-effective organisation.

In the department we are also responsible for the business activities within trademarks and designs.
A separate unit is established with 4 persons. They work with commission and information in tight connection with the trademark- and design unit.

Their business is completely dependent from the customers demand. Essential areas to work with are databases, search tools, high competition, education, business relations, information and finally to find new business areas in the field of industrial designs and trademarks.

During the year, an expansion of skills among the operations in the department has been launched. The expansion of skills is a precondition for a more flexible use of the resources within the department.

Essential projects during 2009 have been to start the process to find a common IT-system for the whole department, standardisation with Wipo and OHIM, electronically renewals and creation of electronically archive for international trademarks and finally Euroclass. After implementation relevant systems for trademark we will study the possibilities to also implement these for design.

Total income, for the whole Designs and Trademarks Department, amounted to SEK 55,6 million, compared with the budgeted figure of SEK 58,2 million. The largest deviations from budget can be seen in the areas of registration fees and fees for applications under the Madrid Protocol.

Total costs, for the whole Designs and Trademarks Department, amounted to SEK 72,6 million, compared with the budgeted figure of SEK 77,2 million. The result was a loss of SEK 17 million, which is little better than the budget figure of SEK -19 million.

The income, related to design, amounted to SEK 3,5 million, compared with the budgeted figure of SEK 2,9 million. The largest deviations from budget can be seen in the areas of registration fees for renewals.

The costs, related to design, amounted to SEK 3,2 million, compared with the budgeted figure of SEK 3,6 million. The result was a profit of SEK 0,3 million, which is a considerably better than the budget figure of SEK -0,7 million.

X. Other relevant matters

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