Powder to the People.  

How a strong Intellectual Property (IP) strategy and professional support have helped an innovative start-up gain a competitive position in the fast growing snowboarding industry.
The present case study traces the journey of ALLWINTER Ltd., a young, visionary company active in the fast-growing snowboarding industry aiming to expand their business and build up a strong IP portfolio. You will learn more about the different Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) attached to marketing new products in this field, and which steps need to be taken especially with regard to patenting. Apart from this, the ALLWINTER story is also a best-practice example of the successful and beneficial collaboration between a start-up and an IP firm, in this case the Cambridge-based company Basck.

ALLWINTER Ltd.
ALLWINTER is an innovative start-up that develops novel technologies and products for the snowboarding industry. One of the core product is PowDaze®, the world’s first snowboard attachment.

www.allwintersnowboarding.com
Turning a love for snowboarding into an innovative product

It all started back in the summer of 2016, when a young couple from Chelmsford, Essex, had an idea. William and Alice, the founders of ALLWINTER®, wanted to share their love of snowboarding with the world and to take strides in re-inventing the snowboarding industry. In 2017, they released the PowDaze®, which is the world’s first snowboard attachment.

As an avid snowboarder, taking part in competitions across the globe, including the USA and Japan, William is no stranger to the snow slopes. Often needing to take 2 boards to go between boarding on or off-piste, or having a delay in competition due to heavy snow-fall, William thought that there must be an easier way than carrying two boards all the time. This is where the idea of the PowDaze® came in - an attachment that boosts performance in powder snow. After developing this concept, ALLWINTER® realised it was worth protecting.

“Paying £500 for a powder board that I may use a few days a year and then want to replace when the technology gets left behind after a few years wasn’t a good option. So I set out to solve my issue – I wanted a way to get the most out of a powder day using my existing equipment.”

William, Co-Founder of ALLWINTER

Things have certainly progressed quickly since the first patented invention for a snowboard back in the 60s for the ‘surf-type snow ski’, but since then there have been thousands of patents filed for products relating to snowboards, with over 600 filed in past 10 years. These figures are amazing considering snowboarding is a relatively new sport – it was not part of the Winter Olympics until the 90s! The introduction of snowboarding at the Olympics coincided with a rise in patent filings related to snowboards, which is when snowboarding technologies really took off.

The past 5 decades have seen snowboarding go from strength to strength, with big name brands such as Burton® and K2 Snowboarding® leading the way in terms of innovation, so how did ALLWINTER® manage to develop such an innovative product which had all the elements to ensure its patentability?
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**Challenge**

**Developing a strong, yet cost-effective IP strategy**

As a young company with fresh ideas, ALLWINTER® needed to ensure that the relevant protection was put into place so that they could build upon their brand and make themselves known in the snow sports industry. Luckily, protecting their intellectual property (IP) was at the forefront of their business plan. Also, they were quite clear about the fact, that they would need to seek professional IP support.

After looking around for the right IP firm to work with, ALLWINTER® was put in touch with Basck®, an IP firm which was pointed out to them and described as specialists in supporting start-ups, and with extensive experience in product commercialisation. With such a strong pool of patent filings and other Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in the snow sports industry already granted and applied for, it was essential for ALLWINTER® to have a strong IP strategy in place. It had to be ensured that the strategy not only provided ALLWINTER® with the best protection possible, but would also be cost-effective.

Whilst work was underway in drafting the patent application for the PowDaze®, Basck® had to look into how they could protect the brand through trademark filings, as well as potential design filings to protect the look and feel of the attachment.

**Previous Actions**

**Paving the way for PowDaze®**

A lot of work went on behind closed doors before developing and releasing the PowDaze®. William and Alice had to work on establishing a modern brand, which would have all the ingredients to be eye-catching and fashionable to the target consumer group.

Not only this, but they had to look into market research to see where the gap in the market was so that they could begin developing a product that would not only be novel, but also inventive and useful. With a degree in Sports Technology and experience working in the sporting industry, William has a flare for developing products, which are
not only pragmatic, but can also change the way the industry is seen.

ALLWINTER® had their name trade mark protected, along with their logo and slogan ‘Powder to the People®’, as well as their product name ‘PowDaze®’. As a start-up, ALLWINTER® had to look into what else sells and what can promote the brand so that they had a constant stream of revenue. At their online shop they offer all sorts of apparel, including beanie hats and hoodies!

Outcome & Next Steps

Safeguarding and managing a varied IP portfolio

Not only did a patent need to be filed, but it was essential to protect the look and feel of the PowDaze®, considering its unique design and ability to attach to most snowboards. By filing a design application in the UK first, ALLWINTER® was able to get the priority date needed to raise funds and look at the relevant markets so that they could expand their design protection globally.

Looking into market data plays a crucial role when deciding where to protect your IP. By reviewing the countries which host the most snowboarders per year, have the most annual snowfall and a higher percentage of boards being manufactured, the IP specialists at Basck® were able to decide where the IP should be filed. Currently, ALLWINTER® have pending and granted designs across the globe, including Europe and Asia, dominating the snowboarding jurisdictions.

Trade marks and designs are all important IPRs when developing a strategic IP portfolio, but having a granted patent for such a product shows the world that the invention is unique and is potentially highly valuable. For a product to be patented it
needs to have three key elements: It has to be novel, inventive and have industrial applicability. Three elements which can be difficult in a field where there are already hundreds, if not thousands, of patents already granted. Yet, William and Alice knew that this product was something special, and having spent time developing, testing, modifying its features, it was obvious that the PowDaze® was the product that had been missing in the snowboarding market.

The patent for the attachment was first filed in the UK in September 2016 and has since been granted, which is a massive achievement having it granted in under three years, proving that this is an innovative product. The patent has now been filed in Europe and North America, key jurisdictions which are well known for their mountains and ski resorts.

With a product that is compatible with 90% of all snowboards, and one that has a number of benefits including: boosting performance in powder snow and reducing back-leg muscle burn that is standard on a powder day with the wrong snowboard, the next logical step for ALLWINTER® to take is to license the PowDaze® to other companies. ALLWINTER® identified Atomic® and Elan® as good potential partners. Both these companies, amongst others, are well known ski brands but have an undervalued snowboarding offering, and many larger companies are often looking for innovative start-ups to boost their innovative culture.
Lessons Learned

Passionate inventors and a strong IP portfolio make a perfect combination

For a company which has been up and running for three years, ALLWINTER® has made massive progress, both in product development, but also in having a strong IP portfolio, which puts them in a competitive position.

ALLWINTER®'s appeal is that it is a company run by two dedicated entrepreneurs who love snowboarding, and it is evident in the care they have put into the development of the PowDaze® and its promotion. The drive that William and Alice have is undoubtedly what keeps the company thriving, emphasising the fact that if you put your heart and soul into an idea, it can pave the way for a new wave of innovative inventions. Plus: The innovative start-up realised very early on that getting an IP firm on board and setting up an effective IP strategy as an integral part of the their overall business strategy are critical steps in safeguarding competitiveness and business success.

“We have seen product launches that required a patent drafted and filed within 24 hours and last minute instructions for filing trademarks in 60 countries. However, working with ALLWINTER® has been a fantastic journey and the team at Basck cannot wait to see what they do next (especially that we will have the privilege of seeing it first!).“

Team members at Basck

With a growing IP portfolio, expansion of their patent in key jurisdictions and the possibility of licensing the PowDaze® to the big players in the industry, ALLWINTER® is a company which is shredding the way for young innovators in a fast growing, and ever expanding, sport and outdoor leisure industry.

From the perspective of an IP firm, working with start-ups can be challenging; sometimes the team have to adapt their way of working so that they are able to deliver work within a much shorter turnaround time and within a set budget. However, on the other hand, communication and decision-making is very quick, and it is quite rewarding to work closely with the actual originators of an innovative idea.
Case Study

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