

OUTDOORACTIVE- 30 Years of Paving the digital Path



Forword

IP as the key to success – A case study of IP management in Germany

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, intellectual property (IP) has emerged as a cornerstone for business success, particularly for companies navigating the complexities of digital transformation. This case study delves into the strategic IP management of Outdooractive, a leading platform in the outdoor tourism sector, highlighting how effective IP practices have been pivotal in their journey towards digitalization and business model innovation.

Outdooractive has adeptly harnessed the power of IP to protect and enhance its digital assets, ensuring a competitive edge in a crowded market. By securing patents, trademarks, and copyrights, the company has safeguarded its unique technological solutions, brand identity, and content, fostering an environment of innovation and trust. This robust IP framework has not only shielded Outdooractive from potential infringements but also facilitated strategic partnerships and collaborations, driving growth and market expansion.

The digitalization of Outdooractive's business model is a testament to the transformative potential of IP. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies and data analytics, the company has created a seamless user experience, offering personalized and comprehensive outdoor adventure planning. The integration of IP into their digital strategy has enabled Outdooractive to continuously innovate, providing users with unparalleled access to high-quality, reliable information and services.

This case study explores the intricate relationship between IP management and digitalization at Outdooractive, offering valuable insights into how IP can be a catalyst for business success. It underscores the importance of a proactive IP strategy in fostering innovation, protecting digital assets, and driving sustainable growth in the digital age.

As you delve into this study, you will discover the critical role that IP has played in Outdooractive's ascent as a leader in the outdoor tourism industry, setting a benchmark for others to follow. The study becomes a part of the joint IP Management training of CEIPI with the European Patent Office (EPO).

The findings of this study will be shared internationally to improve the understanding and practice of IP management.

Thank you for putting together the case study



Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dr.-Ing. E.h. Dr. h.c. Dieter Spath

Präsident und Vorstandsvorsitzender
TÜV Rheinland Berlin Brandenburg Pfalz e.V.

Enjoy the case study

Executive Summary

Outdooractive, established in 1994, emerged as the premier outdoor platform with the launch of outdooractive.com in 2008. Throughout its journey, the company has consistently innovated, expanded, and received prestigious awards, solidifying its position as a leader in outdoor tourism. With a clear mission to build the world's foremost outdoor enthusiast platform, Outdooractive blends cutting-edge technology with a user-centric approach, connecting, guiding, and protecting adventurers in real-time.

At the core of Outdooractive's success is its comprehensive SaaS solutions, seamlessly integrating data management, marketing, and web and app technologies to satisfy both service providers and customers. This two-sided market approach presents unique challenges in safeguarding intellectual property (IP) rights. Recognizing the transformative potential of IP design in reshaping development processes, Outdooractive fosters an innovative culture and is committed to establishing a robust IP management. However, the company acknowledges the need to enhance its approach. Moving forward, safeguarding its innovations and proprietary technologies becomes paramount, necessitating a proactive stance in securing patents, strengthening trademark portfolio, and protecting copyrights to maintain exclusivity and market leadership.

In navigating the dynamic landscape of digital business models, Outdooractive remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering innovation, protecting its valuable assets, and preserving its competitive edge. Through diligent examination and application of IP design methodology, Outdooractive aims to deter imitators, secure its market position, and achieve its business goal of sustained leadership in the industry.

Introduction

Nestled in the heart of Europe, Bavaria stands as a beacon of economic prowess and innovation. With a GDP surpassing €610 billion and an export volume of €168 billion, Bavaria asserts itself as the sixth-largest economy within the European Union. This dynamic region boasts an impressive 53.5% export quota, indicative of its global significance as a trading partner and provider of high-quality products and services¹.

Home to renowned global enterprises such as Adidas, Allianz, BMW, and Siemens, Bavaria's economic landscape thrives on a foundation of medium-sized enterprises, many of which hold esteemed positions as world market leaders. Its advanced manufacturing sector, coupled with its role as Europe's leading hub for Information and Communication Technology (ICT), positions Bavaria at the forefront of cross-industry digital innovation. From autonomous driving and artificial intelligence to cybersecurity and augmented reality, Bavaria fosters an environment conducive to pioneering technological advancements.

However beyond its technological prowess, Bavaria's outdoor industry plays a pivotal role in the region's economic landscape and cultural identity. With its picturesque landscapes, Bavaria offers a playground for outdoor enthusiasts, attracting millions of visitors annually. This vibrant industry not only fuels tourism but also serves as a catalyst for economic growth, supporting local businesses and fostering a sense of community.

Moreover, Bavaria's commitment to sustainability aligns seamlessly with the ethos of the outdoor industry, making it a beacon for environmentally conscious consumers and businesses alike. By prioritizing conservation efforts and promoting eco-friendly practices, Bavaria positions itself as a leader in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation. In essence, Bavaria's innovation landscape and outdoor industry intertwine to create a dynamic ecosystem that celebrates both technological advancement and natural beauty, making it a truly exceptional region within Europe and beyond.

Considering Bavaria's rich tapestry of innovation and natural splendor, it's the ideal breeding ground for visionary ventures like Outdooractive.

¹ Europe's Innovation Powerhouse. <https://africa.bayern.de/europes-innovation-powerhouse/>

Origins of the Company

In 1988, Hartmut Wimmer together with his cousin, embarked on a daring road trip across the USA, eager to explore the thrills of climbing and paragliding. However, their adventure took an unexpected turn when they landed in legal trouble for paragliding in the Grand Canyon National Park, facing a stern judge and a hefty fine (“Don't fly your paraglider into the Grand Canyon!”). Despite the setback, they emerged with a newfound appreciation for thrift and a memorable lesson in the importance of respecting park regulations.

Six years later, in 1994, Mr. Wimmer, now the CEO of Outdooractive, embarked on a journey that would shape the future of outdoor tourism by opening his own engineering office. Reflecting on his paragliding “accident” for the 30 years’ anniversary of a company, Hartmut Wimmer would call this story a defining moment, a highlight of his outdoor life and a tale of trial and triumph that underscores the ethos of Outdooractive: a commitment to adventure tempered by responsibility and respect for nature's boundaries.

Initially focusing on complex construction projects, the engineering office of Mr. Wimmer quickly gained recognition as a reliable partner in planning. By the turn of the millennium, Outdooractive's scope expanded as they delved into tourism projects. Their involvement in mapping out the "Hornbahn" in Bad Hindelang, along with the creation of a mountain bike map and guide, marked their foray into the tourism sector. This early endeavor laid the groundwork for what was to come.

In 2003, Outdooractive took a significant step forward with the introduction of the "Nordic-Walking Park" in Oberstaufen. This comprehensive product, featuring maps, training instructions, and tour descriptions, proved immensely successful, establishing Outdooractive as a strategic partner for tourist infrastructure projects across the market.

As the years passed, Outdooractive's ambition grew. In 2005, ALPSTEIN GmbH was founded, signaling the company's commitment to developing an outdoor platform that would connect all stakeholders in outdoor tourism. With the launch of their first Content Management System (CMS) in 2006, Outdooractive laid the foundation for their future products and services, consolidating content from various partners into a centralized database.

The year 2008 marked a significant milestone as the Outdooractive brand was born, accompanied by the launch of outdooractive.com as an independent channel. This move solidified Outdooractive's position as the premier outdoor platform, catering to a community of athletes and nature enthusiasts alike.

Throughout the following years, Outdooractive continued to innovate and expand its reach. From receiving prestigious awards for their trail-management tool to establishing subsidiaries in Italy and Switzerland, Outdooractive consistently demonstrated its commitment to shaping the future of outdoor tourism.

By 2019, Outdooractive had firmly established itself as a leader in the industry, recognized for its innovation and international growth. With the introduction of new system languages and the formation of alliances for joint marketing, Outdooractive set the stage for continued success in the years to come.

Vision and Mission of Outdooractive

In the heart of Outdooractive's vision lies a captivating narrative, one that envisions the company as the digital haven where individuals unlock the pure joy of outdoor exploration, a world where technology seamlessly intertwines with nature, inviting everyone to embark on transformative journeys.

Their mission is clear: to build the world's premier platform for outdoor enthusiasts. This mission paints a vivid picture of Outdooractive as the enabler of meaningful outdoor experiences. Through cutting-edge technology, the company strives to connect, guide, and protect adventurers as they traverse the beauty of the great outdoors.

Embedded within Outdooractive's essence are core values that breathe life into their endeavors: trust, pioneering spirit, reliability, celebrating local, and making positive impact.

In a bustling marketplace, Outdooractive serves as the bridge between users hungry for exploration and partners brimming with valuable content. It's not just about information; it's about igniting inspiration for the next thrilling journey. For partners, Outdooractive offers a golden opportunity to boost brand awareness, where for example, print products could be showcased alongside carefully curated routes and travel guides, seamlessly linking users to the partner's shop.

But Outdooractive essentially offers a gateway to the digital world, and not a mere exposure. They started off with the idea that “If your content has thrived in print, why not unlock its full potential online?” By digitizing the offerings, Outdooractive’s partners can tap into a vast digital audience eager to jump onto new adventures. And for those craving maps, Outdooractive likewise has something in stock. Partners gain exclusive access to the Print Map Webservice, a treasure trove of maps ready to enrich their publications and guide adventurers on their way.

In the partnership landscape of Outdooractive, it's all about crafting a shared journey towards adventure. Content flows freely, connecting partners with users in a seamless exchange that fuels the spirit of exploration. Together, Outdooractive and its partners redefine what it means to experience the great outdoors in the digital age.

Innovation at Outdooractive

Since its inception in 1994, Outdooractive has been at the forefront of digitizing tourism information and mapping processes digitally. Their commitment to innovation is evident in the continuous development and updates of the Destination Management System (DMS), ensuring that destination managers always have access to the latest features and enhancements. With Outdooractive, there's no need to wait for cumbersome relaunches; the platform evolves in real-time, driven by the needs and feedback of its users.

Outdooractive’s 360° DMS is designed as a comprehensive platform, offering a one-stop solution for the myriad tasks involved in destination management. Imagine being a destination manager faced with a multitude of daily tasks, each requiring its own set of tools and systems. It's a challenge familiar to many in the industry, where disjointed processes and data silos can hinder efficiency and productivity. But with Outdooractive's DMS, all of these tools are seamlessly integrated into one cohesive platform, eliminating the need for multiple systems and providing a unified view of destination operations. At the heart of the DMS lies the concept of the digital twin—an exact digital replica of the destination, meticulously managed and curated by the platform. From data management and interface configuration to marketing campaign control and performance analysis, the DMS provides destination managers with a powerful toolkit to navigate the complexities of modern tourism management. With its help, destination managers can streamline their operations, improve decision-making, and ultimately enhance the guest experience. It's more than just software; it's essentially a transformative tool that

empowers destination managers to unlock the full potential of their destinations in the digital age.

Outdooractive partners reap a multitude of benefits from their collaboration, ranging from streamlined website and app development to enhanced analytics and community management capabilities. With Outdooractive's White-Label Website solution, destination flagship websites undergo a transformation into comprehensive travel guides, effortlessly created and maintained through automated processes. Partners enjoy the flexibility of integrating special pages and personalized designs within the platform's established structure, ensuring their destination shines in the digital realm.

In the mobile landscape, Outdooractive's White-Label App takes user experience to new heights, offering native apps tailored for optimal usability and engagement. While mobile websites and Progressive Web Apps (PWAs) have their merits, native apps provide superior functionality and pave the way for innovative features, crucial for fostering a thriving community of outdoor enthusiasts. Widgets further offer partners the flexibility to integrate Outdooractive content seamlessly into existing websites, whether it's a single detail page or an entire web app. This effortless integration extends to web pages, providing a hassle-free experience akin to embedding videos.

To highlight just some of the innovative opportunities made possible by Outdooractive:

- The power of analytics is harnessed through Outdooractive's platform, offering partners insights into content reach, user behavior, and performance across channels. With comprehensive reports and heatmaps, destination managers gain valuable insights to inform their decision-making and optimize their strategies.
- Trail Management becomes a breeze, ensuring that trails are efficiently managed and maintained within the platform. From monitoring trail conditions to leveraging community feedback, destination managers can ensure a seamless experience for outdoor enthusiasts.
- Cartography takes center stage with Outdooractive's interactive maps, offering an intuitive navigation tool enriched with detailed information. With ongoing support and enhancements, partners can continually improve the guest experience and showcase their destination's highlights.
- Through connectors and standardized interfaces, Outdooractive facilitates effortless data exchange between systems, empowering destination managers to seamlessly integrate their data and streamline their operations.
- While not a booking system in itself, Outdooractive seamlessly integrates with existing booking systems, ensuring that partners' offerings are showcased in the right context and facilitating a seamless booking experience for users.
- The Travel Guide structure offers partners a tried-and-tested framework for informing and navigating guests, seamlessly integrating content from the database and providing SEO-optimized landing pages in multiple languages.
- Also online marketing campaign management becomes a breeze with Outdooractive's platform, enabling partners to launch targeted campaigns and monitor performance in real-time.
- Community Management is simplified through Outdooractive's platform, providing partners with their own branded community space and full control over user data. CRM integration allows partners to gain valuable insights into guest preferences and behavior, enriching their CRM systems with data collected through the Outdooractive platform.

- Besides, the Outdooractive API offers technical exchange capabilities, facilitating data exchange between platforms and databases to further enhance partners' digital offerings.
- Finally, Outdooractive's innovative approach to AI extends far beyond mere reliance, as it embodies a commitment to pioneering the very technologies it utilizes. From AI Recognition & Classification, which autonomously creates classifications, tags, and user profiles based on discerned patterns and behaviors, to AI-Based Q&A Systems refined by Large Language Models (LLM), Outdooractive ensures robust support for its users. Leveraging generative AI for Content Creation and cutting-edge translation tools for multilingual accessibility, they seamlessly craft high-quality, SEO-relevant content in 34 languages. Meanwhile, Graph Neural Networks power the AI Recommender, delivering personalized recommendations rooted in semantics and context. Predictive AI forecasts scenarios from traffic patterns to user behavior, while Explainable AI ensures transparency in complex outputs. Lastly, with Self-Service BI, Outdooractive empowers users with advanced business intelligence, seamlessly addressing individual inquiries within their platform ecosystem.

Therefore, Outdooractive stands as a comprehensive solution that not only empowers destination managers to optimize their strategies and enhance the outdoor experience for its enthusiasts but also exemplifies the transformative potential of advanced technologies. By harnessing the power of analytics, seamless integration, and innovative AI capabilities, Outdooractive enables partners to unlock new levels of efficiency, engagement, and personalization. With its commitment to continual innovation and support, Outdooractive not only meets the current needs of its users but also anticipates and addresses future challenges, ensuring enduring value and relevance in the dynamic landscape of outdoor recreation and tourism.

Outdooractive app (B2C solution)

Aside from White-Label app offered in a B2B environment, Outdooractive offers end-users the access to Outdooractive app they can download to their devices. The Outdooractive app provides a seamless experience for outdoor enthusiasts, combining the best features of the previously existing app, called ViewRanger with the extensive capabilities of Outdooractive.

By merging with ViewRanger, Outdooractive has created a powerful platform that caters to the needs of adventurers worldwide. Users can easily connect their ViewRanger account with Outdooractive to enjoy a host of benefits, including access to a wealth of routes, maps, and features. The app provides routes for every adventure, curated by major outdoor brands, official tourism bodies, national parks, expert travel writers, and a global community of millions of explorers. With GPS navigation that works offline anywhere in the world, users can explore even without phone or data coverage. The app offers high-resolution Ordnance Survey maps for users with Pro or Pro+ subscriptions, allowing for detailed exploration. Enhanced features such as Skyline augmented reality, BuddyBeacon, and automated route planning provide users with an unparalleled outdoor experience. Users can identify peaks, lakes, and points of interest using Skyline, which utilizes augmented reality to overlay information on the camera view. Saving routes and maps offline ensures access to essential information even in remote areas with limited connectivity. The app's intuitive interface and robust functionality make it the perfect companion for outdoor adventures, promoting exploration, safety, and enjoyment for users worldwide.

As Outdooractive merged with ViewRanger and expanded its offerings, it became essential to safeguard its innovative features and technologies. One crucial aspect is protecting the app's proprietary algorithms and navigation systems, ensuring that competitors cannot replicate its advanced functionalities. Furthermore, as the app incorporates Ordnance Survey maps and other third-party content, adhering to licensing agreements and copyright laws to avoid infringement issues becomes pivotal, as is the implementation of stringent policies for content usage and ensuring proper attribution.

B2B Partnership ecosystem

While Outdooractive offering is targeted to all outdoor professionals, the company especially identifies seven categories of B2B stakeholders: Destinations, Hotels, Outdoor industry, Associations, Publishers, Search and Rescue and POIs (Points of Interest).

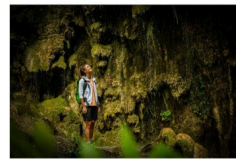



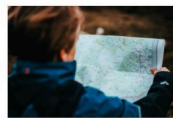
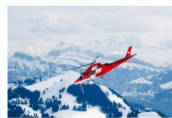
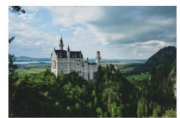
Destinations

By partnering with Outdooractive, destinations can unlock the full potential of their tourism offerings, attract more visitors, and promote sustainable travel practices for future generations, through leveraging cutting-edge technology to create the digital travel guide of their region and inspire travelers worldwide. They can streamline their operations, manage data efficiently, and enhance the overall visitor experience. With one platform, destinations can essentially digitize their region, creating a virtual twin that organizes all tasks seamlessly. From hiking and cycling routes to accommodations and restaurants, destinations can manage every aspect of their tourism offerings with ease.

The platform's digital trail management solution ensures the highest quality outdoor experience for guests, focusing on trails, signage, and local infrastructure. Additionally, destinations can gain valuable insights into visitor demographics and behavior through digital guest management, enabling personalized communication and visitor guidance systems.

Outdooractive facilitates interoperability, allowing seamless data exchange with other systems, and encourages collaboration among all institutions involved in delivering quality travel experiences. Furthermore, Outdooractive is committed to

Solutions for all outdoor professionals

 <p>Destinations</p> <p>Together we digitize and manage your destination while creating the digital travel guide of your region that inspires.</p> <p>Find out more</p>	 <p>Hotels</p> <p>Become digitized, be visible and directly bookable without any commission, and offer your guests great digital experiences.</p> <p>Find out more</p>	 <p>Outdoor Industry</p> <p>Increase brand awareness, strengthen your image, and leverage your reach in the perfect marketplace.</p> <p>Find out more</p>	
 <p>Associations</p> <p>Give your members the best outdoor experiences. Special deals and other benefits for your organization wait for you.</p> <p>Find out more</p>	 <p>Publishers</p> <p>Your premium content needs a premium platform. As an Outdooractive partner, you gain new channels and a greater audience.</p> <p>Find out more</p>	 <p>Search & rescue</p> <p>You provide safety for us, we provide the tools so you and your team stays safe as well. All safety relevant features for your team for free.</p> <p>Find out more</p>	 <p>POIs</p> <p>Make sure your location stands out from the masses and attracts more visitors than ever. Become a landmark with our POI Product plans.</p> <p>Find out more</p>

Source: <https://business.outdooractive.com>

sustainability, partnering with leading organizations in the field and enabling providers to take responsibility for digitizing their services responsibly.

Hotels

By digitizing their offerings, hotels can stand out in the competitive tourism landscape and directly engage with potential guests throughout their travel journey. With Outdooractive, hotels receive maximum visibility, as the platform ensures hotels are prominently featured where travelers make their vacation plans, capturing their attention before and during their stay. Outdooractive's fast-growing and international community comprises quality-conscious travelers who prioritize sustainability, offering hotels an opportunity to connect with discerning guests.

This in fact is one of the key benefits for hotels partnering with Outdooractive, as it offers them the ability to facilitate direct bookings without any commission. Users are seamlessly directed to the hotel's reservation page with just one click, enabling hotels to receive more guest inquiries and save on integration fees. Furthermore, hotels can create a branded experience for their guests by offering customized routes, points of interest, and highlights that align with their unique offerings. An integrated map allows for personalized activity planning, tailored to each guest's preferences and interests. And as an added benefit, hotels can gift their guests the Outdooractive Pro+ experience during their stay, providing them with a unique opportunity to explore the region even more for four weeks free of charge..

Outdoor Industry

Outdooractive's platform boasts an engaged and international audience of outdoor enthusiasts actively seeking quality outdoor services and equipment. With over 14 million community members and 5,292 partners, the platform provides a vast network for industry brands to connect with their ideal target audience. By becoming a Pro Benefit Partner, industry brands gain exclusive access to Outdooractive's Pro and Pro+ subscribers, a unique target group actively seeking special offers from their favorite outdoor brands. This provides industry brands with a direct channel to engage with their fans and deliver effective brand messages that resonate across Outdooractive's channels.

Outdooractive also offers guidance through its community features and content services, enabling industry brands to interact directly with their target audience and craft compelling messaging strategies. Additionally,

Outdooractive facilitates networking opportunities, allowing industry brands to strengthen their network and forge collaborations with other brands and tourism partners. By combining reach, story, and image, industry brands can create unique promotions that transform one-time buyers into actively loyal customers.

Associations

For associations focused on outdoor activities, partnering with Outdooractive offers a unique opportunity to become more attractive to potential members and expand their presence on a professional platform, through the tools and resources needed to reach the right target audience and grow their membership base effectively.

By joining Europe's largest outdoor platform, associations can significantly increase their presence and visibility, reaching millions of outdoor enthusiasts across the globe. Outdooractive also offers associations the opportunity to stand out by providing their members with discounted access to the platform's premium features, incentivizing membership and fostering loyalty among members.

Associations can further enhance their presence by creating a professionally designed website and/or app using Outdooractive technology. This allows associations to provide their members with a seamless and user-friendly experience, further increasing their attractiveness and engagement.

Several examples highlight the success of associations partnering with Outdooractive. Alpenvereinaktiv, a cooperative project by the German, Austrian, and South Tyrolean Alpine Associations, has seen significant growth and surplus since partnering with Outdooractive in 2013. Similarly, the Royal Dutch Climbing and Mountaineering Association (NKBV) and Naturfreunde Österreich have greatly benefited from their own tour portals based on Outdooractive technology, experiencing increased interest in outdoor activities and growing membership sales.

Other associations, such as the Danish Ramblers' Association (DVL) and the Hungarian Ramblers' Association "Friends of Nature" (MTSZ), have successfully leveraged Outdooractive's platform to organize and promote hiking events, courses, and activities for their members. With Outdooractive's support, these associations have been able to engage with their members more effectively and attract new participants to their outdoor programs.

Publishers

Outdooractive serves as a global online marketplace dedicated to quality outdoor content. With Europe's leading platform for digital outdoor tourism, publishers can now digitize their content and amplify both their digital and print product sales using Outdooractive's hybrid business model. Thus, publishers have a unique opportunity to reach over 30 million users seeking access to high-quality outdoor content through Outdooractive's platform.

Supplementing popular analog media with digitized content on the Outdooractive platform opens up access to millions of new customers, increasing exposure and revenue potential. Publishers also gain exclusive access to the Outdooractive Print Map Webservice, allowing them to download route maps for their publications and enhance their offerings.

Companies like KOMPASS, Wandermagazin SCHWEIZ, BVA BikeMedia, HARVEY Maps, Schall-Verlag, Tappeiner, Athesia & Curcu Genovese, Topoguide, and ADAC Wanderführer have leveraged Outdooractive's platform to expand their reach and increase their revenue. By publishing exclusive content and offering discounts to Pro+ subscribers, these publishers have enhanced their offerings and attracted new customers, driving growth and success in the outdoor publishing industry.

Search And Rescue Teams

Outdooractive provides invaluable support to search and rescue teams worldwide, ensuring they have access to the best outdoor maps and navigation tools to carry out their life-saving missions. As part of their commitment to supporting these organizations, Outdooractive offers their Pro service free of charge to members of search and rescue teams. With Outdooractive Pro, search and rescue teams have access to professional maps and navigation tools offline, allowing them to navigate challenging terrain and access up-to-date information crucial for their operations. The platform also offers features like BuddyBeacon, which visualizes the GPS location of team members in real-time, enhancing coordination and communication during missions.

Search and rescue teams benefit from the best outdoor maps and official topo-maps offline, as well as additional features like slope gradient map layers and up-to-date avalanche reports, providing essential information for safe and effective rescue operations in various environments.

Outdooractive is proud to support organizations specializing in mountain rescue, personal search, cave rescue, lowland search and rescue, and more, empowering these teams to carry out their missions with confidence and efficiency.

POIs

Outdooractive offers a platform for Points of Interest (POIs) to attract visitors and locals to their region, ensuring maximum visibility and engagement with a large and highly relevant target audience. By registering on Outdooractive, businesses can showcase their offerings in the digital travel guide of their area, ensuring that both visitors and locals don't miss out on what they have to offer.

The platform's prioritized treatment for searches ensures that registered businesses receive top placement in search rankings, increasing their visibility and reach. Businesses can effectively communicate their offers to users by linking them to their respective POIs, ensuring that potential customers are engaged and informed about what they have to offer. Additionally, businesses have the opportunity to gift the Outdooractive Pro+ experience to their guests, providing them with a unique opportunity to explore the region further.

Outdooractive also offers interactive map widgets that businesses can integrate into their websites, allowing them to intuitively inform visitors about all locations associated with their business. This widget is versatile and can be used to display other relevant content in a specific region, enhancing the overall user experience and engagement.

Overall, Outdooractive provides businesses with the tools and visibility they need to attract visitors and locals to their region, increasing their reach and driving engagement with their offerings. Company's dedication to its partners extends beyond the provision of digital solutions. Prioritizing the well-being of members, partners, and the environment, the company actively engages in various social initiatives aimed at enhancing outdoor experiences, ensuring safety, and promoting sustainability. Through partnerships across diverse sectors, Outdooractive strives to make outdoor adventures truly unforgettable while fostering a sense of responsibility towards natural surroundings.

Inherent challenges

Outdooractive, a pioneering provider of full-service SaaS solutions for the tourism industry, exemplifies the integration of data management, marketing, and web and app technologies to satisfy both service providers and customers alike.

*“Outdooractive reduces the effort required to digitize the community in the regions to a minimum - the data obtained and the resulting opportunities for proactive guest management increase the safety of guests and ensure greater well-being for residents in the regions..”
Hartmut Wimmer CEO*

Central to their platform is the seamless storage, management, and structuring of vast content, sourced from thousands of users and partners worldwide, to create an unparalleled digital travel guide. This comprehensive approach not only facilitates destination digitalization but also enhances brand visibility and accessibility, fostering positive environmental impacts. The interplay between all of that creates a unique position for Outdooractive in the market, which in their case is a two-sided market².

Two-sided markets represent a unique ecosystem where platforms facilitate interactions between two distinct user groups, creating value for both sides. In such markets, opportunities abound, as they offer platforms the chance to leverage network effects, where the value of the platform increases as more users join. This dynamic fosters rapid growth and scalability, enabling platforms to capture significant market share and establish dominance.

Moreover, two-sided markets often benefit from economies of scale, allowing for cost efficiencies and competitive pricing strategies. However, operating in two-sided markets also poses certain risks and challenges.

One of the primary concerns is achieving and maintaining balance between the two sides of the market. Ensuring that both user groups receive sufficient value from the platform is crucial for sustainability and long-term success. Failure to adequately address the needs of either side can lead to disengagement, reduced platform usage, and ultimately, loss of market share. Additionally, platforms operating in two-sided markets must navigate complex regulatory landscapes, particularly in areas such as data privacy, antitrust, and consumer protection.

The rise of two-sided markets, as observed in Outdooractive's platform, underscores the need for adaptive IP strategies that prioritize the protection of coordinated business models across function boundaries. Operating in a two-sided market, catering to both consumers and businesses, poses unique challenges for companies, particularly in the realm of intellectual property.

Generally speaking, for digital platforms serving

both B2B and B2C markets, the challenges and opportunities are quite nuanced.

² More on two-sided markets: Jean-Charles Rochet and Jean Tirole (2003). Platform Competition in Two-Sided Markets. Journal of the European Economic Association, 1(4): 990-1029; Andrei Hagiu and Julian Wright (2011). Multi-Sided Platforms. Harvard Business School. Working paper 12-024. October 12, 2011.

These platforms must cater to the distinct needs and preferences of both businesses and consumers, often requiring sophisticated segmentation and customization strategies.

Opportunities here arise from the potential synergies between B2B and B2C interactions, where activities on one side of the market can complement and enhance those on the other. For instance, data insights gathered from B2C transactions can inform targeted marketing strategies for B2B clients, driving greater efficiency and effectiveness.

However, digital platforms in this space also face heightened competition, as they contend with established players and disruptive newcomers alike. Building trust and credibility across both B2B and B2C segments is essential for differentiation and market positioning. Moreover, maintaining data security and privacy standards is paramount, given the sensitive nature of B2B transactions and the increasing scrutiny around consumer data protection. Ultimately, success in navigating the complexities of two-sided markets requires agility, innovation, and a deep understanding of the unique dynamics at play in both B2B and B2C environments.

From the purely IP perspective, there is, likewise, a number of the inherent challenges.

Firstly, in a B2B context, where the company provides services to outdoor tourism providers, safeguarding proprietary technologies, algorithms, and software code becomes essential. This includes securing patents for novel functionalities or innovative features within the platform. However, aside from the challenges inherent in protecting software-based solutions, the additional challenge lies in striking a balance between protecting these assets and maintaining interoperability with the systems of partner businesses. Open APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and data-sharing agreements are necessary, but they also expose the company to the risk of unauthorized use or replication of its intellectual property.

Similarly, in the B2C sphere, where the company directly serves consumers, issues such as copyright infringement and software piracy can threaten the integrity of the platform. Implementing robust digital rights management (DRM) mechanisms and encryption protocols becomes imperative to prevent unauthorized access or distribution of the software. Additionally, the company must stay vigilant against reverse engineering attempts by competitors seeking to replicate its technology.

Navigating the complex landscape of licensing agreements is generally crucial for a two-sided market player. On one hand, the company may need to negotiate licenses with content providers, such as mapping data suppliers or tourism attraction operators, to ensure legality and accuracy of the information provided through its platform. On the other hand, potentially licensing out its own technology to businesses or third-party developers requires careful consideration of terms and restrictions to maintain control over the use and distribution of its IP assets.

Furthermore, the dynamic nature of the outdoor tourism industry introduces challenges in terms of IP enforcement and compliance. This is especially true, given that fact that the platform itself is inherently dynamic and constantly evolving.

*We are launching a release
for our platform every
week."
Pirmin Mösle CTO*

As the platform further evolves to incorporate new features or expand into different geographical regions, the company must continuously monitor and adapt its IP strategy to address emerging threats and opportunities. This includes staying abreast of regulatory developments related to data privacy, geospatial mapping, and software licensing, which may vary across different markets.

To note that the contemporary knowledge-driven economy in general presents businesses with unprecedented challenges. Technological complexity is on the rise, leading to frequent changes that have become routine, rendering the business environment highly dynamic. Consequently, companies of all sizes are compelled to adapt to this new landscape. In response, an increasing number of companies are shifting to launching agile products, redesigning core processes, business models, and IP management strategies.

As Outdooractive continues to chart its path forward, to maintain its position as a leader in the industry, the company must continue to ceaselessly innovate, differentiate its offerings, and stay ahead of market trends, all while diligently protecting their IP portfolio.

Protecting digital business models

Traditional models often rely on tangible assets and linear processes, while digital models thrive on intangible assets and interconnected networks. This fundamental shift brings forth a myriad of complexities, particularly in safeguarding intellectual property rights. In traditional models, also IP protection primarily revolves around tangible assets such as patents for inventions or trademarks for brands. However, in

the digital realm, the core value stems from intangible assets like software algorithms, data analytics, or user interfaces. In essence, while traditional business models navigate a relatively familiar IP landscape, digital counterparts must become more innovative in safeguarding their competitive advantage. Here understanding the interplay between digital technologies and business models is essential.

In comparing traditional business models with their digital counterparts, one encounters a dynamic landscape defined by both innovation and challenge. What once revolved around simple transactions has now shifted towards intricate relationships within business ecosystems, offering a myriad of services. This shift is observable across various industries, exemplified by companies such as, among others, Sonos, Spotify, Siemens, Signify (Philips), and Hilti. These entities demonstrate how business models have evolved to embrace multifaceted relationships and service offerings.

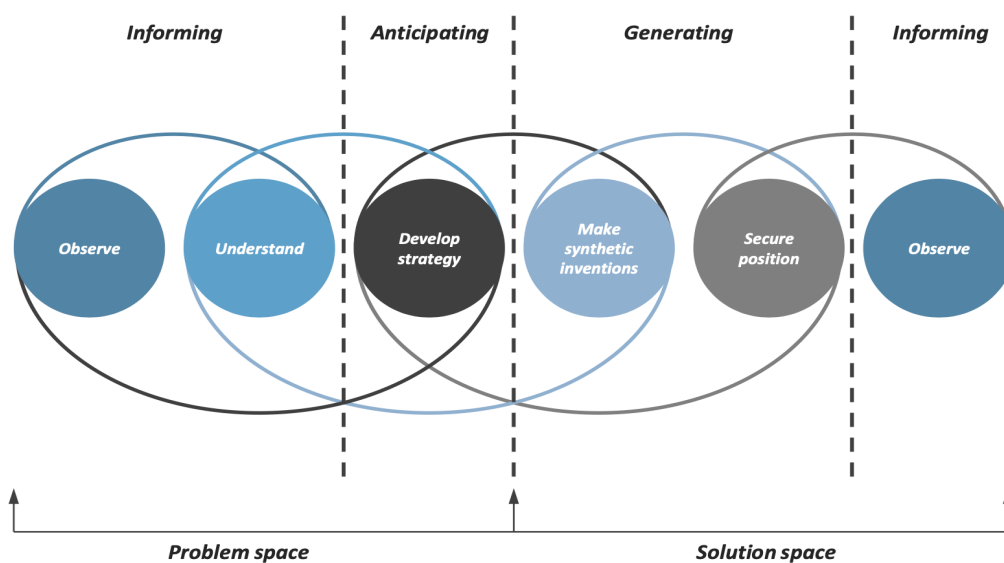
The essence of an IP strategy in digital business models lies in establishing exclusive positions that customers perceive as valuable and defensible against competition. Digital business models operate across different layers, requiring a tailored IP strategy that considers the interactions between these layers. To protect digital business models, it's crucial to identify components worthy of protection and employ methods to derive prohibitive rights effectively. To this end, such approach as IP design fosters a holistic perspective on business models, promoting customer-centric thinking, breaking down silos, and enabling agile decision-making in the face of digital complexities.

IP design

IP design is a transformative approach that reshapes the traditional development process by placing a strong emphasis on user-centric innovation and iterative refinement. It involves the application of standard-compliant IP management principles, following the PDCA cycle: Plan, Do, Check, and Act. The primary objective is to discern the need for intellectual property within a business model and then address it methodically. Adopting this approach often entails a transformative process within the organization, as intellectual property must be integrated early on in the development of new products and services.

IP design isn't merely a theoretical concept; it's an established and standard-compliant procedure. At its core lies the philosophy of design thinking, which prioritizes understanding the needs of customers over technological advancement.

Unlike the conventional model where developers work in isolation, IP design fosters interdisciplinary teamwork in open and creative spaces, encouraging agile thinking and continuous improvement. The methodology, pioneered by designer consultants at IDEO and further refined by institutions like Stanford and the Hasso-Plattner-Institut, follows five key steps: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. These steps guide the development process, ensuring that innovations are not only systematically crafted but also protected with intellectual property rights.



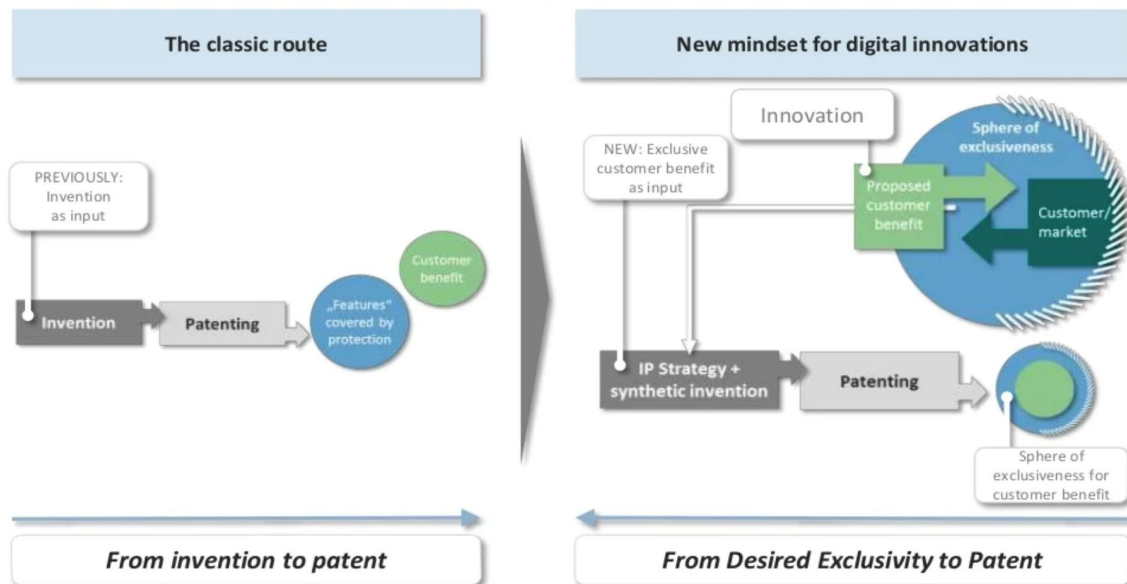
Adapted from: HPI School of Design Thinking / Qudosoft

Source: Prof. Dr. Alexander Wurzer. CEIPI

Similar to design thinking, IP design centers on the user experience and evaluates options iteratively, utilizing standardized tools to document processes and facilitate re-evaluation. Embracing agile principles, IP design diverges from traditional project management paradigms, prioritizing deliverables, quality, and customer satisfaction over rigid adherence to scope, process, time, and cost constraints.

Speaking about the agile principles, the concept of agile innovation, for example, manifests in various forms, including Agile Process Management, Agile Management, Agile Product Management, and Agile Development. Derived from the Latin word "agilis," meaning swift and nimble, "agile" denotes rapid and coordinated movement. When applied to innovative systems, it refers to the Agile Innovation System.

Essentially, this calls for a change of a mindset, obviously also when it comes to using IP rights to protect digital innovations and digital business model.



Prof. Alexander Wurzer, 2019

In today's economy, characterized by the extreme level of interconnectedness, competition extends beyond goods and services to encompass individuals, emphasizing the critical role of effective leadership in achieving organizational goals. To this end, the integration of IP design serves as a valuable tool for developing and safeguarding new business models across diverse scenarios, as it facilitates the implementation of the five crucial leadership tasks of digital leadership in practical terms: driving change, fostering transparency in staff contributions and recognition, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, promoting staff development, and providing guidance and direction.

By aligning, e.g. digital patents, with customer needs and product experience, IP design serves as a dynamic method for developing and safeguarding digital business models in the ever-evolving landscape of digital transformation. Provided the deeply ingrained agile philosophy, already actively employed by Outdooractive, IP design shines as the most applicable methodology for the company moving forward.

IP Management at Outdooractive

In terms of IP Management processes at Outdooractive, the company is committed to fostering a robust framework that aligns with its innovative ethos and strategic goals. Innovation is the lifeblood of Outdooractive's philosophy, and the company actively encourages its employees to explore new ideas and generate innovative solutions.

"When nobody knew about SaaS or spoke about AI, we already offered SaaS solutions and developed algorithms that date back to our early beginnings and are still key in our platform today." Hartmut Wimmer CEO

By cultivating an environment where creativity thrives, Outdooractive seeks to stay at the forefront of technological advancements in the outdoor tourism industry.

Identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks associated with IP is paramount to safeguarding Outdooractive's valuable assets and maintaining its market position. While the company currently lacks a structured approach towards risk management, Outdooractive is committed to enhancing its strategies by incorporating scenario planning to explicitly address also IP-related risks.

Having already implemented certain proactive measures, such as closely monitoring competitor activities and industry trends, Outdooractive minimizes exposure to IP risks and maximizes opportunities for value creation. Adding the explicit IP dimension to this will further enable the company to remain at the forefront of innovation while safeguarding its intellectual property assets.

"In order to protect our platform and the developments on which it is based, we implemented internal and external protection mechanisms in all contractual relationships at an early stage." Markus Schreiner CFO

In addition to proactive enforcement, Outdooractive employs defensive strategies to protect its IP assets from external threats and challenges. Through measures such as patenting key digital innovations and establishing robust contractual agreements, also in the context of employee contracts, the company mitigates the risk of infringement and unauthorized use of its intellectual property.

Fostering a culture of internal IP awareness and education is paramount to ensuring that all employees understand the importance of IP and their role in its protection and exploitation. To this end, Outdooractive recognizes the need to further invest in comprehensive training programs, workshops, and effective communication initiatives.

Challenges Looking Forward

For Outdooractive, the significant risk moving forward stems from the emergence of big players with substantial resources, potentially entering the market from other industries. They could leverage their financial muscle and existing infrastructure to quickly establish a foothold in the outdoor activity space, posing a threat to Outdooractive's market position. Moreover, as Outdooractive experiences further growth and expansion, it may encounter challenges related to scalability, infrastructure, and operational efficiency. Managing the complexities of a rapidly expanding user base and ensuring seamless platform performance becomes paramount.

With further expanding the partner ecosystem, comes heightened concerns regarding data security and privacy, hence the need to prioritize stringent measures to safeguard sensitive information shared among partners, users, and stakeholders, ensuring compliance with stringent data protection regulations such as GDPR. Maintaining the quality and accuracy of content from a diverse array of partners poses another significant challenge, calling for implementation of rigorous quality control mechanisms to uphold content standards and enhance the user experience, potentially involving the development of automated tools for content validation and moderation.

Moreover, scalability becomes a critical consideration as the whole ecosystem expands, given that the infrastructure and systems must scale to accommodate increased demand and workload, necessitating further investments in cloud infrastructure, scalable architectures, and performance optimization. Operating in multiple jurisdictions also brings a complex regulatory landscape, including legal and regulatory requirements related to data protection, consumer rights, taxation, as well as, of course, Intellectual property.

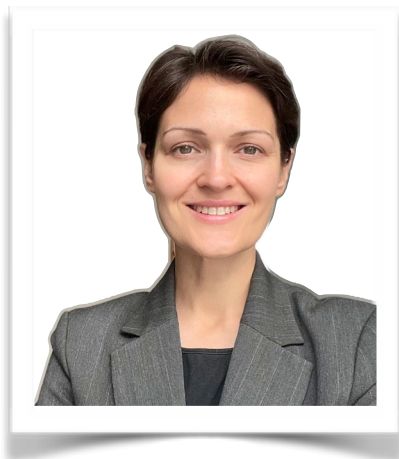
In the realm of IP, safeguarding Outdooractive's innovations and proprietary technologies becomes absolutely crucial for maintaining a competitive edge and preserving the sphere of exclusivity for the company in the future. With the threat of competitors potentially seeking to replicate or exploit Outdooractive's features and functionalities, robust IP protection strategies are essential. This includes securing patents for novel algorithms, potentially expanding the current trademark portfolio and actively protecting copyright for original content and design elements. But above all, it calls for the diligent regular examination of the digital business model and the application of IP design methodology. In this way, Outdooractive can deter imitators and protect its market position, thereby supporting its business goal of

maintaining exclusivity, differentiation in the marketplace and ensuring the leadership position for the company in its industry.

Authors

Maria Boicova-Wynants

Partner at Starks IP Law firm and Founding Partner at Wynants & Co Strategic IP Solutions



Maria Boicova-Wynants is an IP lawyer and IP strategy consultant, helping SMEs make their competitive advantage sustainable. Currently, Maria works as a Partner with Starks, as well as heads her own IP strategy consulting practice.

She is a Latvian Patent and Trademark Attorney, European Trademark and Design Attorney, as well as European Mediator in civil and commercial cross-border disputes for almost two decades. Maria's main areas of expertise are IP strategy, contractual relations, and alternative dispute resolution. She is also a mediator and art law expert on the list of the Court of Arbitration for Art (the Hague), and the Mediator on the WIPO ADR Centre's List of neutrals. Maria holds an MBA degree from Vlerick Business School and LL.M. (MIPLM) from CEIPI/University of Strasbourg.

Prof. Dr. Christian Stauf

Professor for International Business and IP Law and Managing director of BEYOND Innovation

Prof. Dr. Christian Stauf is professor for International Business and Intellectual Property Law at Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Amberg-Weiden with a strong focus on IP Management. In his doctoral thesis he focused on the topic of holistic management of IP in companies and has published various articles on this subject.

Christian is also co-founder and managing director of BEYOND innovation, a consulting company which supports small and medium-sized companies in the field of innovation protection.

